

## **A G E N D A**

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
of the  
VILLAGE OF LA GRANGE  
Village Hall Auditorium  
53 S. La Grange Road, La Grange, IL

**January 10, 2019 - 7:00 p.m.**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Approval of Minutes – November 15, 2018
3. New Business
  - A. Valet Program Report & Discussion
5. Chairman Comments
6. Adjournment

The Village of La Grange is subject to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Individuals with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who require certain accommodations in order to allow them to observe and/or participate in this meeting, or who have questions regarding the accessibility of the meeting or the facilities, are requested to contact the ADA Coordinator at 579-2315 promptly to allow the Village to make reasonable accommodations for those persons.

## **MINUTES**

### Community and Economic Development Commission Village of La Grange

November 15, 2018

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL:**

A meeting of the Community and Economic Development Commission was held on November 15, 2018 in the lower level conference room of the Village Hall at 53 South La Grange Road, La Grange, IL and was convened at 7:33 p.m. by Chairman Russ Riberto.

Present: Commissioners Augustine, Buttron, Carlson, Cassidy, Dillon, Hall, Sher, and Chairman Riberto.

Absent: Commissioners DiDomenico, Janevski, Palmer, Stiles, Washington, and Wimbush.

Also Present: Community Development Director Charity Jones and LGBA President Kathy Dierkes.

#### **II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

On motion by Commissioner Dillon, seconded by Commissioner Buttron, the minutes of the August 30, 2018 Community and Economic Development Commission meeting were approved with the following corrections:

- On page 3, Commissioner Palmer should not be listed as an aye vote and Commissioner DiDomenico should be listed as a nay vote.
- On Page one, Commissioner Cassidy should be listed as absent from the meeting.

#### **III. NEW BUSINESS:**

##### **Community & Economic Development Activity Report**

Director Jones provided an update on various Community Development Department activities and local economic trends.

##### **Valet Program Report & Discussion**

Director Jones gave a presentation on the utilization of the free downtown valet parking program and recent surveys of available parking downtown. Director Jones concluded her presentation with a request for the Commission's input regarding any potential changes to the current program.

Commissioners discussed the utilization rates and several commissioners noted that the overall number of valet users don't seem to be changing over the course of the past year. Commissioners Dillon and Cassidy questioned whether the valet program was the best use of the Village's economic development funds.

Commissioner Hall questioned whether the program has plateaued; if part of the draw of downtown La Grange is the ability to walk. Commissioner Carlson agreed and wondered if perceptions about parking have changed over time and if the Village could use economic development funds to cultivate positive perceptions through implementation of the branding. Commissioner Augustine noted that she still felt there was a logical connection between the valet parking the downtown restaurants.

Chairman Riberto noted that the utilization data seems to suggest that the valet users may only be those customers who are interested in parking very close to their destination and not representative of all typical La Grange customers. Ms. Dierkes asked if the valet is serving a particular demographic; Director Jones suggested she could ask the valet company.

Discussion continued related to the current program and various options to reduce overall program cost and/or increase utilization. Commissioners also discussed pending changes to the downtown landscape and their unknown impact, particularly the occupancy of the spaces formerly occupied by the Magic Wok and Blue Feather. The consensus opinion of the group was to revisit the topic a January meeting, with staff to gather price information on at least the following potential future program changes:

1. Providing only two valet stations instead of three.
2. Consolidating all stations to one, with increased staff at the one location.
3. Changing to a seasonal valet program, offering service only in the summer or winter.

In addition to reporting back on these cost considerations, staff will explore additional signage at the stations during the month of December and collection of additional shopper perceptions relative to downtown parking and the valet program.

### **Branding Discussion**

Steve Chandler, of Chandlerthinks, facilitated discussion via Webex as part of the branding project. The discussion focused on the key characteristics of downtown La Grange and how those characteristics distinguish downtown La Grange from other nearby or similar communities. A summary of the discussion is attached to these minutes.

## **V. ADJOURNMENT:**

There being nothing further to come before the Community and Economic Development

Commission, a motion was made by Commissioner Carlson and seconded by Commissioner Dillon that the meeting be adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Charity Jones  
Community Development Director

11/21/18

## **La Grange Branding Project CEDC Online Focus Group Summary**

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### Description

On Thursday, November 15, 2018 an online focus group was conducted as a part of the Community & Economic Development Commission (CEDC) meeting. The group discussion was led by Steve Chandler via WebEx software and teleconference.

### Objective

Gain deeper insights into the pride residents have for downtown La Grange and into what makes downtown La Grange distinct versus other downtowns.

### **Main Observations**

**1. Residents appreciate the way downtown La Grange creates and delivers a variety of community experiences all in one central place. Whereas many communities have events and activities all over town, La Grange's size and downtown location allow a consistent presence for community building to occur.**

Specific comments were:

- Downtown has a number of natural meeting or gathering places. It's where people get together.
- There's diversity in downtown as a destination. From library, to movie theater, to restaurants and retail. It has everything.
- The nucleus of activity of all in one place. Everything is here.
- People gather here.
- Downtown La Grange has all the pieces for a great downtown. It is the most complete.

**2. The character of La Grange is very important – one that is family focused, familiar and friendly. A balance of traditions while still being progressive.**

Specific comments were:

- Downtown La Grange has a nice Mayberry feel to it.
- Downtown La Grange delivers experiences for teens and families with children better than anyone else. It's good at other audiences but at the same level as others.
- Our people are incredibly friendly. We have a cultural of hospitality to everyone.

- It delivers a feel similar to a city neighborhood (and people that move here from Chicago really appreciate that).
- La Grange is more walkable than other downtowns. Or sidewalks are wider and create a friendly, safe community gathering invitation.
- Everywhere you go there is always a familiar face.
- Village Hall creates a historic tone even if you don't know the history.
- Downtown La Grange is imaginative and progressive. There's a lot of surprises in the corners of downtown.
- The shops and variety of restaurants is eclectic enough to tell you it's place that is still moving forward.

### **3. The distinguishable features of downtown La Grange are its design and variety of experiences.**

Specific comments were:

- It's a constant billboard of activity, because it's a major state road. No one else has a north to south corridor like this. As a result, downtown is always forward facing.
- You can see many of our businesses off La Grange Road. You see a lot on one view.
- Could you imagine the Halloween walk without the sidewalks? We wouldn't be able to accommodate large scale events like that without them.
- Our wide sidewalks are what makes it easy to gather. Restaurants can extend outside with chairs; the outdoor seating adds to the feeling of vibrancy in the downtown.
- It is important we do not build up too much. Part of downtown's draw is the scale of the buildings.
- Downtown is condensed and walkable. All within a few footsteps.

### **Take-aways**

- Downtown creates CONNECTION and GATHERING.
- Downtown is for a FAMILY ATMOSPHERE where anyone can feel COMFORTABLE.
- Downtown is OPEN in its visual presentation. You can see a lot.
- Downtown is still PROGRESSIVE and DIVERSE in what you can find. It has VARIETY.