

**COMMON COUNCIL  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
JUNE 25, 2021**

The City of Noblesville Economic Development Council Committee met pursuant to public notice on Friday, June 25, 2021. Mike Davis, Greg O'Connor, Aaron Smith, and Megan Wiles were present.

Also present were City Clerk Evelyn Lees, Economic Development Director Andrew Murray, Workforce Development Manager Chuck Haberman, Economic Development Specialist Amy Smith, Chamber of Commerce President Bob DuBois, Chamber of Commerce Board Member Angie Sutton, and BlueSky Commerce representatives James Harter, Lori Winkler, and Rachel Painter.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. O'Connor called the meeting to order at 8:16 a.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: March 31, 2021**

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

**3. NEW BUSINESS**

**a) Chamber of Commerce Update**

Mr. DuBois displayed a PowerPoint presentation. He stated he was asked three questions: how is their partnership with the City working; how are City funds used; and how can the partnership be enhanced going forward. He praised the good relationship the Chamber has with the City. He stated communication, programming, information, and events are freely shared. He stated the City contributed \$5,000.00 to the Chamber's Taste of Business which continues to grow. He stated the City's corporate sponsorship of the Chamber provides advertising for the City, because the City's logo appears on all Chamber materials. He stated the City is well represented at all Chamber events. He stated the City's contribution is a significant part of the Chamber's funding. He announced that the Chamber did not lose money last year, in spite of the pandemic. He explained the Chamber's role in counseling existing and prospective businesses. Mr. DuBois noted he serves on the Board of Directors for Hamilton County Tourism, making sure Noblesville's interests are represented. He thanked the City for contributing \$2,500.00 toward the digital marketplace that was used for 2020's Small Business Saturday, which was a great success.

Mr. DuBois stated to enhance the Chamber's partnership with the City going forward, better data is needed for business attraction. He expressed a desire to share data with the City in order to promote Noblesville more effectively. He suggested the Chamber could coordinate visits to competing communities. He stated the Chamber would like to provide a better business formation program in sync with the City. Mr. Murray stated business data and support have been

identified as a deficiency for his department, and working with the Chamber is a good place to begin. Mr. DuBois stated the Chamber is working on a business onboarding program to be called NobleStart. He stated business retention and expansion is important and takes significant effort to build. He stated the City and the Chamber need to improve, but resources and a plan are needed. He stated he has been working with Mr. Haberman to find qualified employees for businesses. He stated the Economic Development Department also needs more staff, but if they and the Chamber work together, it can be accomplished. He stated the Chamber's executive board met last week and will bring a proposal to the City, including funding needs. He stated he understands new funding may have to wait until 2022. Ms. Wiles asked how much funding might be needed. Mr. DuBois replied for data, marketing, and labor, the program could cost in the six figures over three years. Ms. Wiles and Mr. O'Connor agreed to consider a proposal as the budget is being formed. They stated they need the information by the end of July. Mr. Haberman noted the program is one of the deliverables in the Economic Development Department's strategic plan. The committee thanked Mr. DuBois for his leadership and for the Chamber's efforts.

#### b) Business Attraction/Marketing

Mr. Murray stated business retention is critical for the City, but business attraction also needs to be expanded. He stated his department is collaborating with BlueSky Commerce to improve business attraction. Mr. Harter, Ms. Winkler, and Ms. Painter introduced themselves and their roles at BlueSky Commerce. Ms. Painter stated BlueSky's headquarters is in Noblesville, but they also have offices in Canada and India. Ms. Winkler expressed a desire to promote Noblesville nationally. Mr. Harter recommended a strategy and resources to support the Economic Development Department's five year strategic plan, including website support, sales videos, social media, and event planning. The BlueSky representatives displayed a PowerPoint presentation detailing the work they would like to do for the City, including producing videos to promote the City, keeping the City's website up to date, and analyzing visits to the website. Mr. Haberman stated much of the information on the website is out of date, and some information had not been updated since 2013. He stated the website needs to be actively managed by an expert. Mr. Murray added many businesses do their first research by visiting websites. Ms. Painter stated it is critical to keep the website up to date. Mr. Harter stated they also have a social media team to specialize in marketing the City. Mr. Murray stated the Administration supports the Economic Development Department having their own social media sites. Mr. Haberman stated it is important to make sure all of the City's messaging works together. Ms. Winkler stated they have a team of 11 people to work on the project. She stated the project would be accomplished in three phases: Phase I, including strategy, discovery, and research would cost \$30,000.00; Phase II, including developing content and strategy, would cost \$45,000.00; and Phase III, including materials, production, and support, would cost approximately \$155,000.00 to \$205,000.00. She stated the total project would cost from \$230,000.00 to \$280,000.00. She recommended a timeline beginning Phase I in the third quarter of 2021, Phase II in the fourth quarter of 2021, and Phase III in 2022. Mr. Haberman stated the program accomplishes four to five of the deliverables in the strategic plan this year. He stated they hope to acquire grants to recoup some of the funds needed. Mr. Murray stated the Administration supports the program. He stated his department needs to hire a business development professional to help with Phase III of the program. Ms. Wiles asked what the ongoing cost for the program would be. Mr.

Haberman replied with additional staff, the ongoing cost should be approximately \$50,000.00 per year. Ms. Winkler agreed that was a good estimate. She stated the City may want to find what is reasonable to spend and work backwards from there. She stated the Chamber of Commerce and others may share in the ongoing work. Mr. O'Connor stated the program is a step in the right direction. He stated videos are needed to promote the City. He warned that after the initial investment, the information must be kept current, or it will be useless. Ms. Winkler stated BlueSky is passionate about promoting the City because their headquarters is here. She stated if the City does not control its message, someone else will create one. Mr. O'Connor asked what the next steps would be. Mr. Murray replied his department will need \$75,000.00 to get started, but there is not that much money in the budget. The committee thanked the BlueSky representatives. Mr. DuBois stated there is no sense in having a strategic plan without a partner to help with marketing.

Mr. Harter, Ms. Painter, and Ms. Winkler left the meeting.

c) Tax Abatement Compliance

Ms. Smith distributed spreadsheets detailing the City's real property tax abatements and personal property tax abatements. She reviewed the real property tax abatements. She stated three recipients have requested a waiver of non-compliance, and resolutions for the waivers are on the Council agenda. She reviewed the personal property tax abatements. She noted Universal Blower-Pac did not submit forms for either abatement and did not respond when she contacted them. Mr. Murray stated a requirement for compliance regarding real and personal property tax abatements is submission of state form CF-1 each year. He stated in the past, CF-1 forms were signed by the chair of the Economic Development Council Committee, but in order to be more transparent, the information is being presented to the full Council. He commended Ms. Smith for her work tracking the tax abatements.

d) Q2 – 2021 Update of Department Activities

- Business Development

Mr. Murray displayed a PowerPoint presentation. He reviewed his department's work in business development in the second quarter. Mr. Smith asked if a press release was planned. Mr. Murray replied he would like to. Mr. Haberman explained the data has to be collected manually. He stated he is working to produce a "snapshot" report. He distributed a handout of leads tracking data. He stated leads decreased in the second quarter, but that is typical. He stated the most leads are for manufacturing, because Indiana is a manufacturing state. Mr. O'Connor asked if there is a reasonable return on investment for the City to belong to the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce and the Indiana Economic Development Corporation. Mr. Haberman replied he would research the matter.

Mr. O'Connor yielded the chair to Ms. Wiles and left the meeting.

- Real Estate Development

Mr. Murray displayed a map of 141<sup>st</sup> Street from Olio Road to Prairie Baptist Road. He stated the property east of BorgWarner will be dubbed "Innovation Mile". He stated they plan to steer innovation companies to this area. He stated vision for the area should be finished in the next 30 to 60 days. Mr. Haberman stated they are taking a proactive approach and plan to market the land as shovel ready. Mr. Murray pointed out there is potential for residential development just north of the area. Ms. Wiles asked if the City has acquired the land on 141<sup>st</sup> Street. Mr. Murray replied no, but there are only a few property owners. He stated the City's comprehensive plan includes another interchange on I-69, which would open the land from Prairie Baptist Road to Cyntheanne Road for development. Mr. Haberman stated INDOT is aware of the City's interest. Mr. Murray stated the recent investment in infrastructure nearby will aid in marketing the properties.

- Workforce Development

Mr. Haberman stated he has been proactive. He stated a webinar will be held on July 1 for businesses. He stated the new youth employment system will also be covered. He stated effective July 1, schools will no longer issue work permits; employers will be responsible for registering their underage employees online. He stated there is a \$400.00 fine per occurrence of failure to register, so he is trying to increase awareness. He stated registration for a skills boot camp for businesses will open in August for a September event. He stated another boot camp is planned for November. He reviewed a future workforce incentive program that may include relocation grants and veteran attraction. Mr. Murray stated the program could give Noblesville a competitive advantage. Mr. Haberman stated there are incentives at the state level, but not at the local level. He reviewed other upcoming programs.

- Operations

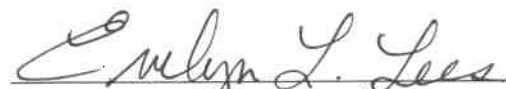
Mr. Murray reviewed the strategic plan, technology and data, processes, and workflows. He stated the TIF proformas will be complete in July. Mr. Smith asked for an update on Panacea. Mr. Murray replied they are committed to moving to Noblesville, and they are working toward that goal.

#### 4. OPEN DISCUSSION

Mr. Murray thanked the committee for their time and input.

#### 5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:06 a.m.

  
EVELYN L. LEES, CITY CLERK

  
GREG O'CONNOR, COMMITTEE CHAIR