



VILLAGE OF BARTLETT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

MEETING AGENDA

**Meeting to be held at:
BARTLETT VILLAGE HALL
228 South Main Street, Bartlett, IL
April 14, 2025 – 7:00 PM**

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of the February 10, 2025 meeting minutes
4. Public Comment
5. Branding Update
6. Legacy Businesses
7. New Business
8. Adjournment



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1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Kubaszko called the regular meeting of the February 10, 2025 Economic Development Commission (EDC) of the Village of Bartlett to order at 7:00 PM

2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Commissioners Kubaszko, Gorski, Lewensky, Suffern, Perri, Erickson, and Gudenkauf

ABSENT: Commissioner Densford

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

3. APPROVAL OF November 11, 2024, MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Gorski, Seconded by Suffern

MOTION CARRIED

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

5. JC'S MEXICAN RESTAURANT BEDA REQUEST

Mr. Fradin provided background of JC's Mexican Restaurant, which has been located at 130 W. Bartlett Avenue for the past eighteen years. The business is run by mother and son Luz and Luis Alvarez. It is a quintessential unique-to-Bartlett small business. They own the property.

JC's is updating its facility to improve workflow and better service the new rear patio area. As part of its renovation, JC's is required to upgrade the fire alarm system to meet current Code requirements.

They are in the process of renovating the interior of the restaurant and will soon reopen the business, which has been closed for the past several months.

The applicant submitted the attached quotes totaling \$20,283 including an estimate of \$18,932 from United States Alliance Fire Protection, Inc., plus an additional \$1,350 for



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materials from Home Depot. They have estimated some additional labor costs, bringing the project estimate to \$21,742.

Tony reported this is the first BEDA application submitted this fiscal year and noted the importance of fire safety, in particular for restaurants, which have a higher risk for fires than most other types of businesses.

Staff recommended a fifty percent grant when the project is completed. Tony introduced the owner's son, Luis Alvarez.

Mr. Alvarez described JC's remodeling project, stating that they were not able to work with the existing fire alarm system, as it was too old to meet current standards. Fire Code requires an entire new panel, wiring and conduit. He added that the labor cost is an estimate since his brother-in-law will be assisting him with the conduit, and he would like to compensate him for his labor.

Commissioner Gorski asked if doing the work, themselves, will meet Code requirements since the village requires licensed electrical contractors. Mr. Alvarez replied that both Mr. Heimbecker and the village's building director, Mr. Komorowski, confirmed that there is no such requirement for running the conduit, and the fire alarm company will be doing all the electrical work and wiring.

Commissioner Perri asked Mr. Alvarez to address the outdoor seating at the rear of the restaurant, since this project is to improve workflow and better serve the area. He also asked where patrons prefer to sit, in front or in back. Mr. Alvarez responded that when customers ask to sit outside, he asks if they prefer to sit in front or in back. He added that sitting in the new rear patio is quieter and more private, while many customers prefer sitting in the busier front area.

Commissioner Perri asked if JC's anticipates an increase in business resulting from this project. Mr. Alvarez responded that is their intention. The restaurant has a small dining room and there is limited seating in front of the building. They nearly double their seating capacity with the seating in the rear of the building and will be promoting that option more this coming spring and summer.

Commissioner Perri asked if JC's will be hiring additional staff to support this expansion. Mr. Alvarez replied, "Yes." They lost some employees while the restaurant was closed for the past several months, but they retained their cook and anticipate hiring additional servers as they reopen for business.

Commissioner Erickson asked when they are scheduled to install the new alarm system and reopen for business. Mr. Alvarez responded that they intend to reopen next week, and they intend to install the new alarm system in about three weeks. Mr. Heimbecker



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has agreed to allow them to reopen since they have plans for the new alarm system submitted and a contract to have it installed. Their goal is to reopen by Valentine's Day.

Commissioner Suffern noted that he is very proud to have JC's Mexican Restaurant as neighbors. He commended their perseverance for being open all these years. Mr. Alvarez responded that it is thanks to his mother. She is the star of the show. He and his sister help.

Commissioner Erickson stated this is a great investment in their property and made a motion to approve a fifty percent BEDA grant, based on the village's final approval of eligible costs. She urged JC's to join the Bartlett Area Chamber of Commerce.

Motion by Commissioner Erickson, Seconded by Commissioner Suffern, to approve a fifty percent rebate (approximately \$10,871) to JC's Mexican Restaurant upon completion of the installation of their new fire alarm system.

Motion carried by a unanimous roll call vote.

6. ECONOMIC INDICATORS REPORT

Every year, the EDC reviews Economic Indicators. We began tracking this following the Recession of 2008-2009, when vacancy rates spiked, many businesses closed, and the EDC worked with staff on a marketing plan and measuring key performance indicators.

The summary of this year's indicators show the Village of Bartlett continues to experience stable and incremental growth across key economic indicators, with several positive trends across its commercial, industrial, and residential sectors.

Tony provided an update to the EDC including the following highlights:

Vacancy and Real Estate Trends

Commercial vacancies in Bartlett currently sits at **6.8%**, a healthy figure and consistent with the village's average over the past three years. This follows a historic low of **4% in Q3 2022**.

Notably, this marks a substantial improvement from a high of **11.5% in 2013**, when major spaces like the former Dominick's and portions of Bartlett Plaza stood empty.

Today, formerly struggling areas like the Streets of Bartlett (formerly Bartlett Plaza) are seeing steady occupancy improvements.



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Industrial vacancy is exceptionally low at **1.6%**, with nearly full absorption throughout the business parks. The only current vacancy is a speculative building along Route 25. With very few undeveloped parcels remaining, industrial growth is nearing capacity.

Office space also remains strong, with a **3.3% vacancy rate**. The few vacancies that exist are primarily in Woodland Hills and Westgate Commons, and they are actively marketed.

Sales and Revenue Performance

Sales tax revenue has continued its upward trajectory, generating nearly **\$4 million** in municipal tax revenue and nearly **\$3 million** in home rule sales tax. These increases are largely attributed to recent commercial additions such as new auto dealerships on Lake Street and the opening of Aldi.

While the village has seen growth overall, the recent closure of CVS on Army Trail Road may result in a short-term dip in collections.

The total number of licensed businesses (excluding state-licensed ones) is now **346**, a slight uptick from the previous year, suggesting gradual but consistent growth in local entrepreneurship and business activity.

Tony mentioned that there are a few hundred home-based businesses, as well, and about fifty businesses that are state licensed and not included in this report.

Industry and Employment Insights

Bartlett supports more than **10,500 local jobs**, with an average wage of **\$77,000**. The unemployment rate stands at a low 3.6% as of December 2024, reflecting both strong job availability and a healthy local labor market.

Top industries in Bartlett include wholesale trade, manufacturing, and educational services. Among them, food manufacturing stands out with a location quotient of 3.44, indicating it is a key economic driver and disproportionately represented relative to the national average.

Demographic Snapshot

- Median household income: \$126,555
- Bachelor's degree or higher: 52% of residents
- Owner-occupied housing: 86%
- Residential vacancy: Negligible
- Race/ethnicity breakdown: 68% White, 16% Asian (nearly doubled since tracking began), 15% Hispanic or Latino
- Cost of living: 12% higher than national average; 8% above Illinois average



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Bartlett's strong educational attainment and high homeownership rates indicate a well-established and engaged residential base. With a growing and increasingly diverse population, the village continues to build on a stable foundation.

Development Outlook

While industrial land is close to build-out, there remain a number of infill commercial sites with potential for new development. Staff are actively working with developers on two retail strip center proposals, along with interest in a day care facility and accompanying retail. Additionally, a new marketing strategy is being rolled out to promote the Lake Street TIF District, aimed at bolstering commercial growth on Bartlett's northern edge.

Despite limited office space, Bartlett has largely avoided the broader downturn in the office market seen in nearby communities. The village continues to benefit from its proactive planning and strategic positioning.

Commissioner Suffern asked if the employment numbers are broken down to include Brewster Creek Business Park. Tony replied that those businesses and properties are part of the overall employment statistics, but the statistics are generally broken down by industry, and wholesale trade and manufacturing jobs are largely based in Brewster Creek and Blue Heron Business Parks.

He added that educational services used to be the leading employer for the village for decades, but the industrial development has made those jobs become the leading ones within Bartlett. Tony explained the highest location quotient is for food manufacturing, reflecting the village's food cluster. He further mentioned the village's largest employer, Rana, is expanding into yet another manufacturing facility, this one in Cook County.

Commissioner Perri asked what will be built at the former Sonic location at Route 59 & Stearns. Tony replied that the Mobil gas station purchased it with the intention of expanding their building and onto that site, but it has been held up due to a lawsuit.

Commissioner Suffern asked about the Crown commercial site. Tony replied there is no commercial project in the pipeline yet. There were a few lookers, mostly fuel stations. He asked what the barriers are. Mr. Skrycki mentioned it is in Cook County, but near the border of DuPage County. Tony added that a lot of the restaurants we would like to be there do not want to be out there on their own; they want to be in a more developed commercial area.

Commissioner Suffern asked about the status of the Lake Street TIF. Tony responded there has been a little interest. Staff is working together to create a dashboard to coordinate the information. There are a lot of moving parts, like working with IDOT and many other challenges, which is what helped the area qualify as a TIF area.



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7. NEW BUSINESS

Tony mentioned a state grant that was recently announced, with capital improvements and major renovations as the targeted projects. It is offered through DCEO and targeted to disadvantaged business owners. He blasted it out to the village's business database; it is important that our village's small businesses are aware of it.

Chairman Kubaszko asked if the grants are for established businesses or startups. Tony replied that we are sending it to our existing businesses and want to get the information to them while there is time to apply. He further stated that the state has typically only provided grants to huge businesses investing millions of dollars with hundreds of new jobs; this is good that the state is recognizing the importance of supporting small businesses.

Commissioner Gorski stated that with DCEO, the money has to be spent up front and is a reimbursement similar to the BEDA program. Tony replied that is correct; many grant programs in towns and the state work that way to make sure the projects are completed before public funds are disbursed.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Perri, Second by Commissioner Gudenkauf

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 PM.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MEMORANDUM

TO: Economic Development Commission

FROM: Scott Skrycki, Assistant Administrator
Tony Fradin, Economic Development Coordinator

DATE: April 7, 2025

SUBJECT: Branding

The Village of Bartlett had a strategic planning goal in 2021 to develop a community branding plan. The goal was slowed a bit intentionally until the pandemic slowed, and some major developments had come to fruition such as Aldi, and More Brewing, amongst others.

The Branding RFP/RFQs were collected and staff suggested bringing in two firms forward to the EDC for consideration, in the spring of 2023, and ultimately the Village Board. The decision was made to go with a5 Branding & Digital out of Chicago, with an agreement approved by the Village Board the subsequent summer.

PROCESS

The first phase was evaluating the community via research conducted by a5 along with assistance from staff, via round table discussions, attendance of community events, and a community survey rendering over 1,000 results.

This research then yielded branding options that were presented to the Board, ultimately choosing *Belong in Bartlett*. The campaign and branding logo would allow for an inward campaign as well as outward with iterations of *You//We Belong*.



After the decision was made on the campaign/branding slogan, the second phase would begin, which is rollout and introduction into the community.

The rollout started slowly, reaching its pinnacle in the first ever restaurant week. The start of the branding/slogan was really an introduction to the community via tee shirts, picture frames, banners, as well as articles in both the *Examiner* and *The Daily Herald* (<https://www.dailyherald.com/20240711/news/village-to-promote-recent-redevelopment-through-new-branding-campaign/>)

Special events also carried the continued introduction of the new brand.



While the introduction to the community was going on, there were also professional photos being taken, as well as brand recognition at events both local and on the road with economic development, specifically ICSC.



After the introduction of the brand, the third and final phase of this fiscal year was an aggressive media blitz utilizing all internet platforms from social media, digital ad campaigns, e-mail marketing, to television ads where data for both earned and paid media was charted, redirecting people to the new landing page that was created for the campaign. <https://www.bartlett.il.gov/about-bartlett/belong-in-bartlett>



MEDIA BLITZ

There were several components to the media blitz which started with Small Business Saturday on Fox News, Radio interviews and video production by WGN television as part of a home town take over, radio spots and interviews from WGN covering the campaign, merry and bright activities, as well as restaurant week.

Finally, a radio interview with Trustee Gandsey on why everyone Belongs in Bartlett.

MEDIA SPOT WITH DATA

President Wallace visited Fox News to highlight the landing page as well as letting everyone know to come visit Bartlett, with an emphasis on Small Business Saturday.

Linear TV impressions	32,000
Fox Sports App Impressions	12,365
Fox Local: CTV impressions (news on smart tv)	48,041

Fox livestream (website and app)	11,672
Website Banner Impressions	91,722
Total FOX campaign impressions	195,850

WGN RADIO SPOTS:

WGN radio had several 30 second ads running in bunches from November 18th through February 6th, that were broken down as follows:

Small Business Saturday	15 spots	11/18-11/29
Merry and Bright	15 spots	12/1-12/6
General	20 spots	1/6-1/12
Restaurant Week	25 spots	1/26-2/6

WGN RADIO HOMETOWN TAKEOVER: <https://wgnradio.com/your-hometown/video-your-hometown-bartlett/>

The video production as well as radio interviews garnered a lot of attention and were successfully achieved. There were several interviews conducted leading up to the takeover of the WGN page. Those chosen by WGN TV with consultation and approval from village staff. Interviews conducted included Bruce Suffern (Owner of Banbury/EDC commissioner), Villa Olivia, Book Lady's Attic, and More Brewing. Given the seasonality and the Park Districts willingness to help get the word out, staff pushed for Villa Olivia to be included.



The video which WGN called the *best one in years* included all the high points as well as several interviews. They interviewed President Wallace as well as Trustee Gandsey, they said two interviews' tops, but staff pushed for three given the proximity of Bartlett Hills, to which they agreed to squeeze in and Evan Blum our events coordinator represented both the food and beverage side, as well as the golf side very well.

Wgnradio.com display ads	Impressions	11,805
Bartlett content	Page views:	18,511
Bartlett content	Video views	2,231
Social media	Impressions	31,340

Restaurant Week

<https://wgntv.com/daytime-chicago/the-village-of-bartletts-first-ever-restaurant-week/>

The final media push was on WGN Morning TV, a segment leading up to our first ever restaurant week. Only two restaurants could be featured, and the two longest standing ones were chosen, TLS and Pasta Mia. They don't ever do more, but WGN liked the cultural aspect of Issa's and its geographical location in between the two establishments which made a third viable.

Social Post	Likes	512
Social Post	Impressions	75,000
Social Post	Links to website	4076
YouTube	Views	222
Television	Impressions	73,598

NEXT STEPS

Continue working with a5 in three key areas: a branding guide, Lake Street TIF, and Route 59 corridors. A branding guide will help transition a5's consultation to the ongoing general branding efforts for the Village as a whole.

The guide will serve as a comprehensive standards manual to ensure consistent and effective use of the Village's brand across all departments and communication platforms.

It will include detailed guidance on logo usage, color palette, typography, tone of voice, and applications for events, initiatives, and digital and print materials. The final deliverables will be provided in both PDF and editable InDesign formats,

offering clear examples and best practices for applying the brand across signage, the Village website, social media, and more.

As the increment for Lake Street TIF builds and the groundwork is established, staff would like to collaborate with a5 to enhance the marketing of that corridor.

Marketing is often one of the first expenses covered by TIF and is eligible for TIF funding. Additionally, other infill projects, such as those along the Route 59 corridor, could be a potential focus for the next agreement with a5.

In addition to the above tasks, staff will track key analytics, such as website visits, permits issued, vacancy rates, social media outreach, etc., following the branding campaign and report them to the EDC and Village Board periodically.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MEMORANDUM

TO: Economic Development Commission

FROM: Tony Fradin, Economic Development Coordinator

DATE: April 8, 2025

SUBJECT: Legacy Businesses

As we continue to shape the future of Bartlett's economy, it's equally important to recognize and celebrate the businesses that have helped define our past.

With that in mind, we're relaunching the *Bartlett Legacy Business* program in 2025, with a timely new focus: honoring the businesses that have been part of the Bartlett community for 25 years or more.

The theme — *25 Years in 2025* — connects perfectly with our broader "Belong in Bartlett" branding.

This effort aims to formally recognize and celebrate the businesses that have shown extraordinary longevity, resilience, and commitment to Bartlett.

These long-standing businesses are more than just local establishments — they are institutions. They help create a sense of place, serve as community touchstones, and represent the very best of Bartlett's entrepreneurial spirit.

Across towns and cities nationwide, legacy businesses often serve as emotional anchors for residents — the go-to pizza place, the trusted salon, the reliable auto shop, the friendly retail store.

They are businesses where relationships are built, stories are shared, and generations feel connected. In Bartlett, these businesses have helped weave the social and economic fabric of our village for decades. They've weathered economic cycles, changes in leadership, evolving consumer trends, and a global pandemic — and they're still here, serving our community with pride.

Our revitalized Legacy Business program invites any business that opened in 1999 or earlier to register and be officially recognized by the Village.

Registered businesses will receive a special commemorative certificate and promotional materials for display, featured in village publications and on our website, and have the opportunity to share their stories with the broader community.



We'll also explore opportunities to include them in community events, social media spotlights, and possibly even a recognition ceremony or reception later in the year.

We want to use it as an opportunity to reinforce what it means to *Belong in Bartlett* — that this is a place where businesses can take root and grow for the long haul.

By shining a light on those who have done just that, we're helping inspire a future generation of entrepreneurs to see Bartlett as a community where their business can thrive for 25 years and beyond.