



VILLAGE OF BARTLETT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES
October 14, 2024

1. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Kubaszko called the regular meeting of October 14, 2024, of the Economic Development Commission (EDC) of the Village of Bartlett to order at 7:00 PM

2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Commissioners Kubaszko, Erickson, Perri, Suffern, Gorski, Densford, and Mary Smith representing the Chamber of Commerce.

ABSENT: Commissioner Lewensky

ALSO PRESENT: Economic Development Coordinator Tony Fradin, Assistant Village Administrator Scott Skrycki

3. APPROVAL OF August 12, 2024, MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Densford, seconded by Gorski to approve the August meeting minutes.

MOTION CARRIED

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

5. INAUGURAL RESTAURANT WEEK

Tony Fradin presented information about the village's inaugural Restaurant Week which will be held in February of 2025.

It ties into our community branding initiative, and he reviewed key points, noting that as members of the Economic Development Commission, various community organizations including the Chamber of Commerce, we were sharing some early details and plans with the EDC.

The overall strategy is to boost our eating and drinking establishments during a typical slow period with cold weather. Tony looked at several towns in the area, and most of them have Restaurant Weeks in late February into early March.

We will strongly encourage participants to come up with unique offers, specials, a prix fixe menu, discounts, or family specials. The benefits of participating include attracting new customers, retaining existing ones, promoting brand loyalty, and giving a reminder to support local businesses during a slow time of year.



VILLAGE OF BARTLETT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES
October 14, 2024

The village will partner with the Chamber of Commerce, and we will be asking the members of the EDC to help spread the word in the coming weeks and months. We will primarily be promoting Restaurant Week via email and social media.

We want a nice cross-section of restaurants, and Tony noted that he anticipates many being willing to participate.

Ms. Smith asked if everyone who goes to the participating businesses will get a discount or if something has to be referenced.

Mr. Fradin replied that we have not discussed that yet, but we would like for customers to have to mention it, and we'd like to tie it into our community branding campaign.

Commissioner Gorski asked if it would be open to national chains.

Mr. Fradin replied that most of the time, corporate chain businesses do not participate in these promotions. However, some local franchisees like the owners of Culver's are very community-oriented and do participate. Another small local franchisee is the owner of Taylor Street Pizza, who participates in local events. Some cannot due to their corporate structure and would need approval from regional or national headquarters, but they will all be invited to participate.

Commissioner Erickson suggested tying a gift card promotion in with this.

Mr. Skrycki replied that along with the Cocoa Crawl, we could promote gift cards and Restaurant Week.

Ms. Smith noted that the businesses should share their participation with their employees.

Mr. Fradin agreed, noting that was an issue in the past with the coupon inserts. We will have to make sure that employees are aware of the Restaurant Week offers.

Commissioner Erickson suggested that they provide a tasting menu or promote a particular item. Perhaps add a dine-around drawing via the Chamber of Commerce.

Chairman Kubaszko asked if everyone, including fast food restaurants, can participate.

Mr. Fradin replied "Yes," and added that when we look at the economic indicators early every year, the sales tax revenues from eating and drinking establishments have been rising since the Pandemic year of 2020.

There are many unique-to-Bartlett restaurants and bars that we hope will participate, but it will be open to everyone.



VILLAGE OF BARTLETT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES
October 14, 2024

Ms. Smith suggested that we promote hashtags like we did during the COVID lockdown and do a drawing for those who use it.

Commissioner Erickson suggested #BartlettRestaurantWeek and the “We Belong” selfie frame and window clings with a QR code to promote it.

Mr. Skrycki replied that we could create a uniform cling to advertise Cocoa Crawl and Restaurant Week together for businesses to use.

Commissioner Suffern asked how much the village has budgeted for this.

Mr. Fradin responded that whatever costs the village incurs will be part of the marketing budget. Most of our marketing budget is set aside for community branding, but we have some additional funds to utilize for this.

Mr. Skrycki added that this will be similar to the Cocoa Crawl, and that most of the expenditure will be the time spent by staff making phone calls and sending emails. Thirty-six businesses participated in the Cocoa Crawl last year and were very pleased with the results.

Ms. Smith suggested that we promote Restaurant Week in the Library newsletter for additional exposure.

Mr. Skrycki said that the details of it will be in the *Bartletter*, which is mailed to every home in the village to make sure that residents know about it.

Commissioners made multiple suggestions about potential specials, cocktails, discounts, and dedicating proceeds to a charitable cause.

Mr. Skrycki replied that the village’s goal for this first year is to provide a platform for them to participate in and promote the event. The restaurant owners are experts, so we’ll leave it to them what they want to offer. The village hosted a Zoom meeting with Cocoa Crawl participants when it began, so we may do the same for this.

Chairman Kubaszko suggested that the restaurants could give a ten percent discount to repeat customers.

Mr. Fradin responded that we are open to suggestions from the EDC, but that we will encourage, not require, participating restaurants to offer discounts. Like Scott said, we will offer a platform and promotion. Many small businesses are too busy from open to close and some do not do a lot of marketing. When we share their offers or events on the village’s social media, they are always appreciative. They tell us that some customers mention they saw it on the village or Chamber of Commerce social media.



VILLAGE OF BARTLETT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES
October 14, 2024

He further stated that “We like our food in Bartlett” and have some of the largest food distributors in addition to the eating and drinking establishments in town. Also, if any commissioners have ideas to share between meetings, do not hesitate to send them our way.

Ms. Smith stated that she would like to see an asterisk or the business names in bold letters if they are Chamber of Commerce members. Mr. Fradin responded that we are happy to do that.

Commissioner Perri stated that we should include families including teenagers and younger children. Perhaps a steep discount or free meals for kids. Mr. Fradin replied that is something we could suggest but it is up to the participants what their offers will be or if they make any.

6. BRANDING UPDATE

Mr. Fradin detailed recent community branding efforts including showing the village’s booth at the recent International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) show in Chicago, at Oktoberfest, and at Bartlett High School’s Homecoming game. He added that he gave away dozens of “I Belong in Bartlett” tee-shirts at Oktoberfest on the opening night.

Ms. Smith asked if there are any parameters or rules on when “I Belong,” “We Belong,” and “You Belong” are used.

Mr. Fradin replied that “You Belong” is more outward bound and used for economic development purposes. That is the message we use for recruiting businesses and developers.

In town, you will mostly see “I Belong” and “We Belong” like at Oktoberfest, Cocoa Crawl, and Restaurant Week.

We continue working with our branding consultants from a5 and are planning some radio and television advertising, which we will detail soon. You will be seeing a lot more of our “Belong in Bartlett” branding in the coming months and years.

7. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Fradin reported that he is working with several restaurants at present. There are often several looking around or seeking locations, and one of them is called Dos Bros, which is a Mexican concept coming to the Galleria of Bartlett on Army Trail Road. Beef Shack and Atlas Chicken are also in that center.



VILLAGE OF BARTLETT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES
October 14, 2024

Also, the owner of Streets of Bartlett is currently remodeling Midway Landing bowling alley into a sports bar concept called Midway Sports Bar.

We are still encouraging the owner of the former Wee-Dee's location in Westgate Commons to bring a nice restaurant to that location.

Mr. Fradin noted that when we review the commercial vacancy rate early next year, it should still be in a healthy range, with most closed businesses having been replaced with new ones already.

Ms. Smith inquired if On the Rocks by Bobby has opened yet.

Mr. Fradin replied that he visited with the owners recently and it should be open very soon. He encouraged them to join the Chamber of Commerce and arrange a ribbon cutting. For whiskey and tequila aficionados, the business features 800 whiskey SKUs and 200 tequila SKUs as well as a full kitchen, so there will also be a food menu. The new owners made the space look very nice, and you will be surprised how good it looks and how comfortable the interior is.

Mr. Skrycki noted that Halloween Fun Fest will be held on October 26th. Ms. Smith added that the Village History Museum will be hosting a business after-hours event on the 23rd about the drinking history of Bartlett.

Commissioner Perri raised the issue of banner flags and asked what is being done about it.

Mr. Fradin replied that the Village Board has yet to modify the ordinance and that if there are any violations with the banners placed on the public right-of-way, to report it to Code enforcement. Mr. Skrycki further explained that the village must take First Amendment rights, the vision triangle, and whose property the signs are on before Code enforcement makes a determination on whether to take action.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Densford, second by Perri.

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 PM.

Tony Fradin, Economic Development Coordinator