

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
June 5, 2018**

The DeKalb County Economic Development Committee met on Tuesday, June 5, 2018 at 7:00 p.m., in the Administrative Building's Conference Room East in Sycamore, Illinois. Chairman Bagby called the meeting to order. Those Members present were Mr. Brown, Mrs. Emmer, Mr. Faivre, Mrs. Haji-Sheikh, Mr. Osland, and Chairman Bagby. A quorum was established with all six Members present.

Others present were Derek Hiland, Robin Brunshon, Karen Cribben, Jolene Willis, Tim Hughes, and the media.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chairman Bagby noted that he would like to add Committee Member Comments in between items 6 and 7 (just before Adjournment).

It was moved by Mrs. Haji-Sheikh, seconded by Mr. Brown, and it was carried unanimously to approve the meeting agenda with the additional item.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

It was moved by Mr. Faivre, seconded by Mr. Osland, and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the May 1, 2018 meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

CHIEF COUNTY ASSESSMENT OFFICE ANNUAL REPORT ([Full Report](#))

The Committee welcomed Chief County Assessment Officer Robin Brunshon to their meeting in order to provide them with her 2017 Annual Report. Ms. Brunshon reported that there was a slight increase in the County's 2017 parcel count from the 2016 year (2016: 42,550 & 2017: 42,613). In 2017, the EAV (Estimated Equalized Assessed Value) increased from last year by 116,261,541. This was due to all townships having a positive multiplier which caused most assessments to go up. Out of the 42,613 parcels in the 2017 year: 66% were considered Residential, 18% Commercial, 11% Farm, and 5% Industrial. There were 1,400 parcels that were exempt (3.3% of total parcels). Ms. Brunshon continued to share that 72% of the Certificate of Errors were due to Homestead Exemptions; included in these were: Homestead Exemptions, Senior Homestead Exemptions, Senior Freeze Exemptions, Disabled Exemptions, and Disabled Veteran Exemptions. There was a 50% increase in new construction from 2016 to 2017 (2016: \$19,857,614 & 2017: 29,598,321). In 2016 there were 2,048 sales of 2,193 parcels and in 2017 there were 2,158 sales of 2,407 parcels. Depending on the number of parcels in a sale, these

numbers can and do fluctuate, Ms. Brunshon shared. She also reported that due to new legislation increasing the amount for exemptions for Disabled Veterans those dollar amounts increased from 2016 to 2017 as well (2016: there were 525 for a total of \$7,450,774 & 2017: there were 520 for a total of \$9,758,197). Lastly, Ms. Brunshon highlighted that the Senior Assessment Freeze increased in frozen value by 2,983,128 (2016: frozen value = 7,196,864 & 2017: frozen value = 10,179,992).

The Committee additionally reviewed Ms. Brunshon's Annual Report booklet and asked a few questions. Committee Members inquired about what the multiplier was. Ms. Brunshon explained that Illinois statutes require that the assessed value of non-farm property equal 33.3% of its market value. However, assessment levels may vary from the statutory 33.3% within an assessment jurisdiction, between assessment jurisdictions, within a county, and between counties. These differences occur for several reasons including the large number of local assessing officials who have different opinions about value, and the inherent difficulties of the assessment process. Assessment levels must be uniform to ensure: Equal distribution of the tax burden among taxpayers; Fair distribution of state grants-in-aid for education, highways, and public assistance; and that tax rate and bonded indebtedness limitations are applied to local government taxing bodies on an equal basis. Equalization factors/multipliers may be applied by the Chief County Assessment Official, Board of Review, and the Department of Revenue. A statistical process called an assessment/sales ratio study is used to find the ratio of property sale prices to their assessed values. The assessment/sales ratio study shows whether or not assessments within a given area actually average 33.3% of market value. If the results of the study indicate that assessments are either higher or lower than 33.3% an equalization factor/multiplier is calculated and applied to all non-farm property to bring the level of assessment to 33.3%.

Ms. Brunshon also added that the list of Township Assessors were listed in the back of the Annual Report. It was commented that that information needed to be on the County's website and she assured that Committee that was being worked on and in some spaces the .PDF list of the Assessors is more easily accessible now. Mr. Faivre commented on how it would be beneficial for the Township Assessor's contact information to be on the new Devnet wEdge program as well. Ms. Brunshon noted that she would try and see what she could do about that. Chairman Bagby added that while they were talking about that information, he wondered if when property tax bills were mailed out if that wEdge sheet would be included in the envelope with the tax bills along with the individual's appropriate Township Assessor's contact information. It added that it would be nice for people who maybe aren't computer savvy to have access to that information and it would be just another way to ensure people have as much information in their hands as possible.

The Committee thanked Ms. Brunshon for joining them and providing her Annual Report.

BUSINESS INCUBATOR UPDATE

DeKalb County Economic Development Coordinator Jolene Willis joined the Committee to provide an update on the DeKalb County Business Incubator and other initiatives that are being worked on. She reported that a new tenant application process is being worked out to streamline the approval process for new businesses to set up shop in the incubator. They are also exploring other bridges and potential partnership capabilities in the near future, such as the 71 North space within Northern Illinois University's Founders Memorial Library. Out of the 10 or so available incubator spaces, four are currently occupied. A fifth business, design firm Kitchen Revolution, will be coming into the incubator in about a week or so.

She additionally handed out an executive summary (attached) on the presentation that was given by NIU's MGMT Class 421 (Global Social Venture Consulting). The conclusion of the report recommended that the DeKalb Incubator: Implement a lean canvas model, leverage and develop strategic partnerships, develop programs for entrepreneurs, and create an engaged community. Ms. Willis shared that she would email the entire report to those Committee Members who were interested in viewing all of the details the class provided.

In addition to increased tenancy interest, the Community Development Department staff have been working diligently this past year to engage in strategic partnerships for small business development. NIU's EIGERlab and Center for Product Development, Fox Valley SCORE, Kishwaukee College's Business & Training Department, and Waubesa Community College's Small Business Development Center all utilize the space as an outreach location for meeting with DeKalb County clients and workshop hosting. The staff have also been instrumental in establishing the DeKalb County Small Business Resource Network as a more inclusive, countywide entrepreneurship ecosystem of business support and resources.

The DeKalb County Small Business Resources Network is comprised of stakeholders vested in building a strong entrepreneurship ecosystem for business development and growth throughout DeKalb County. Network partners are inclusive of all areas of the county who meet regularly to share resources and collaborate efforts to guide business owners and dreamers on the path to success. The DeKalb County Community Development Department is serving as the convener and first point of contact for network resources and service referrals.

She lastly updated the Committee on some regional workshops that are going to be hosted out at the DeKalb County Community Outreach Building and that the Village of Lee is going to be working with NIU's Center for Governmental Studies to work on their \$20,000 DeKalb County Community Foundation Grant to assist with economic development planning and projects. The Committee thanked Ms. Willis for her informative update.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Mrs. Haji-Sheikh shared that her husband is a Professor at the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology at Northern Illinois University and he runs a Clean Room. She explained that the space was originally designed for companies to rent and in the process of doing that he likes to provide tours of the facility. So, Mrs. Haji-Sheikh shared that at the Committee's next meeting on August 7th, the Committee is invited to meet at NIU and have their

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normal meeting and tour the facility at that same time. She added that it would be very beneficial if Ms. Willis attended that tour as well. Mrs. Haji-Sheikh noted that she would like to see this facility be part of the County's economic impact as well.

Mr. Bagby mentioned that more information regarding the tour will be sent out prior to the August 7th Committee Meeting. It was also reminded that there will be no Committee Meeting in July due to the County Board's Summer Recess.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mrs. Haji-Sheikh, seconded by Mr. Osland and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Tim Bagby

Tasha Sims, Recording Secretary

INTRODUCTION

Scope

The DeKalb County Consulting Team focused on helping the DeKalb Incubator (also referred to as “Incubator”) develop its business within the community, gain more entrepreneurs, conduct research on other incubators, and develop a new business model. A goal of the project was to identify differences and opportunities between other incubators and the DeKalb Incubator in terms of their processes and structure. A second objective was to help the Incubator create a new business model. Lastly, we aimed to explore and leverage the partnership capabilities within the NIU community.

Deliverables

This written report contains a set of recommendations that will be accompanied by an oral presentation on April 25th, 2018. The report also includes an implementation plan that details the steps the Incubator should take to see the change they desire within the organization. This implementation plan will be presented on the aforementioned date with the recommendations.

Research Methodologies

As a team, we conducted over ten interviews with various stakeholders of the DeKalb Incubator including staff, entrepreneurs, advisory board members, and strategic partners. Additionally, we engaged with Maynooth Works and Guinness Enterprise Center in Ireland to identify industry best practices.

For our secondary research, we investigated the best practices of incubators, co-working spaces, and entrepreneurial centers that focus on supporting and developing budding entrepreneurs and their business ideas. Specific sources can be found in the Appendices.

Recommendations

After thorough research of multiple opportunities for the DeKalb Incubator to pursue, we concluded that there are four main objectives to focus on.

We recommend that the DeKalb Incubator:

1. Implement a lean canvas model.
2. Leverage and develop strategic partnerships.
3. Develop programs for entrepreneurs.
4. Create an engaged community.