

*Note: These minutes are not official until approved by the Economic Development Committee at a subsequent meeting. Please refer to the meeting minutes when these minutes are approved to obtain any changes to these minutes.*

DeKalb County Government  
Sycamore, Illinois

**Economic Development Committee Minutes  
March 1, 2016**

The DeKalb County Economic Development Committee met on Tuesday, March 1, 2016 @ 7:00p.m. in the DeKalb County Administration Building's Conference Room East. Chairman Brown called the meeting to order. Members present were Mr. Faivre, Ms. Leifheit, Ms. Polanco, Mr. Porterfield, Mr. Pietrowski, Jr., and Mr. Whelan. Others present were Mr. Gary Hanson, Paul Miller, Brett Brown, Dan Kenney, Alex Nerad, Denise Weinmann and Rhonda Gillespie.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

It was moved by Mr. Whelan, seconded by Mr. Porterfield, and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes from February 2, 2016.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

It was moved by Mr. Pietrowski, seconded by Mr. Whelan, and it was carried unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments, however, there was a general comment made by Ms. Leifheit. She gave an update on the Friends of Shabbona group. They are now a 401C, obtained their employer I.D. #, have their sales tax exemption, and they have registered with the IRS. This year they painted all of the strips in the parking lot and raised \$2,000 for the spillway, they raised more money for a boat launch ramp; they purchased 935 walleyes for the lake and planted water willows along the shoreline. They have accomplished much in a short period of time with very little resources.

**AMERICA'S BEST COMMUNITIES TEAM UPDATE – MR. BRETT BROWN**

Mr. Brown explained to the committee what the America's Best Communities Competition is. There were 350 communities that started and the City of DeKalb is now one of the 15 towns left in the competition. They hope to make it into the next stage of the competition which would only be 8 towns left. They would need to compete for the next year and hopefully in April of 2017 they would be one of the 3 winners of the competition. They could win anywhere from \$1 million to \$3 million next year. The Center of Governmental Studies helped them with the proposal. #Proudly DeKalb is a branding and marketing mechanism that they are using during this competition. They have a Plan that will include 7 projects (see sheet attached) that they want to see come to fruition throughout this competition.

Ms. Denise Weinmann said that on March 7, 2016 they will be touring 25N in Geneva which is a successful co-working space. They will have about 25 people going on that tour from DeKalb County. This co-working space model will not be incorporated totally in the newly proposed co-working space in DeKalb next year since they don't feel that our community could sustain all of it. They will have a public/private entity in DeKalb. It is a 16,000 square foot building that they are looking at. They would have a partial section used for the co-working space and then rent out the rest of the space. This building will remain on the tax rolls.

March 24, 2016 they will be holding a Town Hall Meeting on the Competition for the Public at the Egyptian Theatre. They will be reviewing the 7 projects that they are proposing for the Plan that was submitted for the America's Best Community Competition.

#### **FOOD HUB UPDATE – MR. DAN KENNEY**

Mr. Dan Kenney, who is in charge of the Food Hub Project, updated the committee on their status. He said that they are currently looking for a location for the Food Hub that would hold vegetables and produce that could be brought into the space from a 50-mile radius. He said that this Food Hub would also have a freezing facility too. He said that the Food Hub would consist of wholesale produce sales. He is doing a feasibility study currently with 50 farmers. He feels that their business plan will be finished by June or July of this year. He hopes that they will be looking at funding for the project by January 2017 and then in full operation by the summer of 2017. He said that a community kitchen for farmers and such will also be part of this project. He said that the building will be near the City of DeKalb's downtown area. The buildings, again, will be leased and will stay on the tax rolls.

Mr. Faivre asked if any poultry or meat would be processed there.

Mr. Kenney said that they are looking into it. He said that there is a need for a food processor.

He then gave a brief update on the Community Gardens. He said that they have raised 65,000 pounds of food. He said that they are trying to get the University Village residents to grow and harvest their own food and then take it to the Farmers Market to make money. He said that they are looking into a community-owned grocery store that could open up along Annie Glidden Road.

#### **ART, CULTURAL, ENTERTAINMENT CORRIDOR (A.C.E.) – MR. ALEX NERAD**

Mr. Alex Nerad, Executive Director of the Egyptian Theatre and Co-Chairman of the DeKalb Area Arts Council summarized for the committee what the Arts Council has done to date and how they were formed. One of the projects that came out of the Arts Council is the newly proposed Arts, Cultural, Entertainment Corridor or A.C.E. He said that as they did an inventory of businesses in the City of DeKalb and surrounding areas they found that 45 businesses in the Arts were already established that fell along this natural corridor. They decided to create a corridor instead of an arts district because they are

not changing anything to do with taxes or zoning, this is strictly a corridor. He said that the resolution that he is bringing forth this evening to the committee is asking the County to recognize the A.C.E. Corridor as an effort to promote the arts within the City of DeKalb and its surrounding areas.

**It was moved by Ms. Leifheit, seconded by Mr. Pietrowski, and it was carried unanimously to forward the resolution to the full board for approval.**

### **SEVEN-COUNTY ALLIANCE RESOLUTION**

Mr. Pietrowski said that the resolution before the committee tonight would create a 7-County alliance for economic development. The seven counties involved are DeKalb, Boone, Lee, McHenry, Ogle, Stephenson and Winnebago. This resolution will give authority to the Chairman of these county boards to negotiate the by-laws of this alliance. They are not asking for any funding right now. The Chairman of these 7 counties will all approach their various county boards to ask for approval of this resolution and then they will all meet between now and May 2016 with the intention of creating a framework for the alliance.

**It was moved by Mr. Faivre, seconded by Mr. Porterfield and it was carried unanimously to forward this resolution to the full board for approval.**

Mr. Whelan asked if all of the initials in the document could be spelled out.

### **BUSINESS INCUBATOR PROGRAM PARAMETERS**

Chairman Brown asked Mr. Faivre to inform the committee about his tour of the Goose Island Incubator in Chicago that he went on recently.

Mr. Faivre said that major manufacturers created this Incubator in Chicago in May 2015. They all donated equipment and made \$5 million investments each into the Incubator. Some of the colleges represented were Purdue, Iowa State and Wisconsin.

Mr. Gary Hanson, DeKalb County Administrator, said that we need an approval of the documents that the committee has before them tonight so that the County can start the Incubator. We will have to have people fill out the Pre-Incubation Agreement and then in April we will have to appoint an Advisory Committee to interview the applicants with an entry date into the Incubator for June 1, 2016. He said that if there needs to be any changes to the documents we could make them as we go along as this is all new to all of us. He said that if the committee members had any more changes to the documents to please email them to Mary Supple, County Coordinator.

Ms. Polanco asked who the Landlord would be in the Incubator. Is it the Incubator itself or the County of DeKalb?

Mr. Hanson said that it is the County of DeKalb.

The committee discussed the creation of the Advisory Committee. They felt that it should consist of the Economic Development Coordinator, two County Board Members and two other people in the business community, for a total of 5 members. They also spoke about having a representative from NIU and Kishwaukee College on the Advisory Committee, too. They would also like a list of names created of people who would be considered mentors to the Incubator.

**It was moved by Mr. Whelan, seconded by Mr. Faivre, and it was carried unanimously to move forward on the Incubator and accept the documents before them tonight.**

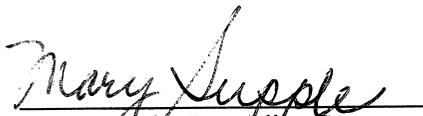
Mr. Borek, Executive Director of the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation gave a brief update on the Enterprise Zone. He said that they have many companies that are considering expansions because of the Enterprise Zone and other new prospects are showing interest. The market is very strong.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

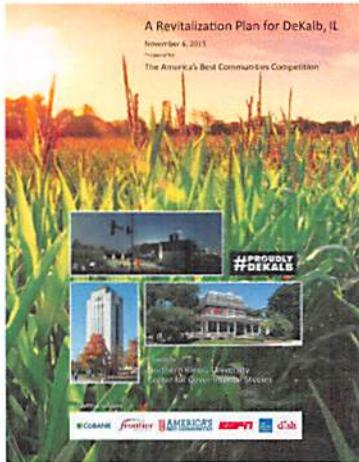
It was moved by Mr. Whelan, seconded by Mr. Pietrowski, and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Chairman Robert Brown

  
Mary Supple, Recording Secretary

# DeKalb Revitalization Plan



## What is the basis for the DeKalb Revitalization Plan?

DeKalb is poised for success thanks to over \$350 million invested in public and private sector projects, a new interest in collaboration between the city and university, and enthusiasm generated by the #ProudlyDeKalb movement and the city's progress in Frontier Communications' America's Best Communities Competition. The DeKalb Revitalization Plan is a product of the ABC grant process. The plan builds on the city's strengths and addresses its challenges in order to realize the city's potential for further success.

Over the past months, conversations have been held with over 300 DeKalb residents, 75 NIU students provided their input, and leaders from organizations, businesses, government officials and the university have been consulted.

### These conversations identified several challenges facing the city, including:

- As the economy improves, a new strategy is needed to tie together multiple planning sources and community partners
- The city's largest employer, NIU, continues to face financial challenges and decreasing enrollment
- Changing socioeconomics has increased demand on city, social, education, transportation, and health services
- Conflicting perceptions of DeKalb have developed inside and outside of the community
- Self-investment has created a high level of indebtedness across tax entities
- Downtown lacks many of the elements necessary to be a vibrant city center

### It became clear from these discussions that we can address some of these challenges by:

- Creating a stronger sense of place, pride and identity
- Stepping up our economic development efforts

# #PROUDLY #DEKALB

The DeKalb Revitalization Plan was developed by a group of volunteers to address the needs identified in the community conversations. The plan focuses on near term opportunities and is expected to evolve over time. It is based on the following vision for DeKalb.

## Vision for DeKalb

*DeKalb is recognized as a 21st century community with a thriving university and a vibrant downtown. DeKalb's residents, businesses, government, and university community are engaged in a dynamic interplay of energy and creativity that retains and attracts businesses with living-wage jobs. DeKalb's leaders are diverse, visionary, and adaptable, and work together to continue to grow our city.*



# How will we make this vision a reality?

The plan includes seven projects. While each has great potential on its own, taken together they can have a real impact on DeKalb's economy and provide opportunities across the community. In addition, by completing these projects, DeKalb will grow its capacity for additional projects in the future.

## DeKalb Revitalization Plan Projects

1. **ACE Corridor** – a defined arts, culture and entertainment corridor
2. **Launchpad Virtual Incubator** – a website and network of advisors, progressing to a physical space
3. **DeKalb Coworks** – a new work space option for businesses and organizations
4. **DeKalb Food Hub** – a multipurpose local foods production and distribution center
5. **SmartSpace** – a STEAM education center (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math)
6. **Branding and Marketing** – a citywide campaign to promote DeKalb inside and outside of the community
7. **DeKalb Leadership Institute** – a broad based leadership development program

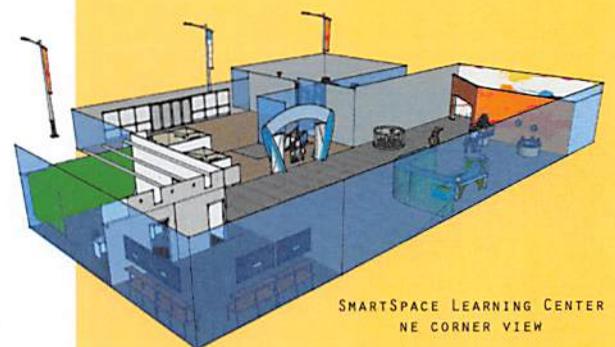
## Can we do it?

DeKalb has a proven track record of attaining its goals, including a new library, hospital, high school, and police building. #ProudlyDeKalb is generating pride and spreading the word about our community's accomplishments.

Work is now underway to implement the projects proposed in the plan.

## How can you get involved?

- 1. Be part of #ProudlyDeKalb by telling your story. Visit us on facebook.
- 2. Publicly support the plan and its projects. Talk to your neighbors, Come to public meetings, post and follow our progress on social media.
- 3. **Contact the Project CEO of a project that interests you.**
  - o **ACE Corridor:** Alex Nerad, alex@egyptiantheatre.org
  - o **LaunchPad Virtual Incubator:** Brett Brown, BBrown@bcb-llp.com
  - o **DeKalb Coworks:** Denise Weinmann, dweinmann@rvgcommercial.com
  - o **DeKalb Food Hub:** Dan Kenney, dkenney@dekalbgardens.org
  - o **Branding and Marketing:** Cohen Barnes, cohenb@sundogit.com
  - o **DeKalb Leadership Institute:** Matt Duffy, matt.duffy@dekalb.org
  - o **SmartSpace:** Jennifer Groce, jgroce@niu.edu



SMARTSPACE LEARNING CENTER  
NE CORNER VIEW

# #PROUDLY #DEKALB

For general information contact Frank Roberts  
(info@proudlydekalb.com).

The full DeKalb Revitalization Plan can be found  
at proudlydekalb.com