

Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce
Board of Directors Minutes – April 23, 2021 7:30am
Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce Boardroom/Virtual Zoom

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

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

CITY OF CRYSTAL LAKE: Heather Maieritsch reported that a new mixed-use development is in the planning stages for the Crystal Court property where the Walmart used to be. It will be a combination of retail, restaurant space, entertainment, and housing. The housing could be a combination of luxury apartments, townhomes, senior living or possibly a hotel. The housing would overlook 3 oaks recreation area with the retail towards the front. The city has some new developments are opening soon. Double Take Consignment will be open at the end of the month. Cornerstone bank is moving to the space that was Chase Bank in front of the Walmart and will be opening next month. Moontime BBQ is opening next month, and McAlister's Deli just received their permit. Raising Cane's is applying for their permit as well. The city is working with area restaurants to have permanent outdoor dining solutions. The city also added picnic tables to depot park in the center of downtown to accommodate carry out diners who want to enjoy a meal outdoors. The city council approved the new budget and will contain funds to market for businesses to come to Crystal Lake. There may also be some more economic development grants coming out for new businesses or expanding businesses. Randy asked about construction on McHenry Avenue and route 14. Heather will get back to Randy. Gary congratulated Haig on his election.

MAYORS REPORT: Haig spoke about the mixed development for Crystal Court. He feels it is going to be the right project in the right place at the right time. The developers are strong financially and have really done some great quality developments in the past. Haig is thrilled. The project is fluid at this point and there are a lot of possibilities for what might go there.

CONSENT AGENDA: Please note that at the March Meeting Mary Miller was present but not listed on the minutes. Motion to accept by Doug McAllister, seconded by Randy Smith, and motion passed

DIVISION REPORTS: Jennifer Johnson reported that the Ambassadors met April 10, 2021 to have a strategic discussion on how to move forward, evolve, and remain relevant. Bob Blazier attended, and a great discussion was had on the history of the ambassadors and how to move forward. Ways to be a connection between the community and the chamber and support development in the community were discussed. More discussion will be happening in the next meeting in May. There are some ambassadors that are retiring that could be a great resource for mentorship for businesses.

FINANCE: Mary Reported on the finances. Finance committee met on Wednesday and started discussions on budget. Bill and Wendy put together a preliminary budget that the finance committee is hoping to present to the Board at the May meeting to review and then be voted on then at the subsequent June meeting. Looking at the Statement of Financial Position, the Chamber continues to be in a very good position. The PPP has really helped keep our cash strong. Our cash is up about 20,000 because of the PPP money. Looking at the Statement of Activities, actual versus budget we are doing pretty good there as well. The staff is doing a great job of managing the finances we are only down about \$15,000 which is great for a pandemic and our net loss is only about \$5200.00. Motion to accept Financials by Tim Urban. Trent Gordon seconded the motion and motion passed.

MEMBERSHIP: Lisa McLaughlin reported that we have 7 new members and 13 dropped members with a retention rate of 80.11%. New members are as follows: The Health Genius, which was a referral from Stacy Brown. Thanks to Stacy. Helmer Septic is looking for exposure and connections. The Rita Corporation was a former client and is excited for Women Empowering Women and is sending 5 women to the meeting next month. She is also excited for the community connections and really sees the value in the membership. Hampton, Lenzeni and Renwick just opened a new office and is looking for exposure and community connection. They have another office in Elgin. The neighborhood butcher shop just opened in Coventry Plaza a few weeks ago and has great food and prices. Donna and Lisa did some dual language calls in that area. Aurora University rejoined with their new budget. Piano Trends joined and is very active in the community and on the board of the Raue Center as well. They are excited to be in EXPO. Motion to accept membership by Dawn Gilman, seconded by Stacy Brown and motion passed. We are caught up on drops, and there are less than there were, but members are still struggling. Wendy reported that we have 5 suspended members that have not been able to open (Old Town Hall, The MAC, Urban Air, Sky High Volleyball, and Crystal Icehouse) that we are holding. Otherwise, the 90-day list is much lower. It is under 10 as opposed to 30+ in previous months, and they are getting a lot of communication from us. Members are getting messaging 30 days prior to their anniversary, on their anniversary, 30 days, 60 days, and 90 days before they are dropped. The 60 and 90 they get by email as well as US Mail and are also getting phone calls and/or visits at the 90-day mark. We are expecting the bridge phase and further

reopening will help, but Lisa said that she is still seeing a lot of places that are not quite open yet. We are cautiously optimistic. Jennifer Johnson noted that the most concerning is people who are just not paying or not giving a reason why they are dropping. The worry is that they are dropping because they do not see the value. The board discussed that people like 21st Century Game film who are truly struggling are ones we should be able to help somehow. Chamber staff noted that the chamber has been trying to be flexible with payments and that we check to see if they have lowered their staffing levels and we lower their membership appropriately to make things as affordable as possible. We try to help and be flexible but if they are not paying at all and not communicating with us then there is only so much that we can do. Motion to accept membership by Dawn Gilman, second by Stacy Brown. Motion carried. Scott Block mentioned that a membership opportunity might be to reach to mental health professionals and have a forum or offer marketing with this group because there has been a sharp decline in this industry. Ken mentioned that there are a lot of questions regarding the PPP loans and that now might be a good time to offer some financial classes or seminars to help the small businesses navigate the tax and PPP questions. Lisa reported that Donna had a Business Builder event recently that directly spoke to this and we could look at doing this at a larger level. Mary Miller agreed and noted that the Employee Retention credit is a great way to get some money back and most businesses do not know about it. Ken felt there are many small businesses that could really benefit from this knowledge. Jennifer agrees this would be a good initiative. There may be other resources we can share from the city as well. Heather confirmed that the city has a resource page with many ways to help businesses. The Shah Center is working on streamlining their offerings and are up and running as well. Bill mentioned that MCC is working on programs and classes as well and the chamber will work on getting the information to the people.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Please make the calls on the Board call list and engage our members. Bill has been with us for a year, and we are glad he is here and put us on solid ground and got us moving forward. Congratulations to Bill. The board search committee is meeting Tuesday at 10AM to discuss nominations for the board positions. The committee is chaired by Matt and is comprised of Dawn and Scott from the Board and Josh Helm and Mike Splitt from the membership at large and they will present, by email, a list of members to be voted in for next year. Be on the lookout for this coming soon. After the board votes we will present it for general election by the membership. Please contact Matt if you have any nominations.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Bill Eich reported that the community guides were distributed the end of march and Thanks to Donna and the Herald staff for getting it all together. They were distributed by the Herald and we have them available in the Chamber as well. It was a bit of a struggle getting a hold of people initially, but Mark Solak was able to reach many people. The ambassadors retreat went well, and it was a great way for them to define their role and determine what their place in the chamber and community will be going forward. Thank you for the response to the advocacy request. The community clean up last weekend was successful. The document shredding and drug take back was almost as much as last year and all the parks were cleaned. Thanks to the YP's and other groups that really stepped up. We had to cancel the mixer last week due to the cold snap. It was too cold to be outdoors, and we cannot host an indoor mixer yet. We have a Cinco De Mayo mixer coming up, Randy's PICA presentation, and the golf league starting up. The EXPO is coming up! The event will be held outdoors on May 22 in the Office Max Home Depot Campus. We will be hosting a Community Outreach Entertainment Tent with performances from the Strikers, the Crystal Lake Central Madrigals, Voices in Harmony, Piano Trends, and others. We will also have the Mercy MammoMobile, On Angels Wings Pet Adoptions, and the City of Crystal Lake Police and Fire vehicles. It is the first time doing it outdoors and it will be interesting. We might continue this as an outdoor event going forward. We are planning our Golf Outing as well as the July 4th parade. We are excited to be planning and moving forward. We do not have a date for the Annual Dinner yet, but they are looking at July at the Dole.

ITEMS FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION: None

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Donna reported that at community clean-up we collected 120lbs of prescription drugs which was the same amount that we collected last July, which is quite a bit. AMS Store and Shred reported that we collected 18 totes weighing 3,910 lbs. Douglas Automotive collected 5 garden tractor batteries, 2 small trailer tires and 7 gallons of used oil. Thank you to Douglas Automotive. WE had a corporate challenge winner - First Institute – and we will present them with a gift card next week. The Multi Chamber scramble was postponed. We have two ribbon cuttings next week, Double Take Consignment and Shepherd Premier. We will also have the PICA presentation for Randy Legee the following week. Expo is moving along, and we have secured generators for the event.

HEARD AROUND TOWN: Heather reported about the work on McHenry Avenue and 14. It will be a water main project. It will be done at night so it should not disrupt traffic and will be done by the beginning of July. Hammortree Financial is celebrating their 35-year Anniversary at the Quarry on June 17th from 5-8pm. Stop by there will be food and beverages! Ken sent an email looking to get together a table for the GEMS luncheon. Let Ken know if you want to join the table. Friday afternoon club will be meeting May 7 4pm.

ADJOURN: The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 on a motion by Doug McAllister and Seconded by Randy Smith. Motion passed. Next Meeting will be May 28, 2021 at 7:30am.