



VILLAGE OF BARTLETT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
DRAFT MINUTES
February 10, 2025

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.



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