City of Crystal Lake Economic Development Committee
August 24, 2010 – 7:30 a.m.
Municipal Complex – Council Chambers Executive Conference Room

Call to Order
The meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m.

Roll Call/Attendance
Members Affrunti, Feddersen, Fowler, Riley, Viger and Haleblian were present. Members Bawolek and Johnson were absent.

James Richter II, Assistant Director of Economic Development, Michelle Rentzsch, Director of Planning and Economic Development, and Rachel Palya, Planning and Economic Development Department Intern, were present from staff. Also in attendance were Gary Reece, President of the Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce, Tom Stephani with Stephani Enterprises, and Jack Minero with Prudential First Realty.

Approve minutes of the May 25th; June 29th; July 19th , and July 27, 2010 EDC meetings
Mr. Haleblian said this will be taken up later in the meeting when there is a quorum.

Public participation and comments
There was none at this time.

PROPERTY TAX PRESENTATION BY TOM STEPHANI
Mr. Stephani stated there is not much housing being built and the concern is with the type and cost of housing. Affordable housing is difficult to attain even with mortgage rates that are low and the construction costs are being held down. He said real estate taxes are about 1/3 of the cost of a home. Mr. Stephani said many people don't protest their tax bill. He feels that the housing prices will be flat for some time and the assessors need to re-assess the values of the homes that are used to determine the taxes on a property. It is his understanding that Algonquin Township is looking at lowering the assessed value of all properties within the township. The school districts will be hit the hardest since they are capped and can't increase their tax revenue. Mr. Stephani said people need to be at the taxing bodies meetings when they discuss their tax rates for the year, and most of the time the rate approvals are snuck in. The quickest way to reduce your assessment is to talk with the assessor. They need to be sure our tax bills are fair.

Mr. Stephani said the tax bills have gotten more complex and your property needs to be appraised. You will also need comparables which are similar properties and what they are valued at. He also suggested checking your neighbors' properties which is easily done on-line. Mr. Stephani added that you need to print and review the rules for protesting your tax bill and be aware of the dates that items are due. He added that you need to start well in advance to gather your information.

Approve minutes of the May 25th; June 29th; July 19th , and July 27, 2010 EDC meetings
Mr. Riley moved to approve the minutes from the May 25, 2010 EDC meeting as presented. Mr. Fowler seconded the motion. On roll call, members Affrunti, Feddersen, Fowler, Riley, and Haleblian voted aye. Ms. Viger abstained. Motion passed.

Mr. Riley moved to approve the minutes of the June 29, 2010 EDC meeting as presented. Mr. Fowler seconded the motion. On roll call, members Affrunti, Feddersen, Fowler, Riley, Viger and Haleblian voted aye. Motion passed.

Mr. Riley moved to approve the minutes of the July 19, 2010 Special EDC meeting as presented. Mr. Fowler seconded the motion. On roll call, members Affrunti, Feddersen, Fowler, Riley, Viger and Haleblian voted aye. Motion passed.

Mr. Riley moved to approve the minutes of the July 27, 2010 EDC meeting as presented. Mr. Fowler seconded the motion. On roll call, members Affrunti, Feddersen, Fowler, and Riley voted aye. Members Viger and Haleblian abstained.

EDC PROJECTS

I Shop Crystal Lake

Rewards program and Website status

Mr. Richter said staff is moving forward with the rewards card and the Shop QA website and gave a quick overview of the program. He said there will need to be approvals from the Committee to move forward. He is very pleased that the company with the best price is a local company.

Mr. Affrunti said the flyers look good and are very bright and young looking. Ms. Viger said she prefers the flyer showing the shopping bags. She suggested moving the "Rewards Program Loyalty Card" to be on one line. Mr. Reece suggested that we keep with the I Shop being all in lower case letters.

Mr. Richter asked about the table tents. Mr. Haleblian said it would be lost on his counter. Mr. Affrunti said he could see the tents being used by restaurants. Ms. Rentzsch suggested that the colors from the flyer be used on the tents.

Mr. Richter said the list of businesses that were compiled from various groups (Chamber, I Shop members, Dunn and Bradstreet Listing, etc.) have been sent to Gov QA for them to start working on the website. He said staff has been informed that the turnaround time is about 3 weeks. Ms. Viger said this will be unveiled possibly in October. Mr. Richter said yes. Ms. Viger said that will be in time for the holiday shopping season.

Mr. Affrunti moved to approve the Rewards card design and vendor, Minuteman Press of Crystal Lake in the amount of $1,900, the Table tent design shall be modified to include the colors and part of the layout of the flyer design, and the Flyer design showing the shopping bags with slight modifications shall be used for the I Shop Crystal Lake Rewards Program. Mr. Riley seconded the motion. On voice vote, all members voted aye. Motion passed.

Public participation and comments

Mr. Stephani asked if he could make a comment for the public portion of the meeting. He stated that the McHenry County Housing Committee will be hosting a presentation on December 7 possibly at McHenry County College to discuss the benefits of housing instead of discouraging homeownership.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES UPDATE

Façade and Commercial Tenant Improvement Program; Targeted Development Zone

Mr. Richter stated that one application has been sent to Council so far and was approved. It was for life safety improvements at the Commons. He also reviewed the list of businesses who have taken advantage of the targeted development zone incentive and they are very appreciative of the reduction in the costs of the permits.

STAFF PROJECTS

Attraction

Recap – ICSC Chicagoland Retail Connection Meeting – August 12, 2010; Retail attraction packages sent and responses

Mr. Richter said he and Ms. Rentzsch had attended the ICSC meeting in downtown Chicago. They received information on retailers interested in expanding in our area. He has sent information to those retailers and will follow up with them in shortly. Ms. Rentzsch stated that in the past few years the moods of those attending the meeting were very solemn but this year's meeting had more energy and excitement.

Mr. Richter said there was a lot of buzz about the Three Oaks Recreational Area. Also companies are in contact with other companies who are already in Crystal Lake and finding out how their businesses are doing. Ms. Rentzsch said it is very helpful that Jameson's Restaurant is doing so well.

Retention

Business Park Meeting – Wednesday, May 25, 2010

Mr. Richter said the business park meeting at Terra Cotta Tech will be held tomorrow at 3:30 p.m. Ms. Palya said they have received 8 RSVPs for the meeting and are hoping that more show up at the last minute. Mr. Richter said this is a different approach to taking information to the business community and building relationships.

Organization Reports:

Downtown Crystal Lake

Mr. Fowler said the new sidewalks are going in and the lunch in the park will be this week.

Mr. Haleblian said he attended the micro car show over the weekend and it was very well attended. He could not believe the number of foreign languages he heard being spoken at the show. This was a great event for the entire area. Mr. Weger desires kudos for this event and it was free to the public. Mr. Richter said Mr. Weger worked on this event for more than three years.

Committee for Business Support

Mr. Reece said the Chamber will be hosting a forum to the held at Woodstock North High School on September 20. They understand that Bill Brady, who is running for Governor, will be there from 7 to 8 p.m. He said questions, which will be business related, will be submitted and asked of the candidate.

McHenry County Economic Development Corporation

Mr. Fowler said the MCEDC is working on business retention and attracting new businesses to the area.

Mr. Haleblian asked about the company who was interested in the former Motorola building in Harvard. Mr. Minero said he had heard that the company was only using it for leverage to get a better deal on the site they were interested in near Naperville.

City of Crystal Lake

Mr. Richter said he has included in the packet for the EDC copies of the Council and PZC agendas. If there are any petitions the EDC members are interested in more information, please let us know.

Comments from the Committee

Mr. Fowler asked if a date for the tour of Knaack has been determined. He feels this is very important that we acknowledge this major employer that has been in town for 50 years. Mr. Richer stated that he would ensure that the tour was organized and confirmed for everyone.

Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 a.m.