

VILLAGE OF FRANKFORT
DOWNTOWN RETAIL GRANT REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES
November 12, 2009

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kaminski called the Downtown Retail Grant Review Committee to order at 6:03 p.m. on Thursday, November 12, 2009, at the Village Administration Building, 432 W. Nebraska Street, Frankfort.

ROLL CALL

Present for roll call were Mayor Jim Holland, Chair Charlie Kaminski, Secretary Jeff Cook and members Ken Hawke, Chris Rosolowski, Paul Slade and Paula Dejmek Woods. Also in attendance were Trustee Kevin Egan and Community Relations Manager Mary Canino.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (October 14, 2009)

Member Hawke requested the minutes be amended, stating he mentioned that the Downtown Frankfort Partnership (DFP) did not seek to attract existing Frankfort businesses to the downtown. Chair Kaminski concurred. Secretary Cook noted the materials reviewed by the Community Services Committee on July 8, 2009 included the language "new or existing retail business."

Member Hawke made a motion (#1), seconded by Member Rosolowski, to approve the minutes of October 14, 2009, as amended. The motion was unanimously approved.

DOWNTOWN RETAIL GRANT PROGRAM ó Discussion

Committee members discussed the goals of the grant program, definition of "new" business, the first application, pending applications and downtown business expansions. Chair Kaminski and member Hawke noted the Downtown Frankfort Partnership believed the program should not apply to existing Frankfort businesses. Members recalled the program amendment from October 14 and following further discussion, confirmed the language "new to the H-1 District" means a business that does not exist in the H-1 District.

Mr. Cook reported that Trustee Morgan was unable to attend, however stated on his behalf that Mr. Morgan wished to emphasize the greater good of increasing business activity in Frankfort's downtown. Members suggested other ways the village could assist businesses in the downtown, such as an advertising campaign. Mayor Holland asked that members provide their suggestions for consideration during the budget process in January. Mayor Holland also stated the Board could consider grant program modifications during the budget process.

Two pending applications were identified and Mr. Cook reviewed a list of seventeen unique inquiries the village received concerning the grant program, noting that many did not meet the

program criteria. He recommended members identify priorities for growing existing business clusters, measures to determine appropriate funding levels and the potential for application cycles to aggregate reviews.

Members discussed eligible retail categories and the evaluation criteria agreeing that qualified retail businesses that complement the retail mix and provide regular hours are the priority for grant assistance. Eligibility requirements were discussed and members agreed the program should remain as originally adopted for consistency of review this year.

Members noted the Community Services Committee agreed to accept a grant application from the Frankfort Bowl when they recommended approval of the grant program. Debate continued concerning eligibility since the business was planned to reopen before the program existed. Members recognized the bowling alley was a unique circumstance that wouldn't likely occur in the future and stated they would need to review the complete application when it was filed.

Returning to general discussion of the program, members said if all other things were equal, grant priority will go to attracting businesses without an existing retail location in Frankfort. Members did not favor the concept of application cycles because timing would not be convenient for the new businesses.

Discussion continued concerning the determination of appropriate funding levels. Members expect most applicants will request the maximum grant assistance however also expect some applications will be more qualified than others. Members reviewed the adopted evaluation criteria and discussed the merits of the first application noting the business was a "great fit" for the retail mix. Debate ensued with members stressing that each applicant will be considered against all applicable review criteria. It was agreed that absent unique circumstances, grant assistance should be limited to no more than 50% of the proposed improvements, noting the reimbursement process could be updated next year to formalize such a standard.

The Committee recommended the review process include two meetings, an applicant interview and a public hearing. Mr. Cook said all meetings of the DRGRC require notice and publication of an agenda. Members stated meetings should be scheduled on an as-needed basis with a preference weekday evenings.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Member Hawke made a motion (#2), seconded by Member Rosolowski, to adjourn the Downtown Retail Grant Review Committee meeting of November 12, 2009, at 7:39 p.m. The motion was approved by all present.

Respectfully Submitted by: Jeff Cook, DRGRC Secretary