

**INVER GROVE HEIGHTS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2020 – 8150 BARBARA AVENUE**

1 & 2 CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL The Economic Development Authority (EDA) of Inver Grove Heights met on Monday, February 10, 2020, in the City Hall Council Chambers. President Piekarski-Krech called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Present were Economic Development Authority Members Bartholomew, Dietrich, Perry, and Tourville; Executive Director Rand, City Attorney Kuntz, City Administrator Lynch, City Clerk Kiernan, and Secretary Fox.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes

Motion by Bartholomew, second by Dietrich, to approve the minutes from the November 12, 2019 Regular Economic Development Authority Meeting.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0 Motion carried

B. Claims

Motion by Bartholomew, second by Perry, to approve the disbursements from November 13, 2019 to February 10, 2020.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0 Motion carried

C. Progress Plus Activity Report

Executive Director Rand advised that Jennifer Gale was not able to attend tonight's meeting. She advised that the *Small Business Guide* is available on the City's website. This guide outlines services, resources, and the process for businesses to use if they wish to start up or expand.

Motion by Tourville, second by Perry, to receive the Progress Plus Activity Report.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0 Motion carried

4. REGULAR AGENDA

A. Election of Officers

Motion by Bartholomew, second by Tourville, to elect Piekarski Krech as President, Bartholomew as Vice-President, Tourville as Treasurer, City Finance Director as Assistant Treasurer, and the Executive Director's Designee as Secretary.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0 Motion carried

B. Introduction of Karen Schaffhausen, Business Advisor, Dakota County ‘Open to Business’ Program

Executive Director Rand advised that the City’s ‘Open to Business’ Business Advisor, Karen Schaffhausen, was unable to attend tonight’s meeting. Rand suggested they invite Ms. Schaffhausen to the next EDA meeting at which time she will provide Boardmembers with a written activity report showing how she is connecting with entrepreneurs in IGH. Ms. Schaffhausen provides free professional confidential counseling to small businesses and entrepreneurs and is especially adept at marketing plans. Anyone thinking of starting or expanding a small business should consider reaching out to her.

C. Presentation by Eric Satre, Executive Director of Inver Grove Heights Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB)

CVB Executive Director Eric Satre advised that the mission of the CVB is to market and promote IGH to visitors and to maintain and stimulate the community’s economic vitality. He is a staff of one but is supported by a Board of Directors made up of representatives from local businesses, all four hotels and the city’s Community Development Director. The Board approved four CVB goals for 2019, including 1) discover new sales opportunities, 2) increase awareness of the CBV and the city of IGH as a destination, 3) maintain digital advertising, and 4) grow the website/social media presence of the CVB. He provided several examples of how he is pursuing these goals.

Mr. Satre explained the CVB’s 2020 projects and initiatives, including marketing IGH as a destination, creating a promotional video of IGH, increasing sales efforts, and developing a tourism map that connects all the City’s assets (i.e. parks, hotels, landmarks, medical facilities, etc.).

Boardmember Bartholomew asked what the EDA/City Council could do to help the CVB.

Mr. Satre replied that he will forward suggestions on once he has met with the City Communications staff to go over their goals.

President Piekarski Krech asked what marketing initiatives the CVB was using to get people to stay at IGH hotels.

Mr. Satre advised that people stay in IGH for various reasons (i.e. business travel, education, sports-related, etc.). One of the biggest benefits IGH has is its location is in close proximity to so many Twin Cities assets. For people not wanting to stay right in Minneapolis/St. Paul he has been marketing IGH as accessible, affordable, and with free parking. This spring he plans to lay out some marketing campaigns and will employ the use of geofencing and Facebook.

Boardmember Tourville asked if reports were still being generated regarding website hits.

Mr. Satre replied in the affirmative and offered to provide that information to the EDA. He advised that overall website traffic was down, but the quality of the traffic was better.

President Piekarski Krech asked if the CVB had information on how many people looked on the website and then booked an IGH hotel.

Mr. Satre replied in the affirmative. He stated the VisitIGH.com website allows visitors to see what hotels are in the city, what their rates are, etc.

Executive Director Rand asked for information on the 2019 trends and revenue.

Mr. Satre replied that historically the peak season has been May-October. In 2019 they had the best July and August ever, but revenues fell off in October. To counterbalance that he cut back on expenses. He was not sure why this occurred; one possibility is that contract work by construction workers for MNDOT or Flint Hills Refinery that stay at hotels ended earlier than anticipated. He noted that they can collect up to 30 days lodging tax. There is a possibility that some stayed longer than 30 days and could no longer be charged lodging tax.

President Tourville asked if the 30-day rule was a State guideline.

Mr. Satre replied in the affirmative.

Boardmember Bartholomew asked if other communities experienced a downturn in October as well.

Mr. Satre replied that Eagan saw a bit of a downturn as well.

Boardmember Tourville asked if IGH was on the low side amongst the metro cities charging lodging tax.

Mr. Satre replied that most metro cities charge a lodging tax; the State allows up to 3% and IGH is at 2%.

D. Executive Directors Report

Executive Director Rand provided an update of some of the economic development activities staff are currently working on. One involves a long-term manufacturer in the City who is considering an expansion. Like many employers they are challenged with finding a quality workforce. Staff is identifying resources and working with IHCC and the Dakota County Workforce Center on a plan to continue to grow the local workforce. She also plans to visit at least 15 of IGH's larger employers every year and is beginning to schedule those now. Interim IHCC President Michael Berndt has offered to join her on these visits. Rand advised that she and city planning staff have met with at least six groups interested in discussing the development of high-density housing projects within our community. Many would require rezoning or a subsidy. One of the proposed projects would be a partnership with Dakota County CDA to develop a workforce housing project on Concord Boulevard.

Boardmember Bartholomew asked if the CDA property was shovel ready as far as infrastructure.

Executive Director Rand replied they were just beginning to look into that; there may be changes to the access and utilities, and the need for a possible street vacation.

Boardmember Bartholomew hoped that everyone was looking at potential roadblocks ahead of time so they could meet the timeline.

Executive Director Rand advised that she connected with the Union Pacific Railroad consultant. They have agreed to meet in March regarding identifying a timeline for the Railroad Quiet Zone project to proceed.

Executive Director Rand advised that there has been an uptick in airport noise complaints from IGH residents pertaining to the MSP Airport. In response to this, a listening session has been scheduled for April 22 at 7 PM with the MAC Board and representatives. Concerned citizens are encouraged to attend.

President Piekarski Krech asked if the number to call for noise complaints was publicized.

Executive Director Rand replied that the telephone number was listed on the City's website.

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Executive Director Rand advised that Inver Point Business Park developer United Properties are in negotiations with a tenant which will hopefully result in summer 2020 construction.

Executive Director Rand stated she received inquiries from two sizable companies about the potential for rezoning property along Highway 52/55 to office/warehouse from current residential zoning. Rand asked them to provide additional details and will encourage them to have conversations with existing property owners in those areas noting this may be an opportunity for rezoning and small area plan to be developed.

Boardmember Tourville asked if the 2019 Community Development Annual Report was available on the City's website.

Executive Director Rand advised that she would get that posted to the website and was also planning on including a summary story in the April *Insights* newsletter. She noted some of the highlights of the report include the construction of over 100 single-family homes in addition to 72 units of multi-housing.

5. NEXT MEETING: May 11, 2020

6. ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Perry, second by Tourville, to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 6:36 p.m.