

Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce
Board of Directors Minutes – June 24, 2022 7:30am
Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce Boardroom/Virtual Zoom

PRESENT: Eric Beier, Leslie Blake, Gary Bonick, Stacy Brown, Pierre Garcia, Dawn Gilman, Matt Horist, Suha Hossain (Zoom), Scott McKeever, Kathy Powell, Ken Pringle, Catie Schmit, Randy Smith, Tim Urban, Mike Wheeland, and staff members Bill Eich, Wendy Pratola, Nick Kubiak, Kristin Parkin, and guests Heather Maieritsch and Haig Haleblan.

ABSENT: Trent Gordon, Cameron Hubbard, Josh Howell, Kelly Roewer

CALL TO ORDER: 7:32 AM by Randy Smith

CITY OF CRYSTAL LAKE/MAYORS REPORT: Heather reported construction is making Northwest highway a mess right now but come fall it will be much better. If you hear anyone struggling because of this, please put them in touch with Heather and she will try to help them. Crystal Lake is seeing a lot of the vacancies around town filling up lately which is exciting. Our retail corridor is really filling up. We are going to see another manufacturer coming to town also called Composites One going in off Mitchell court which will be opening spring of 2023 and create new jobs. Tasty Bistro opened Monday and the interior is completely transformed and they did a nice job. There are also two new salons that opened on NW Highway, Metro Staff on Virginia, and lightning defense academy on NW Highway. Coming soon, Mario's Cart will be opening in front of Walmart, Casey's is opening on NW Hwy, Crystal Lake Junction which is a Bourbon and Beer Bar opening downtown on Railroad Street, BZ Bar will be going into the bubble tea place, Encore Crystal Lake Assisted Living, Summer Moon Coffee Shop going in off of COG Circle, Valvoline Oil on NW Highway, Dollar Tree is opening a second store in the Twin Ponds Shopping Plaza by Office Max, and Banfield Pet Hospital going in the former Helzberg Diamonds spot, and Ollie's Bargain Basement going into the former HH Gregg. We also have interest from a fitness company looking at a 30,000ft space, a trendy cookie company looking at a space by Freddie's and McAllister's Deli, and a small popular fitness company is looking at the former American Bagel space. By next month Heather should have more information about some of those. 95 Crystal Lake Avenue is wrapping up some EPA things and then they should begin construction. Redwood is also moving forward and have submitted their plans to the city. Some other housing providers are interested as well. Mr. A's Beef property was sold and closed last week, and they are planning a fun new concept. We do not have restrictions on what businesses can come into Crystal Lake currently. Haig reported that at the last city council meeting Crystal Court was discussed. At the next meeting they will vote on the redevelopment. They are still working on the commercial component of it. It will be called water's edge. It will have 270 housing units towards the back by the lake and retail on the front side.

CONSENT AGENDA: Motion to accept by Dawn Gilman, seconded by Tim Urban, and motion carried.

DIVISION REPORTS: Dawn had nothing to report. Eric Reported that the Community Clean Up was very successful. The turnout was greater than previous years and the weather was top notch. The parade is next weekend. The parade will be 20 participants more than last year. There are some returning acts like Jesse White Tumblers and some new ones such as a Mariachi Band. A lot of planning with the city and police and safety department goes into the parade and festival. They are closing Country Club Road around the fest this year which is good. We need parade marshals! We could use one banner carrier, one water station attendant, and a few marshals. You get a free tee-shirt and water bottle if you sign up. Tim let the board know that Jeff Lord will be taking over for Tim as of the next board meeting. Randy and Ken thanked Tim.

FINANCE: Matt presented the financial reports. The statement of financial position shows no big change. The statement of Activities shows that the big receivable we were waiting for from advocate has been received. The PPP received was 60,000 and was not in this year. The employee retention credit was not included in this year either. It was put into May of last year. So, our numbers this year do not reflect any government money. As of this month we are operating in the Black. All things considered we can be proud. Next month will show our golf outing and we should be showing a decent profit. Wendy guestimates around 20K profit will come out of the Golf outing. Motion to approve the financials by Leslie Blake and seconded by Dawn Gilman. Motion Carried.

MEMBERSHIP: Bill Eich reported that Drew will be stepping into full time status. The Chamber had a few drops this month. We reached out to each of them. Wendy saved Two Men and a Truck, and they will be coming back next month. We are hoping some of the others we can get back as well. We made some incentive changes to encourage all staff to save members and bring in new members. The new members are as follows: Above and Beyond joined to get connected. Alliance Technology was a referral from Mike Heligons. AWG Health Insurance joined with Drew. Buss ford joined because they wanted to be a parade sponsor. Donna Kurtz is running for office. Kim Martens switched to Emeritus. Chris Pry is a rejoin as he switched companies. TLC Swag joined with Drew, they make promotional items and shirts. The Chamber Foundation and Blue Star Banner were offered complimentary memberships. Drew reported that he has been getting feedback from members that members were not feeling they were getting enough attention. Drew has been visiting members and dropping off candy jars, introducing himself, and forming relationships with our current members

and asking how we can help. He let them know that he is there to help them connect with each other as well. We are rehydrating the optimism. Drew also went on a podcast and hyped up the Chamber. Drew is targeting the dropped members first and hoping to make appointments with them and bring them back. He is hoping to have conversations with them all, bring back the dead, stop the drops, and then add new members to the mix as well. Wendy noted that we had 117 drops in the fiscal year, we onboarded 116 new members and saved 7 so we are ahead of last year by 6. Considering we are coming out of a pandemic, and the hemorrhage of member losses we had been experiencing previously, this is an encouraging sign. We are moving in the right direction. Randy noted that those conversations are important and that they really need to hear from us. Ken suggested a member round table event. Stacy recommended that we need to rebrand our social branding that we come off as old school. Ken would like to know how many of the active members are small, medium, and large businesses. Randy agreed with Stacy and said that we all need to contact people. Ken is going to meet with Harry Samarjan and see what it takes to influence social media. Leslie noted that we should have a standard message, so we are all saying the same thing. Motion to accept the Membership Report by Matt Horist and Seconded by Ken Pringle. Motion Carried.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Randy asked the board to be persistent and keep calling. He reiterated that our communication as a board with the members is so important. Randy feels a unified message is important also.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Bill Eich asked the board to please verify the contact information when they call and let us know if our information needs to be updated. We as a staff are also reaching out to members to update information. We are also looking to grow the member-to-member discount program. Please ask people when you talk to them if they are interested in offering a discount and send that information to us if they do. We want to build this up and keep money flowing locally and try to offset some of the inflation. The personal phone calls and visits are paramount to this. We have a sister site that is consumer based which offers a direct way to search for businesses. We are looking to build this with a B2B and a social services area as well. We are trying to increase awareness and build connections. If someone is interested in using the discount or offering a discount, please ask them to contact the Chamber or email us. The discount page is on the app. The app is active, it is called members plus, and you can download it from a link on the chamber website. It has member deals, events calendars, business directory, and offers to send notifications. We will be pushing out information on how to download the app and use it. We will be sending an eblast about this also. The hope is that we get a lot of participation with the program. We are aiming folks at the website and app, trying to get them to come to the workshop to educate them, and make them aware.

We have two Facebook apps. We have our front facing Chamber community site and then a B2B members only site. Our email list has over 18,000 subscribers. We are reaching more than we ever have before. Our open rate is solid. The Chamber marketing is inexpensive and has a very good reach. Our constant contact list is members only. Nick asked board members to interact with any social media posts you see. If you see us on Facebook or Instagram or any other site, please interact with us with a "like", a comment, or a share and it will please the algorithm gods. Nick posts a lot of photos on Instagram also. Please interact with them. Nick also noted that we are looking into having a podcast setup downstairs that will be available for members and possibly a paid rental for nonmembers which in turn may bring in new members. We can use it to interview our members. Stacy noted that short promo videos will be helpful. Ask people why they are at a mixer. Have a live video from a mixer or ribbon cutting. Stacy does not know why more people do not attend ribbon cuttings they are great little events and a great way to connect with people. When people see the videos and pictures, they will understand what is going on and want to go there. Show the people having fun and talking and enjoying refreshments.

Dawn, Wendy, and Bill reported that the event AFC yesterday was educational and a great event. It was nice to see the D155 interns there as well and knowing that that program is really thriving.

Linked in can be a benefit also with people looking for help. The Chamber can share other's needs. It was noted that the weekly messages could include that if you are looking for people let us know and we will share it.

Nick reiterated please interact with our social media and share photos. Please also leave us a review on Google. Thanks to Gary for the review. We are the biggest Chamber in the county by about 250 businesses and we serve a wide audience. If we have good reviews that will help too. It is very quick and easy to do. Again, our open rate is really good for our marketing. If you hear that a member is not getting our information, please let us know so we can investigate that and try to fix it. Even if all you have is a name.

Tim Urban noted that he just did a review, and it took about 30 seconds.

Bill reported that we have been doing videos at businesses and they have been rewarding and well received. Golf outing is coming up. Every hole will have a contest or sponsor on it practically. We have 90 golfers currently signed up. We are down a little from last year. Ken would like to talk to the committee to discuss the venue for next year and that our price might be too high. Wendy noted that she has had feedback that quite a few folks that would normally attend the Golf Outing are on vacations this year and taking advantage of having the opportunity to go post-pandemic. Bill noted that the Crystal Lake Country Club was the cheapest private club we could get. Ken feels that the event does not need to be at an exclusive place. Dawn let Ken know that the draw is that they cannot normally go there. Wendy let the Board know that the Golf cost has not gone up, only the food cost. Randy suggested possibly having two events. Dawn mentioned having a women's event at Woodstock. Ken would like it noted that he does not think the Country Club is a fun

place to play golf for a golfer like him and that he is concerned that the golf outing did not sell out. Dawn feels the lower numbers are more driven by people taking post pandemic vacations. She does not feel it is the cost. Leslie let them know that their outing is \$1100 for 4.

ITEMS FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION: Randy requested a motion to accept the clarification of the wording on the staff vacation policy regarding the vacation time being accrued and the addition of comp time. Motion to accept the policy Changes by Matt Horist, seconded by Leslie Blake, and motion carries.

Randy requested a vote on the policy changes that clarifies that all groups are equal and makes a kitty that carries forward for WEW group. Motion to accept the policy change by Stacy Brown and seconded by Tim Urban, motion carries.

Randy requested a motion to accept Grace Todd to replace Trent Gordon. Tim Urban spoke on behalf of Grace Todd as did Nick Kubiak. Motion to accept Grace Todd by Tim Urban and seconded by Eric Beier, and motion carried.

Gary suggested a new board member orientation and a mentorship of new board members by existing board members. Randy said set up a separate meeting for an orientation. Stacy will mentor Samantha, Gary will mentor Katie, Mike will mentor Lisa, Ken will mentor Grace. Tim will mentor Jeff Lord. Kathy suggested that anyone that brings in a new board member becomes their mentor.

Nick reported that all new board members that were put on a ballot (Lisa, Katie, and Samantha) to the membership can be accepted. There were only 2 nos' so it is unanimous.

UPCOMING EVENTS: July 8th is the official opening for Tasty Bistro. Also on July 8th is a ribbon cutting and dedication at Countryside for a pick your own bouquet garden at 4pm. The Raue Center school for the arts is doing a ribbon cutting at St. Mary's Episcopal Church at 4:30pm for their arts school. Friday the 15th at 7pm is a ribbon cutting for the little league tournament at Lippold Park at the West Babe Ruth field. The 20th there will be an Out to Lunch at Pub 47. The 23rd is the Cardboard Cup Regatta. The 27th is a Rotary Ribbon Cutting for the pollinator pocket at the nature center. Please sign up to be a parade marshal.

Randy would like to schedule a springboard. It was decided to have it Wednesday, August 31 at 1:30pm with a goal of finishing by 4:30. We should look for a facilitator. Bill will work on a location.

PASSING OF THE GAVEL AND RECOGNITION OF RETIRING DIRECTORS: Randy recognized Dawn for 8 years of service on the board and thanked her for her service. Wendy let Dawn know we will trade her cube for another fun gift. Randy recognized Tim Urban for his years serving as the YP chair on the board and thanked him for his service. Tim was given a Crystal Cub. Randy recognized Kelly Roewer and Trent Gordon who did not attend the meeting. Kathy noted that Kim Martens will be taking over for Kathy as of next month and Wendy gave Kathy Powell a ceremonial Gavel. Randy let the board know that he learned a lot this year and that the year has been challenging but rewarding and that he is looking forward seeing what Ken will do next year. The Board recognized Randy for his service and Wendy presented Randy with a ceremonial gavel.

HEARD AROUND TOWN – Northwestern medicine signed a contract with D155 and will be accepting 16 students in the fall for a CNA program. Randy recognized D155 for really growing their manufacturing, trades, and non-traditional career path programs. Wendy let the board know that In the Heights is going to be at the Hemmens Auditorium July 15-17 and 22-24 and will be a great show.

ADJOURN: The meeting adjourned at 9:10 am on a motion by Gary Bonick and seconded by Eric Beier. Motion passed.

****Please bring your Board of Directors' binders to the next meeting****