



VILLAGE OF BARTLETT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES
May 12, 2025

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Kubaszko called the regular meeting of the May 12, 2025 Economic Development Commission (EDC) of the Village of Bartlett to order at 7:00 PM

2. ROLL CALL

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

ABSENT: Commissioner Lewensky

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

3. APPROVAL OF April 14, 2025, MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Gorski, Seconded by Densford

MOTION CARRIED

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

5. TL'S FOUR SEASONS BEDA REQUEST

Mr. Fradin stated that we have had some long-time downtown businesses apply for BEDA grants in the past several years including Pasta Mia and Banbury Fair. This is another one. TL's Four Seasons is a well-known Chinese and Japanese restaurant in downtown Bartlett for the past 20 years.

Last month, Commissioner Gorski asked about the status of BEDA grants, and I mentioned we were working with one new restaurant and one long-term restaurant. The long-term restaurant is TL's Four Seasons, owned by Mr. Li, who is here tonight to discuss his business and project.

This is Mr. Li's first BEDA application. I cannot recall any prior village programs or incentives he's applied for, and he participates in village events like Restaurant Week and hosts a big Chinese New Year's celebration annually.



VILLAGE OF BARTLETT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES
May 12, 2025

His restaurant has been featured on television, independent of village events. It's a well-known downtown Bartlett establishment that attracts customers from beyond village boundaries.

The restaurant offers good food, excellent service, a beautiful atmosphere, and fair prices.

Mr. Li recently completed an interior refresh, which wasn't part of this BEDA application as it was not an eligible expense. Having been in business for 20 years, as of early this year, they've refurbished the interior.

Tonight Mr. Li is here to discuss plans to improve the exterior of his building. We've been encouraging him to participate in the BEDA program for about six years, specifically to improve signage. We're glad he's taking this step forward.

The packet includes renderings of a new red sign that lights up, along with a new awning. The exterior paint is part of the facade improvement tied to the new sign, distinct from interior painting, which isn't BEDA-eligible.

You're not approving the sign itself tonight but are considering a grant to reimburse Mr. Li for these improvements.

He's been working with our planning and development staff. The proposed 48-square-foot sign is based on the 48-foot width of his building's frontage. Mr. Li owns the building, so no landlord approval is needed.

The project costs include \$9,600 for sign-related painting, approximately \$9,000 for the awning, and \$14,000 for removing the old sign, electrical work, and installing the new sign, totaling about \$33,000.

We're recommending a 50% rebate, as is typical for signage. We've approved one BEDA grant for about \$10,000 this year, and the program remains fully funded. I'll now open it up for questions and invite Mr. Li to speak or address any questions I can't answer.

Mr. Li introduced himself as the owner of TL's Four Seasons.

Mr. Li described his business as having been in Bartlett for over 20 years and always appreciates the support from the village and residents.

Bartlett has our most loyal customers, compared to our former locations in Barrington and Roselle. We recently refreshed the interior after customer feedback about it being outdated. The results exceeded expectations, with customers commenting on how nice, new, and refreshing it feels.



VILLAGE OF BARTLETT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES
May 12, 2025

The positive feedback encouraged us to consider updating the exterior as well, given the building's high visibility near the downtown train station.

Our current wooden sign is old and low-key. Customers have joked it's like negative advertising. After discussions with the sign company, we decided on a larger, modern, yet classic design inspired by old Chicago or Vegas signs. It's simple, internally lit, and not flashy, ensuring it's visible without being disruptive.

We believe it will remain attractive for years. Any questions about the sign?

Commissioner Gorski asked if the sign meets facade size regulations.

Mr. Fradin replied that it is correct. We've worked through several iterations with Mr. Li and our planning staff to ensure it meets code.

Commissioner Suffern praised Mr. Li's investment in downtown Bartlett, noting his role as a pillar in transforming the area when few businesses were willing to invest.

Commissioner Perri noted the new sign is big and bright, but there's a suggestion to clarify that TL's Four Seasons is a restaurant, as some might mistake it for a heating and air conditioning business.

Mr. Li responded that earlier renderings included "Chinese and Japanese" on the sign, but the text became too small for visibility. Given the restaurant's 20-year presence and name recognition among Bartlett residents, they opted for a simple "TL's Four Seasons" design.

Additional restaurant and sushi open signs by the window will provide further clarity.

The new sign's size and lighting will ensure it's noticeable, addressing past issues where customers couldn't locate the restaurant. Mr. Li emphasizes the need to actively reach out to customers with physical signs and social media in today's market, unlike the old saying that good wine sells itself.

Mr. Li noted the restaurant's steady business through the pandemic and beyond, with kitchen staff averaging 10 years of tenure, rare in the industry.

The refresh aims to strengthen and sustain the business. The new sign will be visible from the train, unlike the current one, which is unreadable due to the small size and excessive text.

Mr. Li shares that the interior redesign, developed over seven to eight months with a designer, features iconic Tokyo and Osaka street scenes. Customers familiar with Japan



VILLAGE OF BARTLETT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES
May 12, 2025

recognize these settings, and the printing creates an immersive, almost 3D effect under the right lighting, resembling a Japanese street restaurant. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

Commissioner Suffern highlights the building's historic significance in Bartlett, noting its productive use for future generations. Mr. Li confirms extensive upgrades to the building's interior, upstairs, downstairs, and basement, making it nearly brand new.

With no further comments, a motion was made by Commissioner Erickson to approve the BEDA grant for TL's Four Seasons in the amount of approximately \$16,500, or 50% of the actual cost. Second by Commissioner Gorski.

MOTION CARRIED BY A UNANIMOUS ROLL CALL VOTE

Tony stated that the positive recommendation will be forwarded to an upcoming village board committee meeting for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Li, for your input.

6. EDC Meeting Time Change Discussion

Commissioner Erickson initiated a discussion on changing the EDC meeting times to increase participation and interest from the business community.

A memo was shared highlighting meeting times of other local communities' economic or business development commissions, including:

- Hanover Park: 12:30 PM
- Hinsdale and Elmhurst: 8:45 AM or 7:45 AM
- Hoffman Estates: 2:00 PM (as needed)
- West Chicago: 10:30 AM
- Wayne: 10:00 AM
- Geneva: 8:00 AM
- St. Charles: 7:00 PM
- Bloomingdale: 6:00 PM
- Streamwood: 10:00 AM

The discussion focused on moving the EDC meetings from 7:00 PM to a daytime slot to encourage greater attendance, particularly from chamber members and business owners.

Key points raised included:

- Chamber Perspective (Kirsten Erickson): The 7:00 PM time is challenging for chamber members, who often go home after work and are reluctant to return for



VILLAGE OF BARTLETT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES
May 12, 2025

evening meetings. Daytime meetings could increase awareness of programs like BEDA grants and the branding campaign, fostering collaboration with the chamber.

- Commissioner Concerns (Bruce Suffern): Daytime meetings may exclude potential future commissioners who work 9-to-5 jobs. Historically, the 7:00 PM time was chosen to accommodate working commissioners. Commissioner Suffern suggested a 5:30 PM meeting before the Village Board's 7:00 PM meeting, but this idea was not pursued due to past discussions rejecting it.
- Bettering the EDC (Robert Gorski): If this improves the EDC, he is all for it. He does not want to change it only for convenience purposes. If it does not change anything, he does not see the benefit of changing the meeting time.
- Public Engagement (Kirsten Erickson): Daytime meetings could attract business representatives, as many companies allow employees to participate in community activities during work hours. Commissioner Erickson noted that chamber events during the day see good attendance, suggesting a similar outcome for EDC meetings.
- Agenda Relevance (Robert Perri): Questioned whether daytime meetings would significantly increase public participation, given the EDC's primary role of approving BEDA grants and reviewing economic programs. He expressed skepticism about attracting public comment without compelling agenda items.
- Logistical Considerations (Scott): Proposed a Zoom option to accommodate commissioners unable to attend in person during the day. Meetings must be recorded, making Village Hall the preferred location due to the existing recording infrastructure. Offsite meetings (e.g., at a restaurant) were deemed impractical due to recording and noise issues.
- Trial Period Proposal: Commissioner Erickson proposed moving the EDC meetings to 1:00 PM on the second Monday of each month, with a Zoom option, for a six-month trial period to evaluate its impact.

Motion by Erickson, seconded by Suffern, to move EDC meetings to 1:00 PM on the second Monday of each month, with a Zoom option, for a six-month trial period.

Vote:

- Bruce Suffern: Yes
- Robert Gorski: No
- Mike Densford: Yes
- Benedett Gutenoff: Yes
- Robert Perri: No
- Kirsten Ericson: Yes
- Jerry Kabazko: Yes

Result: Motion carried 5-2. The EDC will schedule its next meeting at 1:00 PM on the second Monday of the month, likely starting in June, pending agenda finalization.



VILLAGE OF BARTLETT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES
May 12, 2025

Additional Notes:

- Agenda Timing (Tony): Agendas are typically finalized the Wednesday or Thursday before the meeting due to delays in BEDA grant applications. Efforts will be made to finalize agendas earlier to allow the chamber to promote meetings.
- Public Engagement Strategies: Suggestions included promoting agendas via the chamber, leveraging Zoom for virtual participation, and tying EDC meetings to chamber events to boost attendance. The “You Belong” campaign could be used to market EDC meetings as a low-key forum for residents to share opinions.
- Room Availability: Village Hall’s master calendar will be checked to reserve the room for 1:00 PM meetings. No recurring conflicts are expected on Mondays.

7. New Business:

- Lake Street TIF Update (Tony): No imminent developments, but potential developers are exploring the area. Discussions continue, with some “tire kickers” evaluating suitability.
- Apartment Building by Town Center (Scott): Still under discussion, with no final updates.
- Branding Phase Two (Scott): The Village Board will discuss phase two of the branding campaign at its next meeting, focusing on economic development and outward marketing. The EDC will review similar recommendations to previous ad buys.
- Chamber Golf Outing (Kirsten Erickson): The chamber is hosting a golf outing on Thursday, reinstating a ball drop to fund a scholarship for employees of chamber member businesses. The goal is to sell 117 more balls to fully fund the scholarship.

8. Adjournment

Motion by Suffern, seconded by Gudenkauf, to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM.

Next Meeting: Second Monday of June, 1:00 PM, Village Hall (with Zoom option).

Minutes prepared by Tony Fradin