

## **AGENDA**

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

**November 07, 2019 - 7:00 p.m.**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Approval of Minutes – August 08, 2019
3. New Business
  - A. Community & Economic Development Activity Report (presentation)
  - B. Valet Program Update
  - C. Branding Implementation Update & Gateway Signage 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

August 08, 2019

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

A meeting of the Community and Economic Development Commission was held on August 08, 2019 in the auditorium of the Village Hall at 53 South La Grange Road, La Grange, IL and was convened at 7:06 p.m. by Chairman Russ Riberto.

Present: Commissioners Cassidy, Hall, Hayes, Janevski, Matteucci, McGee, Palmer, Sher, and Chairman Riberto.

Absent: Commissioners Buttron, Carlson, Dillon, DiDomenico, Stiles, and Wimbush.

Also Present: President Tom Livingston, Trustees Michael Kotynek, Lou Gale, and Beth Augustine, Community Development Director Charity Jones, Village Attorney Mark Burkland, LGBA Executive Director Nancy Cummings, and residents Nick Gangas, Justin Hanson, Patti Ernst, and Elizabeth Crewe.

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

On motion by Commissioner Palmer, seconded by Commissioner Carlson, the minutes of the May 01, 2019 Community and Economic Development Commission meeting were approved.

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

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

Director Jones gave a brief presentation of sales tax trends, permit activity, and new business openings.

##### **Video Gaming Discussion**

President Livingston introduced the topic, noting that the CEDC is an important advisory body to the Village Board and that the Board is interested in hearing the CEDC's feedback on video gaming in the context of Village policy and finances. President Livingston noted that the CEDC is being asked to take a second look at this topic not because it is a strategic priority of the Village Board, but because it is a potential tool to assist local businesses in meeting the challenge of various additional and increasing costs of doing business coupled with a competitive business environment. He explained this is a Village wide discussion, and we're starting with the CEDC because this body has been helpful before; thoughts on

aesthetics, business issues, and personal views of gambling are all fair comments. When the CEDC reviewed this topic in 2017, it was clear that restrictions on visibility and types of establishments with video gaming would be important if La Grange were to allow video gaming. The staff has been working on looking at ways other communities have regulated video gaming and what requirements La Grange could adopt.

Director Jones then gave a brief presentation with an overview of the Illinois Video Gaming Act, the extent of video gaming throughout the state, video gaming revenues, and a potential local regulatory framework, including restrictions on types of establishments with video gaming, location of establishments with video gaming, and design requirements for video gaming areas within establishments.

Commissioner Hall began the discussion stating that restrictions on signage are important. If the Village were to allow video gaming, it should be something that customers of an establishment have as an added benefit of visiting that business, not the reason for visiting.

Commissioner Janevski noted that all of the restrictions noted in Director Jones's presentation would be very important if La Grange were to allow video gaming. We have economic pressures on our businesses, but want to maintain our character. If La Grange were to allow video gaming it couldn't be a dominant visual for our businesses.

Commissioner Matteuci asked if we had any information on what the businesses want.

Commissioner Palmer noted that since the CEDC is not being asked to vote on this topic, he is comfortable participating in the discussion. He reported that among the businesses he has talked to, quite a few are potentially interested in video gaming but all are waiting to see what the regulations would look like; they are cautiously interested. If video gaming were to be allowed in La Grange, it wouldn't be an immediate implementation, it would take time. Commissioner Palmer noted that in 2009 he was not in favor of video gaming; he thought La Grange should learn from other communities. A lot has changed since 2009 and we now have the benefit of seeing how other communities have regulated video gaming. He stated that no business in La Grange wants to take away from the character of the town.

Chairman Riberto noted how video gaming has evolved and grown, both since 2009 and even since 2017 when the CEDC last discussed the topic.

Commissioner McGee said he feels there is a dark side to gambling, it has devastated families through gambling addiction. As a Village, he wouldn't want to see La Grange to have any part in contributing to that.

Commissioner Cassidy said he can appreciate increasing business costs and the Board being responsive to those concerns. However, he feels that if we need to propose such heavy restrictions to hide video gaming, then it begs the question of whether video gaming is really consistent with our brand, who we are as a community.

Commissioner Riberto read a statement from Commissioner Carlson, who was unable to attend. She reiterated her support for video gaming, with restrictions as noted in the staff report.

Commissioner Sher said she agrees with Commissioner Cassidy; if we need to hide something, then why do we want it. She agrees with the need to support our businesses but questioned whether this is the right way to help our businesses.

Commissioner Hall asked if staff had any information on whether video gaming added any demand for police services. Village Attorney Burkland noted that when the topic was raised at a recent Village Board meeting, Police Chief Bluder noted that he was unaware of any impacts on police departments in nearby communities that allowed video gaming.

Commissioner Palmer reported that he has discussed the topic with many police chiefs, who have not reported any issues. In his business, it is often a senior citizen clientele that are interested in video gaming. He noted that La Grange was once a dry town and when alcohol was first allowed, people were concerned it would ruin that town, but that has not been the case.

Commissioner Matteucci said he was curious if the addition of video gaming terminals would make business less desirable for customers who were not in favor of video gaming.

Chairman Riberto opened the floor to public comment.

Nick Gangas, resident and owner of Steak + Vine, said that although he has no idea if he would want video gaming at his restaurant, he has lots of reasons why he thinks video gaming is a good idea. He noted that he's spoken with many restaurant owners that have video gaming and it has been great for them. As a resident, he feels any potential addition to our tax base needs to be evaluated seriously. There are 30 restaurants in about a three block area around downtown La Grange; if video gaming can help sustain a business that's an important consideration and will help foster stability. Mr. Gangas noted that his family was the first business to receive a liquor license in La Grange. His father spoke at a Village Board meeting in support of allowing alcohol; there were many who were concerned it would negatively impact the Village, but it has helped restaurants flourish. He noted that with the change in sports betting laws he will soon be able to sit in Palmers or another restaurant and gamble from his phone; with these sorts of considerations, the presence of video gaming in La Grange will likely not increase or decrease any gambling addictions.

Justin Hanson, resident, said he opposes video gaming in La Grange. He said that in his opinion, the Video Gaming Act was not good governance; it has fallen short of state revenue projections and the Gaming Board is understaffed and underfunded; Illinois is one of the only states in the country to allow video gaming but conduct no studies on the effect of video gaming on gambling addiction. Mr. Hanson further said that he doesn't think video gaming is right for La Grange; he agrees with what others have said that if it has to be out of sight, why are we allowing it in the first place. He said that video gaming machines are designed to get people to gamble faster, longer, and therefore spend more money. He said

he's observed many restaurants in other suburbs that have brought in video gaming and it has changed those establishments, but not for the better. In conclusion, Mr. Hanson urged the Village Board to not vote on this topic until the fall so there would be enough time for a full community discussion.

Patti Ernst, resident, said she has lived in La Grange since the 1980's when La Grange Road was "dead" and she appreciates the vitality in La Grange today. She agrees with Mr. Hanson and feels there must be another way to help local businesses. Ms. Ernst also noted that although video gaming may not create additional demand for police services, it impacts demand for social services.

Elizabeth Crewe stated she agrees with everything Mr. Hanson said. She also noted that the term video gaming seems misleading when it is gambling not arcade games. Ms. Crewe feels that video gaming would alter the community in a huge way.

Chairman Riberto thanked everyone for their comments and asked for any further commissioner comments. Commissioner Hall agreed that the topic at hand is gambling, not gaming and Commissioner McGee noted that if someone doesn't know what video gaming is, the term can be misleading. Commissioner Palmer noted that the revenue projection shortfalls are due to Chicago prohibiting video gaming, which they did in hopes of receiving approval for casino; now it appears Chicago will get a casino and sports betting as well. Commissioner Palmer noted examples of other area businesses who have reinvested proceeds from video gaming into improvements to their buildings and businesses.

Commissioner Janevski noted that the Village has always had controversial decisions to make and he asks himself what has changed since the CEDC last looked at this topic in 2017. He said gaming has continued to expand; La Grange is in the minority of communities not allowing it. Commissioner Janevski noted that with all the state law changes and continued expansion of video gaming, a lot has changed and La Grange has to give it strong consideration.

Commissioner Cassidy said that just because you can do something doesn't mean you should and questioned if video gaming is consistent with the brand we're trying to build. He said he's not sure video gaming is something he wants to surround himself with or have so close to home.

Chairman Riberto thanked the commission for a robust discussion.

### **Branding Update**

Director Jones thanked the CEDC for their efforts over the past year to develop the new La Grange brand strategy and visual identity. She noted some implementation efforts already underway and reported that staff is working on developing a full implementation schedule for various brand applications.

**V. ADJOURNMENT:**

There being nothing further to come before the Community and Economic Development Commission, a motion was made by Commissioner Palmer and seconded by Commissioner Matteuci that the meeting be adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Charity Jones  
Community Development Director