

City of Dunkirk

Economic Development Committee Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 1, 2013
11:00 am, Conference Room

Attendees: Stephanie Kiyak, Council Member-At-Large, Chair
Andy Gonzalez, Councilman, Board Member
Bill Rivera, Councilman, Board Member
Steve Neratko, Director of Planning and Development
Tim Gornikiewicz, CDBG Administrator, Planning and Development Department
Councilwoman Stacy Szukala
Ron Szot, City Attorney
Richard Halas, Fiscal Affairs Officer
AJ Dolce, Mayor
Gib Synder, Observer
Susan Shipone, Buffalo News

Guests:

Call to Order: 11:04am

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Approval of March 13, 2013 and April 3, 2013 meeting minutes were not approved.

Issues Discussed

CDBG Reports: Tim Gornikiewicz forwarded the reports electronically for Council's review. There were four drawdowns for the month of April: Administration, Code Enforcement, Nicole's reimbursement for the DLDC, and a bill paid to the Observer. No other activity to report – things are on hold while outstanding issues are still being cleared up. Tim reported that no subrecipient agreements have been signed to date but said it should be soon so that funds can be disbursed. It was clarified that the agreements haven't been forwarded to subrecipients as of yet. Tim has posted April's activity on the City website.

Boardwalk: Steve Neratko said that seven out of the eight businesses are now open – Campi's remains closed as of this date but plans on opening May 15th. All tenants are paid up to date. There will be a meeting of boardwalk tenants within the next couple of weeks to discuss policies and procedures, and to provide tenants with contact information when issues do occur. Stacy Szukala told the committee of a phone

conversation she had with one of the tenants who is upset with the idea that the City is asking tenants to remain open year-round. Specifically, the tenant has a problem remaining open during the months of January and February, and that since their contract is due in a year or two, they were curious as to the incentives the city would provide to have them open during these months. She told the committee that she agreed with the tenant, and that it would be difficult to enforce year-round hours unless all tenants met that requirement, and not just a few. Steve said that this issue was also brought up when the Yummy's contract was recently renewed, and that he's more concerned with tenants remaining open during the Spring, Summer and Fall seasons. The committee agreed that it's unacceptable that tenants are closed during the peak season, especially when there is a planned activity such as Music On the Pier. Steve mentioned that there exists the possibility of patrons not coming back to the boardwalk when they encounter closed businesses during the peak season.

Festivals Update: Tim informed the committee that the first event will be Picnic at the Point on Sunday, May 26th. Tim said that sponsorship funding is still coming in for events, and that sponsors are typically slow in remitting promised payments. Steve pointed out that part of the problem is manpower, with someone to do follow-up phone calls. Steve said there is a possibility of obtaining an intern to help with the festivals, and someone recently contacted Tim looking to help for either a stipend or college credit. Tim has been in contact with the School of Business at SUNY with regards to a credit program for an intern. Stacy asked Tim if he has secured bouncers and other items that will be featured at the Picnic at the Point event, and stated that she felt frustrated with the Festivals Committee due to a lack of commitment from member of the committee showing up and carrying the workload. Stacy pointed out that things that should already be in place aren't, and that the event is less than 25 days away. Steve said that Tim and Nicole cannot spend their time making the calls. Andy pointed out that he and Stacy have volunteered to make calls but as of today, they have not received information to perform this task. Tim stated he didn't believe they were behind in schedule or in advertising. He said that all of the advertisers have been contacted, and that forwarding flyers to the schools will be done a week or so before the event. He said that the website is nearly complete (85%). Andy said that he believed there should be equal emphasis on events when it comes to promotion and follow-up. Tim said he believes the approach shouldn't necessarily be equal, but rather attention be given to events based on amount of patronage and money involved. He pointed out that Wreck and Roll is advertised outside the area and is a big event encompassing two days, whereas Picnic at the Point is geared to the local community. Stacy pointed out that this wasn't the issue she and Andy were addressing, but rather the lack of coordinated details regarding planning the event that they both felt was not being done in a timely fashion. Stacy mentioned that details regarding food for the Picnic at the Point was still an unknown and this concerned her. Tim said this shouldn't be a concern, since the City was providing/cooking the food, and that there was a committee of nine people who would be helping out. Steve mentioned that at the next festivals meeting there needs to be a list compiled of volunteers who will commit to helping on the actual day of the events.

Tim also mentioned that he forwarded an email to Council regarding procedures for handling cash from vendors. Tim coordinated with City Treasurer Mark Woods to create a form that would document pertinent information. He also explained the chain of command for ensuring that a proper auditing trail would be in place, including using a receipt book, and that four signatures would be required on the form: his signature, a representative from the DLDC, Treasurer Mark Woods, and a bank representative (whoever takes the deposit). A receipt will also be provided to the vendor. Every Friday morning Music on the Pier sales will also be deposited.

Bill Rivera voiced a concern over how cash was handled at events last year, and the apparent lack of procedures involved that allow the opportunity for cash to go missing. Stephanie Kiyak pointed out that there should be a procedure similar to a grocery store, where the person that receives the cash in the draw signs off on the amount received, as well as the person removing the money. Thereafter, anytime money is removed from the draw, it is counted right there, with both the cashier and the other person again signing off on the amount. This would not only keep a clear check on how much money is coming in and taken out of the drawer, but would also hold the cashier responsible for any shortages. Right now, there is no procedure in place to account for how much money is actually being collected. Tim acknowledged that this was a good idea, as well as providing drawers that secure the individual bills so that on a windy day the chance of money flying away is lessened.

Landbank Update: Steve Neratko informed the group that the County Landbank has finalized its paperwork so they were finally able to take ownership of the two properties located on Eagle Street and Dove Street. The County tax foreclosure auction is coming up, and Steve forwarded the list to Council for any input as to future houses that should be considered. The Bank is expected to take seven properties this year; last year they took four. We can anticipate that they will take at least two properties again in Dunkirk. The main focus of the program will be on Dunkirk and Jamestown. There is also the possibility of demolition for some properties. Steve requested that the committee forward a list of any properties they believe should be a priority for landbank consideration no later than the end of this week, since the landbank will be holding a meeting next week.

Grants Update: Still working out details of the Main Street grant. Steve heard from the State yesterday regarding this grant, and they need a little more information from us before we can move forward. The Arbor Day grant is also still in process. Last week Steve worked on finding appropriate locations to plant trees on the first and second blocks of Central Avenue, between Lake Shore and the railroad tracks. Work should begin in the near future. It was questioned whether fruit trees could be planted. Steve told the group that there are a couple of issues with this: one is the liability of people eating fruit from trees on city-owned properties. The second would be the idea that fruit would fall and be messy if no one is picking fallen fruit up. Steve said that there is a list of trees (available on their website) approved by the State and they highly discourage trees that bear fruit and drop. He said another issue of concern is whether the trees can handle the salt during the winter months. It was questioned if the Arbor grant has restrictions as to where trees are planted and Steve verified that there is a target area we must adhere to. The program is also monitored with the help of the DEC.

The CFA grant will be available in the next couple of weeks, with the application due in mid-July. Some possibilities for this grant include dredging the harbor. Steve mentioned that the DEC expects the water levels of the lake to be lower than average this year. We're working with the County and Lake Erie Management Association – they've teamed us up with Westfield and Hanover since they have boat launches as well. Steve reminded the group that it's "grant writing season" and that we will need to pick a few grants that are large in scope, rather than several little grants, due to time constraints and lack of personnel to write them. Andy Gonzalez asked if Steve will be going to the grant writing seminar that is coming up next month in Buffalo – Steve wasn't aware of the seminar and Andy promised to forward the information for him to look into. Steve said that hiring an independent consultant to work on grants is being considered since there is some funding available in the budget. It was questioned whether there are grants where the salary is built into the grant. In this case, they would be considered the administrator of the grant, so their duties would

continue after the grant was procured. Steve said he would be looking into the ARC and EDA grants as well. Bed tax monies were discussed. Steve said the city did not apply last year but did the previous year. The city has received money in the past for festivals and for dredging and weed cutting. There is still \$5,000 left over in the budget that hasn't yet been used that can be applied to weed cutting. Steve told the committee that the City didn't apply last year because all the grants are due roughly around the same time and that a choice needed to be made as to which grants should be given attention. He also said that the County wasn't interested in weed cutting as a project, since they want to see long-term results, not immediate maintenance needs. They're interested in agriculture issues like runoff and creek stabilization. Steve said that awarded monies are disbursed in March of the following year. Rich Halas questioned if the finance committee could put together an application for festivals and apply for the bed tax funds and it was discussed that we would pursue this direction. Basically the bed tax is focused on two areas: tourism and environmental issues.

Rich questioned the status of the activity for the IDA. Steve said the focus is on businesses that will create jobs, particularly industrial. The IDA is currently seeking applications. It was questioned whether the group has issued a press release and Steve said that hasn't been done yet. Posting information on the website was also suggested. Funding through this group are not grant funds but rather a loan program.

Stephanie talked about the upcoming meeting with Janet Forbes regarding the community gardens and the issues of insurance and a water supply still needs to be addressed before commencing with the first bed being planted. The meeting will be next Tuesday at 2:30 in the Stern's building.

New Business: Andy Gonzalez questioned if the Cable Access channel will be providing coverage of the festivities for broadcasting. Bill Rivera was asked to write a formal letter to the Cable Board requesting that they cover major events at a minimum – although it was requested months ago, he didn't do it but promised he would.

Adjournment: Bill Rivera made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Andy Gonzalez at 11:56 am.