



3RD WARD MEETING MINUTES – ALDERMAN DENISE RODD

February 12, 2014

AGENDA

- Community and Economic Development Director
- Other City Topics

WELCOME

Thank you for coming. Happy 205th Birthday to Abraham Lincoln.

PAST MEETING ITEMS

Train Station: Looks beautiful with wood paneling and has lots of charm.

- Question from previous meeting was the location of the bathroom window: The bathroom window in the men's room faces the platform but is opposite the sink, so not really an issue. There is a baffle entrance.
- Yes, taxis are allowed back in front of the station. During construction, taxis were temporarily relocated.
- Is Metra Ticket Office open? Metra handles the Ticket Office.
- Train Station Coffee Shop? City owns the space and is looking for a long term tenant and collect rent from coffee shop. City has 3 viable candidates for the Coffee Shop. Plans are to add an outside sitting area.

CITY DEVELOPMENT

Two new businesses opening in the 3rd Ward:

- Happy Dog Day Spa located next to the Pawn Shop – private owner starting business.
- Flexible Rubber located in the industrial area near the corner of Mt Prospect and Rawls Roads – they make rubber gaskets.

Cook County is offering tax breaks to new businesses that rehab vacant properties in the form of a 6b. This is good but the concern is who makes up the taxes if business is given a tax break.

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DIRECTOR:

George Sakas comes to the City of Des Plaines from working previously in Schiller Park. George grew up in East Moline area, between the Mississippi and Rock Rivers and is no "stranger to rivers or floods." George has been in Community & Economic Director position for 2 months, and is still studying the properties and businesses within the City. The development and economic growth of Des Plaines is a "hot topic" with the Mayor. Alderman Rodd will join Director Sakas at a later date to tour city development.

- **Metropolitan Square:** Occupancy is going well. New owner of Metropolitan Square is Mid-America. There have been inquiries from stores moving into Square, but the season/weather has things on hold. Potbelly's and Panera's continue doing well. Tap House Bar and Grill is increasing in popularity.
- **Downtown Reconstruction:** The goal is "critical mass" downtown, which is the number of people living and working in downtown Des Plaines that will impact its economy.
 - Phase 1 is completed: The streetscape of Miner St.; Sidewalks paved/bricked; sidewalks widened for outside dining. There will be 2 charging stations for electric cars near the train station. These will be credit card accessible.
 - Phase 2 is the Ellinwood landscape and crosswalks. Plans are in process.
 - Phase 3 is trees and grasses. Des Plaines is currently looking at types of trees and grasses.
 - When will Downtown area be completed – 2015/2016? We are doing something substantial every year.
- **Des Plaines Theater:** Theater was built 1924/1925 when Vaudeville was ending and Talkies beginning. It is an old building with more problems than safety issues, such as plumbing, architectural, and heating ducts hanging out of ceiling. The owner had until January 15 to bring building up to code, which didn't happen. Theatre has 700 – 1,000 seats, which will need to be replaced. City closed the theater down mid-January.

Theater is not under landmark status - it was started but never completed. Being landmark status would raise the cost of refurbishing. As a city, do we want to own a Theatre for \$1M then put \$2M more into it? Who is going to fund the fixing of the theatre? Who runs the theatre and does the promoting?

Des Plaines has visited other communities with older style theatres and similar repairs. These communities are having the same results of remodeling costs too high and no buyers. Demolition of the building would cost \$200K. Nothing more the City can do unless we can come up with \$2M to reconstruct.

Are there any sentimental feelings to keep the Theatre? (Not much related within group other than either attending or working in the theatre). Sad story...it could have been the centerpiece of Des Plaines. It would be a shame to tear it down.

PROPERTIES/BUSINESSES IN DES PLAINES:

- **Dominick's:** Negotiations are ongoing with Dominick's building and Caputo's. Dominick's building is 70-80K square feet. If Caputo's takes over Dominick's building, what happens with the current Caputo's building? Don't know.
- **Grazie:** No plans. The area is a great demographic. There has been some interest.
- **Walmart on Golf:** Walmart is opening a Grocery/Pharmacy store (only) by the old Butera on Golf and Elmhurst.
- **Bus Company (Golf & Mt Prospect):** Bus Company moved to 3rd Ward on Algonquin near the RR Tracks. Residents are noticing a smell of diesel fumes and running buses all day long... "can't breathe the air."
- **Vacant Building (Thacker/Warrington):** 7 Eleven was interested in location until finding out that building is not zoned for liquor.
- **Littlefuse Property:** This is a triangular property approximately 20 acres. There is nothing new for this property.
- **Old Bowling Alley on Ellinwood:** 5 owners involved, including city, 2 interested in developing property.
- **Hardware Store** possible in Downtown? – Yes. There is a place for smaller stores.
- **Oakton Street:** Oakton is the 2nd downtown of Des Plaines and on radar. Oakton is not a TIF district and updating area would come out of General Fund. Miner Street Downtown area is TIF District.
- **TIF 6** is Mannheim and Higgins.

RESTAURANT PROPERTIES: City is working on incentives and looking at TIFs to provide money for the build out of current restaurant properties. Any time a restaurant comes in a vacant building even into another restaurant space, upgrades are done. Properties are available but not many of them are "up to speed" and would need remodeling.

- **Caliente:** Kolmar owns property. Rent was raised causing owner to leave current location and wanting to re-open the restaurant in another part of Des Plaines.
- **Boston Fish Market:** Very good restaurant – small dining room.
- **Black Ram:** Open. Dancing on Friday and Saturday. Restaurant is doing well.
- **Wing Stop:** Open in downtown Des Plaines.
- **Olivetti's:** Owner over mortgaged with opening of nightclub. All was mismanaged, as well as liquor tax not paid.

RIVERS CASINO

\$14M: with \$8.8 to City and \$5.8 to other communities. We are the only casino contract with provision of funding other communities. If one of the benefiting communities becomes new casino site would we continue to give money? Denise is checking.

What about running trolleys between Rivers Casino and Downtown Des Plaines and make it complimentary. George is meeting with Rivers later in week and suggest. Rosemont provides a courtesy bus between Blue Line and Casino.

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, March 12, at Prairie Lakes, 7:00 p.m.

TO CONTACT DENISE

- Please contact Denise at drodd@desplaines.org or call/text (847) 514-6318
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