



Economic Development Commission

**Wednesday, January 27, 2021
Held in Village Council Chambers &
Via “GoToMeeting”**

Commissioners Present: Chairman James Kucienski, Vice Chairman James Berger, Myles Berman, Maureen Ehrenberg, Tim Garcia, and Jennifer Spino

Commissioners Absent: Joe Spagnoli, Rivak Albazi, and Leonard Weiss

Staff Present: Community Development Director Scott Mangum, Management Analyst Jake Litz, Village Manager Anne Marie Gaura, and Assistant Village Manager Charles Meyer

Village Board Liaison: Trustee Atour Sargon

1. Call to Order/ Quorum Declaration

Noting a quorum of six members present electronically, the meeting was called to order by Chairman Kucienski at 8:03 a.m.

2. Minutes Approval

Chairman Kucienski asked the Commission if any edits were to be made to the December 16, 2020 meeting minutes. Hearing no corrections, Chairman Kucienski called for a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Berman moved and Commissioner Ehrenberg seconded the motion. There was a consensus to approve the minutes.

Aye: Kucienski, Berger, Berman, Ehrenberg, Garcia and Spino

Nay: None

Motion Approved: 6-0

3. Update on Commercial Occupancy Rate and Sales Tax Revenue

Management Analyst Jake Litz stated that the purpose of this item was to establish a few economic indicators to gauge the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. He then presented the results of an updated commercial occupancy study that was conducted in early January 2021. The same study was conducted in January 2020 as well. The year-to-year variance was presented to gauge the economic impacts on Lincolnwood’s business

community. The 2020 study found that the Village had a commercial occupancy rate of 89.63%, leaving a vacancy rate of 10.37%. The 2021 study found that the Village currently has a commercial occupancy rate of 89.07%, leaving a vacancy rate of 10.93%. Mr. Litz stated that the nominal change suggested there was no statistically significant change in year-to-year commercial occupancy/vacancy. Commissioner Ehrenberg asked about the methodology of the study. Mr. Litz clarified the way in which the study was conducted.

Mr. Litz then provided the second economic indicator which included an analysis of the Village's sales tax revenue. The analysis compared 2020 sales tax information to the previous 3 years. The first component of the analysis dealt exclusively with the Village's Food and Beverage Sales Tax to assess how restaurants in the community performed compared to previous years. The spring and summer months were below average. However, by September 2020 the Food and Beverage Sales Tax revenue recovered to pre-pandemic levels. A series of graphs was presented to demonstrate how the month-to-month variances of 2020 compared to the previous 3-year average. Next, Mr. Litz provided the same analysis for State and Home Rule Sales Tax Revenue. Finally, he presented all sales tax revenue data for the previous 4 calendar years. Mr. Litz stated that the final 4 months of the year were more or less on par with the previous 3 years in terms of total sales tax revenue.

Commissioner Berman asked how Lincolnwood's economic situation compared to surrounding communities. Mr. Litz stated that staff did not have that information at this time. Chairman Kucienski said he was surprised that Lincolnwood's business community was relatively successful despite the pandemic.

4. Update from Lincolnwood Town Center Mall Manager

Mr. Litz stated that in January 2020 the Lincolnwood Town Center Mall (LTC) had an occupancy rate of 81% - 83%. In January 2021, the LTC occupancy rate was approximately 79%. LTC General Manager Peter Abraham provided an update on the mall's successes and struggles during the previous year. Commissioner Berman asked Mr. Abraham what goals and aspirations the LTC has for the near future. Mr. Abraham said that the original plans were to remodel the LTC. However, due to the pandemic, these plans were put on hold. He also said more of an aspirational goal involves reinventing and reimagining the area altogether. Chairman Kucienski asked how the mall maintained a relatively stable occupancy rate. Mr. Abraham said the LTC brought in new tenants by reducing monthly rent. Commissioner Berman asked about the types of tenants that were moving into the LTC. Mr. Abraham stated they were mostly local in nature. Commissioner Berman asked how the LTC fared compared to other malls. Mr. Abraham stated that the mall held its own during the pandemic. He said the mall did not lose any of

its anchor or national stores. Mr. Abraham concluded by saying the LTC is willing to help with any future Village initiatives.

5. 2021 EDC Biennial Report Draft and Discussion

Mr. Litz presented the draft of the EDC Biennial Report. He overviewed a summary of the EDC's significant activities from the previous two years. Commissioner Garcia asked how this list of activities compared with previous Biennial Reports for the EDC. Mr. Litz stated this list was on par with previous reports. Mr. Litz then asked the EDC what should be included under the anticipated activities and goals for the next two fiscal years. Chairman Kucienski proposed reviewing the zoning map in the NEID TIF area to ensure the areas are zoned in a way that matches up with NEID Conceptual Development Plan. Commissioner Berman suggested that the EDC partake in trips to various development sites over the next two years. Commissioner Ehrenberg agreed with this idea. She added that the cleanliness of the community, or lack thereof, could be addressed. Commissioner Berman restated the benefits of on-site trips for the EDC. Chairman Kucienski said it might be a good idea to include the Plan Commission on an activity such as this. Commissioner Berman suggested that the EDC have more workshops related to the Village's zoning ordinance. In response to Commissioner Ehrenberg, Mr. Mangum noted that the report was being presented as a draft and welcomed any additional suggestions for commission goals. Mr. Litz also asked the EDC to send any specific questions or comments for the Village Board.

6. Reports

No business was discussed.

7. Other Business

No business was discussed.

8. Public Forum

There was no public comment.

9. Prospective Businesses Forum

No business was discussed.

10. Adjournment

Commissioner Berman moved for adjournment and was seconded by Commissioner Ehrenberg. By consensus, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

Aye: Kucienski, Berger, Berman, Ehrenberg, Garcia and Spino

Nay: None

Motion Approved: 6-0

Respectfully submitted:

Jake Litz

Management Analyst

Fire Department/Community Development