

Darien Economic Development Committee

March 11, 2021

Call to order: 7:08 pm

Darien City Council Chambers

Members Present: Tina Beilke, Robert Hahn, Matthew Weberling, and Angelo Imbrogno

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

Approval of February 4, 2021 Minutes – Minutes were approved as presented by unanimous vote.

New Business –

- A. CoVid-19 lifted restrictions -EDC strategy. Strategy and short-term goals for EDC were discussed. With Spring coming the committee thought a spotlight focus on businesses over the next few weeks would be good timing for a celebration that businesses are open again. Showcasing businesses in a strategic way was discussed. For example, to promote a landscaping business in the first wave as Spring is a busy season for them. We talked about having City staff, elected officials, members of EDC and a member(s) of the Chamber present would be a collaboration method that would be most effective. Promos could be provided to attendees either through the City, the business, or both.

Old Business –

- A. Chamber of Commerce Integration Discussions – Strategy of Chamber of Commerce was discussed with Chamber members present. Events planned to date for 2021 were shared. EDC will help spread the word and promote these events. Brainstorming followed wherein an idea was brought forward where both EDC and The Chamber should be notified when new businesses open in Darien. A coordination effort between EDC and Chamber would then be made where a welcome reach out call and/or visit would be made, along with a follow up after 3-6 months. One of the conclusions was that more visibility and participation is needed between City Staff, Elected officials, EDC and member(s) of Chamber to demonstrate support of businesses and making business appreciation a clear coordinated priority for The City.
- B. COVID-19 Calls to All Businesses – Additional feedback was provided from phone calls made to businesses. It is clear that businesses enjoy these calls and are appreciative that the City cares and appreciates them. One massage establishment said business was doing very well and fully booked due to people looking to them for some stress relief. One former tenant of Darien said they had to move out due to rent increases and finding another location for much less per month in a neighboring town.

Previous Follow Up – Question was brought up on where the City’s business marketing videos were being shared. Members are aware it is posted on The City’s website but a discussion ensued about how to help push that video message out to the community through our many volunteer/ city organizations, as well as any business showcasing that is done.

Next Scheduled Meeting – Thursday, April 1, 2021

Adjournment – Meeting was adjourned at 8:26 pm.