

Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce
Board of Directors Minutes – November 20, 2020 7:30am
Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce Boardroom/Virtual Go to Meeting

PRESENT: Pam Bilas, Leslie Blake, Scott Block, Gary Bonick, Stacy Brown, Dawn Gilman, Trent Gordon, Suha Hossain, Jennifer Johnson, Randy Leggee, Doug McAllister, Scott McKeever, Kelly Roewer, Randy Smith, Mike Wheeland and staff members Bill Eich, Donna Sather, Nick Kubiak, Wendy Pratola, Lisa McLaughlin and guest Heather Maieritsch.

ABSENT: Matt Horist, Mary Miller, Ken Pringle, Beth Repta, Catie Schmit, and Tim Urban

CALL TO ORDER: Gary Bonick called the meeting to order at 7:31 AM

CITY OF CRYSTAL LAKE: Heather Maieritsch reported that the city is offering some great incentive programs please help get the word out. The city council expanded the transition grant for \$1000. This is ongoing for any sales tax generating business. Cannot have over \$4,000,000 in sales. The other program is a Grant the city applied for \$600,000 and the city added an additional \$150,000 so there are a total of \$750,000 of funds available for tax generating businesses in Crystal Lake that have experienced lost revenue. The grant is based on the loss and can be \$5000 up to \$15,000. This is a great program with a more substantial impact for businesses that have experienced a loss. Applications are due December 4. There have been 22 applications turned in so far. Also Comed contacted the city and they have a new financial assistance program for small businesses. The city paid for advertising for the Northwest Herald for shop and dine local campaign. They have curbside pickup signs for businesses to use also. They are allowing these signs on sidewalks and on easements where they might not normally be allowed. They are pushing IShop Local and Small Business Saturday. A-Z and JC Licht have opened in downtown Crystal Lake and Jude's Gin Bar and Rice Kitchen will be opening soon. Crawfish Oyster Bar will be opening in spring. Housing and Residential permits have been really busy which is good. The newest development will be going in near Walmart and will be luxury rentals.

CONSENT AGENDA: Wendy Noted Stacy Brown was in attendance last month. Motion to approve minutes by Dawn Gilman, Randy Smith seconded the motion and motion passed.

DIVISION REPORTS: Jennifer Johnson reported that the Annual Board and Ambassador Holiday Luncheon will be happening via Zoom. Friday December 11, 2020 from 11:30am to 1pm. There will be an email to register and a list of restaurants that donate to the food pantry as well as a link to donate to the food pantry directly. Please have fun and create a unique backdrop with a picture. We will have some fun and enjoy lunch together.

FINANCE: Wendy reported on Finances in place of Mary Miller who was absent. We are down a bit compared to last year on renewals. Normally we would be seeing early registrations for EXPO happening right now but we have elected to push early registration to January and will be hosting the event outdoors due to the pandemic. So, we will not see registration revenues start to come in until after the first of the year. As we wind down to the end of the year the revenue tends to be lower due to less new members joining at the end of the year, historically. This year is trending the same way. We are not doing any activities right now but we are not too far down from our budget and we tried to account for changes due to the pandemic. We are keeping the costs in line compared to the revenue. If you look at the comparison with last year, however, you can really see the difference in revenue from the events we are not having. We expect to see a jump in revenue in January as a majority of our enhanced memberships renew at that time. No Questions or Comments. Motion to accept financials by Scott Block and seconded by Trent Gordon - Motion passed.

MEMBERSHIP: Lisa McLaughlin reported that we have 14 dropped members and 7 new members with a retention rate of 88.76%. Our new members are: Actin Care Groups which is a small business health provider group referral from CLR Benefits. Extreme Air Duct and Dryer Vent Cleaning Co. is a duct and vent cleaning company. J Alek Salon was a referral from Heather at the city. They are located on the corner down from Georgio's. Lanie's accounting was a referral from Sue Dobbe. She is a certified accountant. Nana's New York Deli was also referred by the city of Crystal Lake and has great sandwiches and they are very nice. They are near Hobby Lobby. They hosted our out to lunch. Strada Salon and Spa finally joined they are Lisa's salon and she has been chasing them for a year. Veritas IT Solutions is a subsidiary of Nick Patel who owns Indian Spices and Lucky Penny's. They do computer software and internet services as well as digital advertising and marketing. Wendy asked if anyone knows any of the drop list please reach out to them. Motion to accept membership by Pam Bilas, seconded by Kelly Roewer. Motion passed. Wendy There were no questions or comments regarding the drop list. Gary noted that the staff has worked hard to save these folks and he appreciates all the hard work.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Gary reminded everyone to please make your board phone calls and how important it is to communicate with our members and let them know about the city grants and resources.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Bill Eich reported that Leaders in Action will be Feb 4 through March 18 and ending with a panel discussion. State of the Community will be February 5 at D'andrea Banquet and if that cannot happen then we will have it virtually and send out the booklets. We had a PICA award at Snap On and we had a few ribbon cuttings. We are doing an adopt a restaurant marketing push. The Expo is currently scheduled for April 3. We may move it outside and move it to a later spring date to use either MCC or Crystal Lake south parking lots. Plan C would be at the McCormick Park here at the chamber. We may see if we can arrange a vaccine clinic in conjunction with the EXPO at the Advocate booth. We are working with professional and workforce development with the consortium and the job board as well as MCC to help guide people into the areas where there are jobs and needs. Randy noted that there was a comment from the school that they are trying to get the parents involved as well. The schools are actively engaged. There will be a section of the MCC science building showcasing local manufacturers. It will be exploratory and a good way for kids to see what options are out there. MCC is also looking at their healthcare programs and specialty needs for the area and trying to create a feeder program like they are with the manufacturing. The Shah center is boosting it's professional development to provide accreditation or certification for some of the professional development courses and will be given at a discount to chamber members. We will be launching our website and database December 1. Everything will look different. There will be some new areas to the website and it should be easier for everyone to navigate and provide more benefits for the members. There will be new opportunities for connections and to market your business. We will have a separate domain – explorecrystallake.com- which will be another outlet to our directory and should provide community links for the city, schools, parks, and library and calendars as well a map to make it more of a consumer friendly one stop page. Businesses are getting basically your own page and the ability to provide photos, videos, and menus. We are trying to make it no more than 3 clicks for a consumer to find you. It will be mobile friendly as well. The community guide will be coming out the end of March. Update you information if you need to asap. Community Harvest is going on so if you have an opportunity please give.

ITEMS FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION: none

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Donna noted that we are trying to get a few more ribbon cuttings. We are not having any mixers until April right now. There is a Maximize your Membership on December 3rd and might be useful for the new program and site. A-Z Interiors Ribbon Cutting December 2nd. Bill asked if anyone has the opportunity please come to the ribbon cuttings we could use some more friendly faces. If you need reminders sign up for our texting program.

HEARD AROUND TOWN: Lisa was approached by Clicks Web Design to help do a shop local video for the downtown Crystal Lake area. Thank you Scott for letting the WEW group use the room at the Mental Heath Board building last month. We have 40 members meeting this month for the auction where we raise money for Home of The Sparrow. Anyone is welcome. It is a live auction and there are some great items. We are accepting donations and also taking registrations. We encourage you to sign up for Maximize your membership. Scott Block wanted to share that the county and EDC are starting a pretty major campaign for shop local as well. The local mercantile is trying to start an ecommerce site as well that would be free to local businesses that do not have an online presence. Scott McKeever shared that money donated to the food pantry is a great value because every dollar given is worth 8 dollars at the greater Chicago area food depository and other outlets. 99.7% of funds go directly to purchase food to feed our neighbors. Cash contributions have a tremendous effect.

Lisa asked for help getting the word out to members that we have other members that can help them get an online presence for very inexpensive. We are also doing a free 1/8 page ad in the magazine for coupons or whatever the business wants to provide. Please submit to the chamber.

ADJOURN: The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Pam Bilas and seconded by Kelly Roewer. Motion passed. Happy Thanksgiving all!