

VILLAGE OF RIVERSIDE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING
Thursday, February 13, 2020
Riverside Township Hall – Room 30
27 Riverside Road, Riverside, IL 60546

1. **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by 7:05 PM

2. **Roll Call**

Present: CHAIRPERSON KRISTINE HERBST
COMMISSIONER JENNIFER FOURNIER
COMMISSIONER BRIDGET DOHERTY
COMMISSIONER AMY JACKSIC
COMMISSIONER SUZANNE KAHLE

Absent: COMMISSIONER BRIAN PLAIN
COMMISSIONER JACK BUOSCIO

Also Present: Eric Wagner, Visit Oak Park
Trustee Elizabeth Peters
CD Director Abt (arrived at 8:20)
Management Analyst Bouman

3. **Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

4. **Chairperson Update**

CHAIRPERSON HERBST welcomed Amy Jacksic as the new Economic Development Commission member.

5. **Review 2019 marketing campaign results and discussion and recommendations to Staff and Visit Oak Park on the 2020 marketing partnership with Visit Oak Park.**

Eric Wagner with Visit Oak Park (VOP) gave a PowerPoint presentation to the commission (Exhibit A). He provided the commission with information regarding their yearly re-certification process with the State of Illinois Tourism Bureau. The re-certification process helps determine the VOP regional tourism bureau budget. President Sells sent signed letter to VOP signaling the Village's intent to continue membership as a VOP member community.

Mr. Wagner provided details on the VOP "digital transformation." He said that their digital transformation has included developing the Visit Oak Park Digital Marketing Hub. He highlighted that the Hub is central to VOP's "always on" strategy to provide highly targeted, 365 day per year marketing. He said the Hub will enable VOP to collect and capitalize on data collection.

Mr. Wagner informed the Commission that, as part of their pivot in strategy, VOP will be hiring an Agency of Record to handle the creative and digital marketing functions of VOP's marketing. To this end, VOP has scaled back internal staffing levels and issued an RFP closing 2/21/2020.

Mr. Wagner went over the VOP timeline. Their plan for the Riverside Community Page is to increase total content, including new videos, photos, articles, events, and business listings. Mr. Wagner hopes to have a team in place by March and currently has a writer on staff. The commission is invited to the Visit Oak Park Annual Meeting which will showcase their recent and future work, including the Urban Local Made Campaign. Mr. Wagner envisions this campaign as an umbrella for artisans in the VOP area. The commission watched a video produced for the Urban Local Made Campaign from Irish Times in Brookfield. Mr. Wagner asked the commission for ideas on what other businesses they would like featured in promotional videos.

Mr. Wagner provided a recap of VOP's Fiscal Year 2019 Riverside Digital Advertising Campaign materials and

strategies, along with campaign results. The results were positive. He highlighted some insights and results from the campaign. The campaign was most successful with women 35 and older. Visit Oak Park recommended tailoring future content towards women. They also highlighted the need for more content in the form of new and different creative.

Mr. Wagner asked the commission for their thoughts and recommendations. COMMISSIONER FOURNIER would like to see the impressions per person metric drop a little. She recommends that VOP should not target people who live in Riverside to expand the reach of the campaign. COMMISSIONER JACKSIC asked whether Quincy Street Distillery received an uptick of traffic and customers after their video ad was launched. Mr. Wagner did not know, but said he would check on that. There was consensus among Commissioners that any campaign should highlight the connections between and proximity of Brookfield Zoo and Riverside.

The Commissioners and Mr. Wagner discussed the 2020 budget as presented in the draft engagement letter (Exhibit B). Mr. Wagner confirms with EDC and TRUSTEE PETERS that he will present before the Village Board on March 19th. He added that video production and other asset generation activities are paid for by VOP and that they plan to use Riverside's 2020 budget entirely for marketing.

The development of new content will be a central theme for Visit Oak Park in fiscal year 2020. Mr. Wagner asked for the EDC's ideas and opinions for new content including businesses to focus on, itineraries for a visit to Riverside, and other stories to pursue.

Management Analyst Bouman presented the EDC with a list of businesses in the Village compiled for the survey of local businesses requested of Staff by the EDC.

Restaurants of interest that were highlighted by the Commissioners included: Nada, EmpanadUS.
Other businesses highlighted by the Commissioners: Shamrock Garden Florist, Ivins-Moravecek Funeral Home (good interview)

Commissioners brought up businesses without storefronts and suggested video as a good medium to promote them. COMMISSIONER FOURNIER suggested content highlighting an Architect's perspective of Riverside. She highlighted that there are many creatives in Riverside and suggested other professionals (writers, photographers) whose perspectives on the Village would make compelling content. There was general agreement that this was a productive avenue to explore and develop further.

The Commission discussed several ideas:

- Regarding the Desplaines River
 - TRUSTEE PETERS mentioned promotion of the river.
 - Fostering connection to the riverfront was discussed in the CMAP plan.
 - The abundance of trails and opportunities for kayaking and other water recreation
- Regarding Outdoor Recreation
 - Promoting outdoor recreation opportunities in conjunction with promoting restaurants and businesses
 - It was noted that, while these experience do not directly generate economic activity, there are myriad ways to tie them in with local businesses on VOP itineraries
 - Promoting bike trails and walking tours.
 - Highlighting the nearby bike trails - including the Salt Creek trail
- Regarding Businesses
 - Colorsmith was mentioned
 - White Fence Farms was mentioned
 - Riverside Food's craft beer and olive oil sections were mentioned along with their collaboration with Buckledown Brewery on two Riverside beers.

Mr. Wagner mentioned the concept of "ok I'm already here in town, what's next for me to do"; he used this idea to illustrate the utility of devising itineraries for the Riverside VOP page.

COMMISSIONER FOURNIER asked Mr. Wagner if there was a pacing schedule for content posts. He said there is not.

Mr. Wagner discussed the timeline. He requested that the Commissioners send additional content ideas. Staff was directed to compile the commissioners' ideas and send to VOP.

Mr. Wagner mentioned Chicago's Restaurant Week and Commissioner's mentioned that The Chew Chew hosts their own during the week of Chicago's. The EDC and Mr. Wagner hoped for Open House Chicago to expand into the suburbs in the near future. There was consensus that Riverside would be well suited for the event with its density of historic and architecturally significant sites.

TRUSTEE PETERS asked if VOP partners with real estate agents in Chicago to promote the near western suburbs. She stated that people who want to buy in the suburbs want to visit the suburbs. Mr. Wagner agreed, and highlighted the importance of tourism to real estate.

The Commission thanked Mr. Wagner for his presentation.

Mr. Wagner left.

The EDC discussed the engagement letter. COMMISSIONER DOHERTY questioned whether the EDC might want more frequent performance reports than the stated "Semi or Annual" frequency. COMMISSIONER FOURNIER stated that the EDC would want useful benchmarks that are comparable to other VOP communities. COMMISSIONER KAHLE stated that they want a concrete commitment regarding which metrics will be shared by VOP.

CD Director Abt joined the meeting.

Director Abt suggested that the EDC could require reports from VOP every two months, in advance of regular EDC meetings. Management Analyst Bouman added that VOP campaign metrics will be useful outside of just measuring the success of VOP. They can be instructive for the EDC's own social media too. The EDC agreed that every other month reports from VOP was the desired frequency.

6. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 PM