

**Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce**  
**Board of Directors Minutes – April 22, 2022, 7:30am**  
**Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce Boardroom/Virtual Zoom**

**PRESENT:** Eric Beier, Gary Bonick, Stacy Brown, Pierre Garcia, Trent Gordon (Zoom), Matt Horist (Zoom), Suha Hossain (Zoom), Josh Howell, Cameron Hubbard, Scott McKeever, Kathy Powell, Ken Pringle, Kelly Roewer (Zoom), Catie Schmit, Tim Urban (Zoom), Mike Wheeland, and staff members Bill Eich, Wendy Pratola, Nick Kubiak, Kristin Parkin, and guests Heather Maieritsch and Haig Haleblian.

**ABSENT:** Leslie Blake, Dawn Gilman, Randy Smith

**CALL TO ORDER:** 7:35 AM by Ken Pringle. Meeting will be run by Ken in Randy's absence.

**CITY OF CRYSTAL LAKE/MAYORS REPORT:** Heather wanted to give a recap from Crystal Lake. She reported that as things are normalizing that the Illinois Department of Revenue reported that Crystal Lake had 1.3 billion in retail sales last year so that is amazing to hear and see. It will help the growth and attraction to the Crystal Lake market. The Courtyards on Congress is a new 93-unit development that just recently went through planning and zoning and is slated to begin construction later this year. The Route 14 project by IDOT will be starting this coming Monday. Retail Vacancy rates 12-month average are at 3.5 percent which is really low actually. Crystal Lake average is 2.98 which is even farther below the average. Industrial average is 5.01 and Crystal Lake's is 4.57. Office Vacancy is 9.2 and Crystal Lake's is 8.93. It is good to see that Crystal Lake consistently falls below the vacancy averages. Crystal Lake is going to work hard to fill those vacancies in the coming months. They are finding also that businesses are moving around within the market and Crystal Lake is working hard to make sure that those businesses choose to stay within the Crystal Lake Market. Haig reported that He attended the Edge fitness open house, and it is an incredible facility. The owners reported it was the best opening they had in the Midwest and second best opening in the entire company for attracting new members. Raising Cain's reported similarly that it was one of the best openings they had nationwide. Haig heard this week that the City's bond rating was raised to Triple A, which was the best news he has heard lately! This was worked on for quite some time and that rating is the highest rating you can receive. It is an incredible honor and means we can borrow at the lowest rates available. Haig is so proud of staff and counsel. Haig feels all involved are really working hard and working in the same direction together, have no hidden agendas, and work together as a team to propel Crystal Lake forward and he is so proud of the team. Getting that rating was a huge honor.

**CONSENT AGENDA:** Motion to accept by Gary Bonick, seconded by Scott McKeever, and motion carried.

**DIVISION REPORTS:** Kathy Powell reported that The Ambassadors hope everyone can join us for the Annual Dinner on May 19<sup>th</sup>. Jim Haisler will speak from the Heartland Realtor Group to speak on housing and development in the Crystal Lake area, which should be interesting. Our Business of the year, Member of the year, and presidential awards will be given out at the dinner. Nominations are still being accepted for those awards. The Ambassadors had Brian Packard from Prairie Ridge High School come out and speak about the Incubator Program, which was very interesting. If you have not had an opportunity to participate in the program and watch the kids present their business ideas, it is really neat. Many Ambassadors have participated in the program. The Ambassadors have been seeking candidates to join the Ambassador group, and they have brought in three recently, but they are looking for 2-3 more.

**FINANCE:** Matt presented the financial reports. Cash position continues to be strong on our statement of financial position. Statement of Activities shows that we are still working through the change in dues as well as the changes in dates of events over the last two years. It is going to be difficult to compare year to year because of this. At the change of this fiscal year the dues will be all straightened out, but the events will still be weird for another year. Compared to the budget we are doing really well, so we did an excellent job with last year's budget. Motion to accept the financials by Scott McKeever and Seconded by Cameron Hubbard.

Matt reported that the finance committee met this past Wednesday to go over and create the budget for the upcoming fiscal year. Thanks to the members of the committee and to Wendy for all their hard work putting the budget together. The budget the board has in front of them, looking at the three columns with last year's budget, YTD numbers, and next year's proposed budget. We are budgeting for stable revenue. Wendy let the board know that we are budgeting of sixty dropped members over the next year which equates to five per month. That is based of pre-covid averages from 2017-2018-2019. We are budgeting for 115 new members which equates to eight new members per month with a pop of extra memberships at 15 per month for the month during Chamber Week and the month during the Community Guide. Also based off of pre-covid averages. We are budgeting to gain 3 Elevates and 2 Engages. We currently have four at the Engage level with twelve total available. The renewals and new members are broken out separately. We are also budgeting for a twenty-five dollar increase to the Connect levels for the coming year with small going to \$325, medium going to \$450 and large going to \$650 effective in July. Two years ago, we reduced the number of levels and combined them from eight levels to three levels in the restructuring process. During that time many levels went down in price, a few went up. The \$25 increase would amount to \$16,000 in additional operating revenue for the Chamber. With the increase in expenses coming with gas and electricity and other inflationary items the increase will be necessary. The finance committee does not feel the increase is very much increase but will really help the chamber. The chamber will make sure we are providing extra messaging and marketing to make sure we are showing

that we are providing the value for the price. Stacy asked about other Chambers pricing and value. Bill indicated that we do provide more value for our price. Everyone will have 30 days to review the budget and bring questions to the next meeting and vote. Kathy asked about the increase on the parade budget. Wendy let her know that the acts have increased their honorarium prices. Kristin let the board know that she is actually having more acts this year by removing one overpriced act.

**MEMBERSHIP:** Bill Eich reported that Lisa McLaughlin resigned her position and joined a sustainable energy company in Chicago. We are looking for a replacement. We have five candidates currently and will be taking our time to find the right person. Staff is all working to cover the role right now. We had five new members. Four from staff and one from Lisa. We had six drops. We lost Bull Valley because they kept asking to do golf and members in motion events, but their prices were just too high. Toast Masters dissolved. We have significantly reduced our 60- and 90-days past due which is very good. New Members are Bickford Home Health, CEO studios, Huntington National Bank, Miranda Alt rejoined, and Weer Insurance. Our retention percentage is still high. Ken would like a note when a new member is a rejoin. Kathy wanted to know how long we carry them before we drop them. Bill let the board know it is 90 days. Wendy let the board know that monthly paying members need to give a 30-day notice if they want to drop their monthly payments. Electronic Messaging goes out a month before their renewal with reminders of the benefits they get as a member as well as the benefits they have already received over the past year. Then the month of renewal they get a letter, the day of their anniversary, then 30 days past due, 60 days past due, and finally a 90 day drop letter. Motion to accept membership by Mike Wheeland and seconded by Stacy Brown. Motion carried.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Everyone has the call list in front of them. Does anyone need or want a script to make these calls? Kathy offered to send around the Ambassador call script. Ken feels our message needs to be unified right now. One script would be helpful. Bill let the Board know that we provide the primary contact on the call list. If you find a contact has changed, please let us know so we can update the records. Please make the calls or send emails.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT:** Bill Eich reported that the community guides are in front of you all. They are going out in the mail this coming week. The community guide has changed a lot. We changed the format to make it easier to read and find stuff and really highlights the businesses by segments. It combines aspects of the old shopping and dining guide with the community guide. It turned out well. There are over one hundred adds from members in the guide. We get 8-8500 in commission payments from Shaw for the sales of those adds. If you want some copies for your office, please let us know.

GEMS went really well yesterday. We celebrated four of our community leaders and had record attendance of 139 seats purchased and 135 attended. It is nice to see these events being so well attended. We had the same thing at State of the Community with record attendance. A moment of silence for D'Andrea. We have been working with the Holiday inn to host future events since we are having such good attendance and need larger spaces. Members in Motion and State of the Community will both be held there. We have been working with our Inspire member, Home State Bank, with four pay it forward memberships to not for profit organizations in our community. It is a terrific way for them to give back to the community and help a NFP, and both entities can market that partnership over the coming year. The Annual Dinner is coming up at the Dole on May 19, 2022. We have four food vendors which will be providing both plated and food station items. The room will be configured differently this year with the awards happening in the center of the room which should be better for everyone. It is nice to have our local restaurants being represented. The golf league starts May 5. Golf Classic sponsorships have been offered to last year's sponsors for first right of refusal and many of the sponsorships have been taken so far. We are offering the network groups a designated hole this year to give them an opportunity to grow their groups. It will make the event even more fun having activities at a lot of the holes. There are a number of FB pages in Crystal Lake, and we are reaching out to them to help them with all the referrals people ask for. Most of the Chambers in the area have added the term "greater area" to their names. Our official name in the State of Illinois includes Greater Area already so we are considering starting to use that to acknowledge that we do serve a greater area than just Crystal Lake. Ken wanted everyone to know that we will still be having a springboard, but we needed to get our house in order first. Ken would like everyone to think about if they know anyone who may benefit from the chamber or if we could form a barter partnership with anyone. Ken asked the board to be influencers and seek out influencers. Ken feels we are facing a challenging time. We need to challenge each other to find ways to get members to join and to grow our membership.

**ITEMS FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION:** Gary informed the Board that the Board Member Nomination Committee is nominating Katie O'Neill of Heritage Title, Lisa Karlov of Copper Bottom who is on Finance committee already, and Samantha Wagner from Minuteman Press to the Board of Directors. Motion to accept board member nominations by Scott McKeever and seconded by Eric Beier. A ballot will be sent to the full membership and the results will be given at the next meeting.

**UPCOMING EVENTS:** Kristin reported next Thursday that we have two ribbon cuttings. Chick Fil A at 10 am will be providing food. 4pm is Huntington Bank in North Barrington. It is far but he is a great guy, and they have a lot of good financial events coming up and he would like to have help spreading the word on the events. May 3<sup>rd</sup> the Referral Network is hosting a mixer/membership drive at Crystal Lake Brewing. First fifty people get a free drink ticket. Two weeks later the American Legion group mixer will be at Crystal Lake Brewing also on May 17 from 5-7pm. May 19<sup>th</sup> is our Annual Award dinner which Bill already discussed.

Some other events happening around town by members are April 30<sup>th</sup> is the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of On Angels Wings Fur Ball at Hickory Hall. Tickets are \$75. May 1 is Bob Blazier's run for the Arts. May 6<sup>th</sup> is Purrfect Cat Rescue Kitty Bingo. Home of the Sparrow anniversary gala is May 21<sup>st</sup>. Register by May 10. Gary Lang multi chamber mixer will be Tuesday May 24<sup>th</sup>. Community Clean Up will be this Saturday here at the Chamber and in the community parks as well as Haig's Car's and Coffee which will be held at the metro lot. April 25<sup>th</sup> is national hug a plumber day. The Farmer's Market will be at the Dole and there are a lot of great concerts coming up at the Raue. WEW has a speaker coming from Chattergirls which is a program to empower young women and girls. She is nationally known and has been on NBC. She is a speaker and author. Should be a great event. EXPO registration will be opening May 1. The event will be October 1 at Three Oaks Recreation area with a rain date of October 6.

**HEARD AROUND TOWN** – Nooners group is having a kickoff to summer mixer here on June 7. Crystal Lake Social will be bringing her mobile bar trailer. Ken suggested everyone sign up to the golf league. It is not real serious and is a lot of fun. \$50 registration and \$25 for each round of golf and runs till September. Last week on NBC news Crystal Lake was named the most affordable city in the US to live in based on having greatest amenities, services, and education for the price. Crystal Lake got our first electronic car charging station at the metro lot. The City is under contract for the purchase of the downtown Metro Station with the intention to purchase in one year.

**ADJOURN:** The meeting adjourned at 8:38 am on a motion by Gary Bonick and seconded by Stacy Brown. Motion passed.