

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
May 3, 2016**

The DeKalb County Economic Development Committee met on Tuesday, May 3, 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, and Mr. Pietrowski, Jr. Mr. Whelan was absent. Others present were Mr. Gary Hanson, Robin Brunschon and Karen Cribben.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

It was moved by Mr. Faivre, seconded by Mr. Pietrowski, Jr., and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes from April 5, 2016.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

It was moved by Ms. Polanco, seconded by Ms. Leifheit, and it was carried unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

PUBLIC OR MEMBER COMMENTS

There were no public comments. Chairman Brown said that he had recently attended the Economic Development Vision meeting and shared an update with the committee. They asked that the organizations supporting this vision to take the priority list (attached to these minutes) back with each of us to our members. The first 5 items are what most counties would need. At the bottom of the page the group talked about how they would expand one item as an example, he said. They are meeting with the communities and over half of them are done so far. The next two meetings this week are with Sandwich and Shabbona/Waterman. He asked the committee to please email Mary Supple if they had any other ideas or comments they wanted to share. Mr. Brown said that the Economic Development Summit will be held on 5/24/16 @ 8:00a.m. at the Farm Bureau.

SUPERVISOR OF ASSESSMENTS ANNUAL REPORT

Mr. Robin Brunschon, Supervisor of Assessments, gave her annual report to the committee. She first wanted to thank Mr. Gary Hanson, DeKalb County Administrator for her newly remodeled office space. She proceeded to highlight certain items for the committee.

Ms. Brunschon mentioned that the assessed value increased to \$49,687,770. It came primarily from almost all townships having positive multipliers. New Construction went from \$10,057,302 in 2014 to \$15,021,113 in 2015. The Homestead Improvement Exemption went from 139 in 2014 to 524 in 2015.

The Disabled Veterans Applicants rose 20.46% in 2015. The assessed value amount for the Disabled Veteran Exemption went from \$980,500 in 2014 to \$5,752,575 in 2015. Ms. Tammy Anderson, the DeKalb County Superintendent of the Veterans Assistance Commission, and Ms. Brunschon published a press release that explained the change to 35 ILCS 200/15-169 (Please see her report in the Supervisor of Assessments Department.)

Ms. Brunschon also mentioned that the average increase in assessed value for bare farmland was approximately 4% for DeKalb County. The median price per acre for farmland in our county was \$11,900 in 2015.

Chairman Brown thanked Ms. Brunschon for her informative report.

BUSINESS INCUBATOR PROJECT

Ms. Supple handed out the Advisory Board membership list so far. The committee discussed the remaining names and directed Ms. Supple to call the two or three suggested names to make the Advisory Board Member list complete.

Ms. Supple then informed the committee that the SCORE Organization has agreed to help with the training sessions with the new tenants that enter the Incubator. The press release on the Incubator was sent to all local news agencies, all chambers of commerce and to those chambers in LaSalle, Grundy and Kendall counties.

The committee also discussed how they could educate and inform the community about the Incubator. They talked about holding Open Houses in the late Summer/early Fall and host the local Chambers of Commerce. They discussed how the Advisory Board should work with the tenants who may need lower prices to pay for rent. They mentioned that the F611 office rental price should be lowered to \$500.00.

DEKALB COUNTY AREA ARTS COUNCIL

Ms. Supple said that she had no report to give for the Arts Council as they are discussing a possible policy change.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Robert Brown

Mary Supple, Recording Secretary

DRAFT

DeKalb County Economic Development Vision-Draft 5-3-16

Priority Areas

1. **Funding and Grant Opportunities**-limited resources at the municipality level make it more important to look at grants and other innovative sources of funding such as crowdfunding, USDA, EDA, community foundations, and others. Need assistance identifying and writing applications
2. **County-wide Marketing**-at the local and county level to highlight good and negate bad perceptions. Is there a common thread throughout the County (i.e. wine tours, breweries, outdoor activities, etc.)?
3. **Quality of life**-Parks, sidewalks, bike paths, grocery stores, senior facilities, housing, local foods, rural health, safety issues,
4. **Infrastructure**-municipalities in DeKalb County struggle with aging infrastructure and lack of funding and/or development options.
5. **Diverse Business Retention, Expansion, Attraction**-need small business development as much as large industry attraction. Having mentor programs and business leadership and soft skills training would help, incentives (such as the EZ) and other innovative funding ideas.
6. **Community Strategic and Comprehensive Planning and Coordination**-communities need to take responsibility for their success. County can provide guidance and a template for planning. Require and updated annually or every several years.
7. **Professionalize the Leadership in Communities and County**-more educated elected officials and volunteers will help in planning and implementation. Require training as part of the position? Sharing city/village managers to help smaller communities have a dedicated ED or CD person. Create a learning network.
8. **Code and Zoning Enforcement**-Intentional Growth, no absentee landlords, agriculture zoning, boundary agreements.
9. **Transparency**-open communication between the county and the communities. When issues arise if the county can provide a forum to discuss, such as hot topics on a website. Informed citizens officials are a necessity.
10. **Entrepreneurial Investment and Employment Training**-living wage employment, helping unemployed and under employed workers, re-training, education outreach (taking training on the road), business incubators.

Priority Area Example

Infrastructure

As with mature communities across the nation, many municipalities in DeKalb County struggle with aging infrastructure. Of particular concern are many vacant or dilapidated buildings that, with financial assistance, could be renovated or demolished to make way for new development. Further, as the economic recovery continues, many communities lack the infrastructure needed to support growth opportunities resulting from the Chicago economy's continued westward development.

Examples of possible County priorities or strategies:

- a. New sources of financial support for infrastructure replacement or expansion, e.g. new water tower or sewer system
- b. Matching funding for structural rehabilitation or demolition programs.
- c. Provide County-wide Internet
- d. Improved and consistent County-wide public transportation to create a fully connected and effective pedestrian and bicycle transit the area.
- e. Work with every community to have a specific plan as to where future businesses should be located and what their appearance should be. Promote strict adherence to the plan (i.e. Sycamore downtown).
- f. Promote the Illinois Enterprise Zone and how businesses could benefit.
- g. Build/improve bike lanes and pedestrianized zones between
- h. Sycamore and DeKalb, and around higher-density areas.