

MEETING SUMMARY – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
City of Lake Forest Park
Thursday, January 5, 2006

PRESENT: Rick Bungay, Chair; Phil Sluiter, Marj Ando, Tom Killorin, Gordon Stephenson

ABSENT: Jeff Weissman, Julie Krick, Jeff Snipes

GUEST: Austin Johnson, Lake Forest Park Albertsons

Call to Order

Chair Rick Bungay opened the meeting of the Economic Development Commission meeting at 7:05 p.m. and welcomed Lake Forest Park Albertsons manager Austin Johnson to the meeting.

Review of Meeting Summary

Cmr. Stephenson moved to approve the December 6, 2005 meeting summary as written. Cmr. Ando seconded. The motion to approve carried unanimously.

Discussion

Commissioners expressed their appreciation for Johnson's willingness to visit with them and discussed with him the community's needs regarding its grocery store. Parking issues were discussed along with the potential impact of future businesses. Johnson noted the Paul McCartney event at Third Place Books and the parking and traffic impacts of such events.

Bungay encouraged Johnson to meet with Great Harvest owner Jeff Weissman to learn more about issues affecting mall businesses. He noted that Weissman also serves on the Economic Development Commission and provides valuable insight regarding the business community.

Commissioners discussed the impact of Third Place Books and Commons on the community and noted that citizens have indicated their desire for more upscale and organic choices at the local grocery store. Cmr. Stephenson said that it should be the goal of the businesses to capture as much of the local spending as possible. Discussion followed regarding potential changes in ownership of Albertsons and the shopping center.

Johnson said that Albertsons has determined that 73 percent of the store's customers buy 10 items or less. Cmr. Killorin noted that the commission has learned that \$4 out of \$5 spent by city residents is spent outside of the city and expressed his interest in finding ways to increase local spending.

Commissioners discussed the success of the Farmers' Market in its first year and noted that spending at mall businesses increased on market days also. Killorin said that the commission is interested in making sure that local businesses are aware of what is happening in the community and are informed of the comments of citizens regarding the local businesses. Cmr. Ando noted the importance of a town center to the identity of a community.

Johnson discussed traffic and parking issues and noted his experience exiting the parking lot onto Ballinger Way NE. Bungay discussed challenges to vehicle and pedestrian travel and noted the impacts of a creek and two state highways at the shopping center boundaries.

Commissioners thanked Johnson for his time and encouraged him to contact the commission if he has any questions. Johnson exited the meeting at 8 p.m.

Unfinished Business

Survey Feedback

Bungay noted that accountant and commission staff member Heidi Dunlap-Inglis reported that surveys had been mailed with city business license renewal applications and tax reports, and the number of returns is encouraging. He noted that the responses would be discussed at the February 2 meeting.

Bungay said that Building and Planning Director Steve Bennett would be invited to an upcoming meeting to discuss the commission's findings.

Reports and Communications

January 9 Inaugural Ceremony

Bungay said that the newly elected councilmembers would be sworn in at an inaugural ceremony on January 9, and he said that Cmr. Tom Killorin would serve as Master of Ceremonies for the event.

New Business

Discussion followed regarding businesses at the Town Center, and fewer vacancies were noted. Commissioners expressed interest in the status of the Coco's site and discussed the possibility of meeting with business owners and operators to learn more about their needs. Ando noted that the health of the community is a topic of discussion for interested citizens and said that a vibrant town center contributes to the health of the community.

Meeting Adjourned

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Susan Stine
for Heidi Dunlap-Inglis

Next Meeting: February 2, 2006