

**City of Darien**  
**Minutes Economic Development Committee**  
**Monday, April 12, 2021**

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Chairwoman Tina Beilke. Other committee members present were: Robert Hahn, Nick Pitzer, Louis Mallers and Matthew Weberling. Also present were Mayor Joseph Marchese and Alderwoman (EDC Committee liaison) Mary Sullivan.

**2. Public Comment**

Darien Chamber of Commerce April Padalik and Tom Papais were present and contributed to discussions under Old Business item a).

**3. Approval of Minutes – March 11, 2021**

Minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

**4. New Business**

There was no New Business.

**5. Old Business**

**a) Business Community Spotlight Events– Coordination with City, EDC, and Darien Chamber of Commerce**

- i. Springtime – A Nice Time to Shop in Darien** – The Darien Chamber of Commerce will create a list of businesses in Darien, regardless if they are Chamber members or not, to give them the opportunity to participate in this program. The program will consist of advertising the participant’s business specials, and those businesses participating will be included in a *The Chicago Tribune* advertisement and social media the City of Darien puts out as well as The Darien Chamber of Commerce pages. Plans for the program would be months of May and June (Spring) and a Fall one.

**Virtual Business Expos** – An in-depth discussion took place regarding additional ways to promote businesses in Darien. All present agreed the best way to start was with an enhancement to the City’s website where it would create a hyperlink to each business listed. Currently only the name and address are listed. This hyperlink would take you directly to the businesses’ website where if a video was made of the business it can be placed on the front page for all visitors to see. If a business does not have a website, then a hyperlink to their email address would be listed in addition to the name and address instead.

**In Person Business Introductions** – This initiative was already under way (pre-CoVid-19) and had been done before on a lesser scale. The enhancements discussed were to have more business invited to City Council meetings. As many as 1-3 depending on the City Council’s agenda that evening. In addition, the business could use the video tape from the council meeting to create a video to place on their website as well. The businesses lined up for the Council meetings would be strategically invited based on a number of factors--new businesses to town, anniversary dates of businesses, and businesses that fit into any Commemorative Observances (i.e. African American History month, Women’s History month, etc.). The businesses would be promoted on Direct Connect at that time as well.

**Business Coffee and Donut Reception** – Previous attempts to hold a coffee and donut gathering was hosted by The Chamber in the past and were attended well in beginning, but then attendance dropped off. Feedback was having first thing the morning is hard for people to be away from their business. Having an event later in the day was discussed and a recent activity done during the hours of 4:00-6:30 was received more favorably. The Committee discussed tabling this item since we have all the other initiatives going on at the same time. Committee agreed we should come back to this item at a later date.

**b) New Business Licenses and Renewals – Notification to EDC and The Darien Chamber of Commerce**

A process is in place now where City Staff will alert Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Committee of new business licenses issued. The Mayor requested that the EDC Committee draft a welcoming package for City review. The package would be delivered either by email as a PDF or hand delivered in person by an EDC member. A welcome letter from the Mayor and an application to join the Chamber of Commerce were some of the items discussed that could be included in packet. A member of the EDC Committee would schedule a welcoming visit to the new business, in addition to doing a follow up visit after about 3 months.

- c) **City of Darien Business Marketing Video** – External ways to promote video to businesses and community were discussed. A previous presentation was done at one of our community organization meetings but it didn't hold the level of attention necessary. Potential to showcase at any City functions/expos the City holds would be a good fit.

## **6. Previous Follow Up/Hanging Matters**

Economic Interest Statements due 5/3/2021

## **7. Next Scheduled Meeting**

Next scheduled meeting is Thursday, May 6, 2021.

## **8. Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.