

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

May 12, 2020

The Economic Development Committee of Chardon City Council met on Tuesday, May 12, 2020, at 11:00 AM via video-conference, Zoom.

Heather Means, Chairman of Economic Development Committee presiding.

Members of Economic Development Committee present: Nancy McArthur, Heather Means.

Others present: City Manager Randy Sharpe, Community Development Administrator Steve Yaney, Clerk of Council Amy Day, Mary Glauser, Daniel Meleski, David Favorite.

Ms. Means called the meeting to order at 11:01 AM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. McArthur moved and Ms. Means seconded to approve the minutes of the Economic Development Committee meeting from February 25, 2020.

Upon voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

Regarding the City's response to COVID-19, Ms. Means asked for staff to report on business visitations.

Mr. Yaney reported that he has reached out to a number of businesses to inquire if they are in need of assistance. He noted that he provided the committee a list of businesses he has been in contact with. The general consensus is that the businesses are strong and are functioning. Sales are down for some industrial users and some large retail sales are up while smaller retail establishments are closed. Restaurants are reporting sales are at 25-45%.

Mayor Meleski reported that the businesses he has spoken with expressed that they had been impacted, but did not expect that they would not be able to recover.

Ms. Means reported on the conversations with businesses she has spoken with and explained that some businesses are doing well and some are struggling. She added that she feels it is

important that local businesses can help each other in various ways.

Mary Glauser added that her conversations with businesses are similar. Even though business is lower, overhead is smaller in many instances. She noted that Middlefield Bank has been exceptional in assisting businesses.

Ms. Means stated that allowing outdoor seating for restaurants is a concept that could be considered.

Mr. Sharpe stated that another community has allowed restaurants to put additional seating in parking areas. This would be more for those in plazas since additional seating has already been added to the Square for Main Street businesses.

Ms. Means stated that if a restaurant is interested in adding outdoor seating, they should contact the City to discuss ways this can be accomplished. She suggested social media be used to get this message out.

Mrs. McArthur inquired about the possibility of relaxed State liquor standards. She suggested discussing ideas with the State Liquor Control and the Ohio Restaurants Association.

Mr. Yaney explained the concept of a DORA (Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area) which connects all of the liquor permits into a designated area. He stated that it would be a large overlay liquor permit which is not something that the City may want to do.

Ms. Means stated that the Committee can report to Council that if there are restaurants that are interested in expanding outdoor dining, they could contact the City for assistance in making this happen.

Mr. Sharpe reported that the City has been working with many groups throughout the County including GGP who sent a survey out to businesses. Results will be communicated in the near future.

Mr. Favorite stated that it is a very small sampling of the businesses in the County and interpretation of the results needs to be done cautiously.

Mrs. McArthur inquired if public restrooms are available near the Square at the present time.

Mr. Sharpe stated that the restrooms at the Heritage House will

be open on Fridays when the outdoor dining restriction is lifted.

Mr. Meleski inquired about the possibility of allowing restaurants to use the Heritage House for additional dining.

Mr. Sharpe stated that another option could be tents with tables.

Regarding the Geauga County Economic Development Plan, Geauga County Department of Development Executive Director, David Favorite, noted that the County is in the process of updating their comprehensive plan and working on the strategic plan for economic development. They are in the process of trying to gain input on what the townships, villages and cities need and want. They have asked their consultants to assist businesses with their recovery plan and what that will look like.

Ms. Means asked what the City will receive from the work the consultants are doing.

Mr. Favorite stated that they will put together a plan with action items and some idea of cost and where the funding will come from. Because municipalities have their own plan, it will be an aggregation of existing individual plans along with a general plan for the County identifying areas of potential development.

Regarding the Chardon Together Initiative, Mr. Sharpe stated that Company 119 initiated the idea to provide one resource for information, grants, funding sources, events and contacts.

Ms. Glauser reported that the Chamber and Chardon Tomorrow have joined with Company 119 to create a website and Facebook page for the community.

Mr. Yaney stated that it is a way to get good news out and also provide resources.

Mrs. McArthur inquired about the results of the survey on the website.

Ms. Glauser stated that the results are very mixed but added that she will share the results with Council when it is finished.

Regarding Retail Strategies, Mr. Sharpe stated that \$44,000 was included in the 2020 budget and in the subsequent revision to the budget, he recommended that the costs be removed and wanted

to hear from the Committee their thoughts on it. He noted that if things turn around sooner, it could be added back into the 2020 budget.

Ms. Means stated that she understands the need to remove it but noted that she thinks it is important to not let it go forever because the City will need help with recovery and wants to make sure that it be brought back in when it is reasonable to do so.

Mrs. McArthur stated that the Finance Committee discussed it and recommended it not be spent right now even though it is a difficult decision. She noted that if things turn around sooner, it could be added back into the 2020 budget.

Mr. Yaney stated that it makes sense to start the program later.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - none.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Sharpe noted that NOCE thanked the City for the added 10-minute parking on Main Street parking for pickup orders and they have asked if this will continue through the summer. He noted he supported the idea.

Ms. Means noted that extending this parking option in the future may be a possibility as long as it isn't a problem for other businesses. She stated that other Main Street restaurants have expressed their support of the parking.

ADJOURN

Mrs. McArthur moved and Ms. Means seconded to adjourn. Upon voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 12:15 PM.

Attest:

AMY DAY
Clerk of Council