

**Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce**  
**Board of Directors Minutes – July 24, 2020**  
**Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce Boardroom/Virtual Go to Meeting**

**PRESENT:** Pam Bialas, Leslie Blake, Scott Block, Gary Bonick, Trent Gordon, Matt Horist, Jennifer Johnson, Doug McAllister, Scott McKeever, Mary Miller, Ken Pringle, Beth Repta, Kelly Roewer, Catie Schmit, Randy Smith, Mike Wheeland, staff members Bill Eich, Nick Kubiak, Wendy Pratola, Lisa McLaughlin, and Donna Sather and guest Heather Maieritsch. **ABSENT:** Dawn Gilman, Suha Hossain, Randy Leggee, and Tim Urban.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Gary Bonick called the meeting to order at 7:32AM.

**CITY OF CRYSTAL LAKE:** Heather Maieritsch reported the construction project on Crystal Lake Avenue is fully underway. The city will be doing some minor construction downtown as well adding more handicapped accessible parking. 3 new housing development projects are meeting with planning and zoning about coming to Crystal Lake. One near route 31 and Walmart will be a gated upscale luxury rental community. One near Crystal Lake and Main (95 Crystal Lake Avenue). Also, the Crystal Court mixed development. The city has approved the build of Raising Canes which will be on a portion of the old Pauly site. The city still has business transition grants available for \$1000 each to aid businesses in reopening and operating in our current environment.

**CONSENT AGENDA:** Motion to approve minutes and division reports – Ken Pringle, Pam Bialas seconded the motion and motion passed.

**DIVISION REPORTS:** No updates

**FINANCE:** Mary Miller reported on the June financials. The finance committee met on Wednesday. The annual audit/review is coming up and Wendy is preparing the documents we need to complete the audit. We are closing the year at a negative of \$19,000 which is not bad considering the situation with the pandemic. Mary complimented Wendy on doing a great job with the finances. Motion to accept financials by Ken Pringle and seconded by Scott McKeever. Motion passed.

**MEMBERSHIP:** Lisa McLaughlin reported that we have 5 new members and 11 dropped members this month with a retention rate of 98.76%. Our new members Clientwon who is a former member and noticed all the website changes and the affordability of the monthly payment option won him over, Crystal Lake BP needed a registered agent, Lizzy Lou Boutique wanted to connect to the community and is new to the area, Stratus Communications has been watching us for a while and is an active member in McHenry, and Tropical Smoothie Café which used to be in the YMCA and has opened a new location that is freestanding and she is a former member also that noticed the activity and changes on the website. What the chamber is doing seems to be working. Doug McAllister motioned to accept the membership and Randy Smith seconded the motion. Motion passed.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Gary reminded everyone to please make your board phone calls and how important it is to communicate with our members especially during this uncertain time.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT:** Bill Eich updated that we got a lot of feedback and participation from the grand reopening of Crystal Lake. We got a lot of great photos that we can use to continue marketing our businesses and let people know we are open. The Herald was a great partner to us and helped a lot with the marketing. We had our first mixer with On Angels Wings. It went was well attended, a lot of fun, and did not exceed the 50-person guideline. Everyone enjoyed being out and of course the pets. We switched to ZOOM and added 3 users so that we can accommodate all our groups. The city reconsidered their decision to not let us hold our Monday Night Football program. We really appreciate the city stepping up and realizing that it is a major fundraiser for us. We are not sure how the football season will look yet so we are still in a holding pattern for now. The program will be done online this year as opposed to a book format with advertising done digitally. There will be weekly emails with the grid and the advertising around the grid. People will be able to purchase the entire season and also weekly games. They can still be given as gifts. The only costs will be a small printing

cost for the stubs to fill out. If the NFL season does not happen then we can use another sport or event. One suggestion from Ken would be to use the NFL 2k fantasy football game via x-box so there would still be a game and scores. Gary, Ken and Mike Wheeland will help with Monday Night Football.

The City is recognizing the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Chamber on September 1, 2020. Space will be limited.

The Chamber is gathering bio information to build a better information page about our board and all the great work you do here and in the community. We are also working on a bio list for ambassadors. Please send them to Donna.

We are working on the virtual expo.

We have been evaluating our dues and benefits for the last few months. We are recommending a change in dues structure and benefits. We feel that even though we are in a pandemic, this is still the time to make the changes because the changes are designed to create more value for our members that are less events driven. Bill went through the documents with the board briefly. Scott Block likes the consolidation. Jennifer Johnson asked if there were any focus groups or polling from our membership. We have not done a broad polling but have talked to cross sections of members. Wendy did a broad comparison to our area chambers and we are one of the last ones to update. Our proposed changes would bring us up to the levels of the chambers around us. Lisa mentioned that businesses tend to be either community/mission driven or marketing driven and have different needs. We are trying to make structure to give tangible better basic benefits to all members which should create a better value and in turn more referrals and retention. The two main reasons for drops are either financial or they don't see the value. We are trying to create value as well as continuing to make membership affordable. Jennifer asked if sponsorships will still be available to businesses and not all wrapped into the higher levels? Bill said yes there will still be sponsorships available. We are trying to minimize the nickel and diming, offer exclusivity, and balance that with sponsorship opportunities. Scott recommended a short survey to the membership regarding the proposed changes. Gary proposed a 2-week time period to review the documents and vote on them and to send out a short survey to the membership.

Jennifer asked how it will be implemented. Bill said there would be messaging out to the membership initially and then individual contact at each member's renewal time.

There will be more benefits added to each level with the exception of platinum where we are removing a few things that businesses seemed not to use. Members will have the opportunity to choose their level based on their needs.

We will be evaluating barter memberships on a one at a time basis.

Lisa has heard from members that they appreciated having things grouped together with one price with less nickel and diming. We are going to focus on retention and meeting with our members to go through the restructuring and educate our members and help them find the level that works for them. Board members commented that the chamber staff did a great job with the restructuring.

#### **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

We had a great Out to Lunch event last week with a picnic in the park catered by Outback Steakhouse.

Regarding mixers, Express Employment has cancelled due to the situation.

The PICA presentation to Breaking Bread will be on the 29<sup>th</sup> at 4pm in the Crystal Lake Location

Tomorrow (July 25) will be our community recycling day which is free from 9AM to 1PM. Donna's son will be there to help unload. You do not have to be a resident, and there is no limit. We will have AMS Storage and Shred there to take shredding, the Crystal Lake Police will be accepting prescription drugs, and Prairieland will be accepting electronics.

Lizzy Lou will be having a ribbon cutting on July 30, 2020 at 4pm. Our first post quarantine ribbon cutting

Golf Classic is August 10 and will have about 75 golfers.

Women empowering Women will be meeting on August 4, 2020 at Veterans Acres Park.

#### **HEARD AROUND TOWN:**

1776 had a temporary closing for Covid

**ADJOURN:** The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Doug McAllister and seconded by Ken Pringle. Motion passed.