

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO  
ECONOMIC BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
Wednesday, December 18, 2019

BOARD MEMBERS:

Jesse Avitia  
Leon Valdez  
Delainah Medina

STAFF:

Belinda Harris  
Richard Morrisroe

Reported by: Peggy S. LaLonde, CSR, RPR  
Fissinger & Associates

Call to Order: 4:30 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: Present: Jesse Avitia  
Delainah Medina  
Leon Valdez

Staff Present: Richard Morrisroe, Legal Counsel  
Belinda Harris, Recording Secretary

Motion to approve minutes of December 2, 2019 made by  
Delainah Medina. Second by Jesse Avitia.

Comments/Questions: None

Roll Call: "All in Favor": Delainah Medina and Jesse  
Avitia Abstain: Leon Valdez Opposed: None

MR. AVITIA: Motion carries.

Since we appear not to have any Old  
Business, let's move on to New Business. Mr. Morrisroe,  
you were going to present an overview?

MR. MORRISROE: Just the Planner's Guide.  
I was going over this and talked with Belinda, this was  
given some time ago to the Plan Commission, and more  
recently to the Board of Zoning Appeals. And because  
there is a chapter for Economic Development, rather than  
just give you the chapter, I decided to give you the  
whole book. This kind of gives a framework of Planning  
and Development, and growth within the City.

I'm not going to go over the chapter  
in depth at this time. Perhaps for next meeting we  
could set aside at least ten minutes to begin going over  
the Economic Development chapter and just questions or  
observations, or whatever. I think I may do two minutes

1 or so, but I'd rather be in dialogue discussion with  
2 yourselves as to what you see, what it says, what it  
3 doesn't say. Fair enough?

3 MR. VALDEZ: Yes.

4 MR. MORRISROE: The history of it is that  
5 there was prior notices for citizens, so it's written  
6 for Plan commissioners, Economic and Business  
7 Development commissioners, BZA commissioners. It's not  
8 -- even though it helps someone like myself -- it's not  
9 our primary tool. It's more written as a tool put  
10 together by professionals. Most of this is Indianapolis  
11 based, not all.

8 As I was mentioning Bob Thompson,  
9 from Porter County, did a lot. There are a few from  
10 other parts of the State also. I know they worked a  
11 great deal on this. If you notice, most of them are  
12 members of the American Institute of Certified Planners,  
13 and a couple are AFCP, which is kind of special  
14 fellowship, and then others have some credentials, like  
15 with LEED, which is kind of a new organization that  
16 seeks to make environmentally friendly buildings,  
17 sometimes with solar panels, with rooftop gardens,  
18 different kind of way of absorbing water and producing  
19 energy.

14 So any questions or comments at this  
15 point?

15 MS. VALDEZ: Not at this time.

16 MR. AVITIA: Okay. We'll do that, and,  
17 Belinda, you will remind us. That will be part of the  
18 agenda.

18 MR. MORRISROE: As I say, we'll try to  
19 limit it to enough time period that we do something, but  
20 we don't end of putting anyone to sleep. I'll try not  
21 to do that.

21 MR. AVITIA: If I understand correctly,  
22 our next meeting we are going to start getting a little  
23 bit of an understanding of this?

23 MR. MORRISROE: Yes. For instance, you  
24 may have some questions about Planning, some of this  
25 effects Redevelopment, the Redevelopment minutes, but  
certainly the chapters on Planning. If we could look at  
the Table of Contents just briefly, this question of

1 ethics, as to what we are doing, our rules of  
2 procedures, the comprehensive plan, has a lot to do with  
the way City unfolds and sets things aside.

3 We'll do a little bit about the  
4 zoning in the City and the history of the zoning, and  
5 subdivisions. We practically have no vacant land to be  
6 setting aside new subdivisions. The last ones were east  
of the hospital, the Prairie Park and Guadalupe Homes,  
and few homes put around Jerose Circle. Those things  
we'll be able to look at and discuss.

7 MR. AVITIA: So a seminar on Planning?

8 MR. MORRISROE: Yes.

9 MR. AVITIA: Okay. We'll appreciate the  
understanding further what we are doing here.

10 MR. MORRISROE: Well, I have been messing  
11 around with this stuff for 50 years in different ways.  
I can go over with you the business list.

12 MR. AVITIA: That's next on the agenda.

13 MR. MORRISROE: The Cal Region Supply,  
14 I'm not familiar with them. They are relocating from  
15 East 151st Street. This supply company seems to be  
close to Parrish -- or rather close to Euclid Avenue,  
along that north side of Chicago Avenue.

16 MR. VALDEZ: You were correct. If you go  
17 straight up Parrish, you run right into the facility.

18 MR. MORRISROE: You are familiar with  
them?

19 MR. VALDEZ: The City does a lot of  
20 business with them.

21 MR. MORRISROE: Very good. Do you know  
22 Straight Focus Films? Seems to be almost a home-base  
business.

23 MR. AVITIA: There is a lot of that going  
on now.

24 MR. MORRISROE: They want to register  
25 with the City. They are usually not traffic intensive.  
The City is perhaps permissive about this, but as long

1 as they are not traffic intensive, then the equity might  
2 help.

3 MR. AVITIA: I get the feeling it's more  
4 of a formal business. It's registered with the City,  
5 that's what they aim for.

6 MR. MORRISROE: Yes.

7 MR. VALDEZ: Do we know who the owners  
8 are?

9 MR. MORRISROE: We can try to find out  
10 from the licensing. Next is Jaji's Smokehouse is the  
11 rear of a building at the corner of 138th and Main.  
12 Really there was nothing in the ordinance preventing  
13 them from opening a tobacco shop. We gave them a hard  
14 time for month, month and a month. When it came down to  
15 it, they were within the operation. I don't know how  
16 they are doing. They also own the front of that  
17 building and have some -- at least had some space down  
18 there, just south of the Post Office.

19 Watco Services is a Kansas based  
20 company that provides some services -- I believe rail  
21 related -- for BP. And that's where their site is, on  
22 Riley Road.

23 Sanchez Truck & Trailer Repair. I  
24 think they've been there for some time. They finally  
25 were licensed and also were operating on the north side  
of Chicago Avenue. The City has tried to place some  
limits on not becoming kind of a truck berthing center.  
The Council adopted a developmental plan. They have to  
get a special variance in order to open new trucking  
places because they simply seem to sprout up and they  
advertise space, but they don't employ people, maybe one  
person or whatever. It's usually the owner. If they  
are also servicing mechanically trucks, that can be a  
little bit more productive in terms of employment and  
opportunity. So they're looking a little bit closer at  
ones that do that.

For instance, there seems to be a  
fairly successful family owned business not too far from  
Mr. Avitia, on 148th, just east of Huish. There is a  
large empty space. It's become mechanical for  
maintenance of trucks and berthing center during various  
times. Usually the truck unit, not the trailer. It's  
on the south side of the street, just east of Huish,  
Danny's Muffler. Again, I think it's a matter of  
licensing rather than being in business. I think they

1 have been working for some time.

2 Smartway Furniture is what we had  
3 hoped to be a food store at 2121 East Columbus. It  
4 opened today. It had its Grand opening and a few of us  
5 were there. The owner was very kind and gracious. We  
6 wished him well. What kind of success they will have,  
7 I'm not sure. I was amazed in going in there as to how  
8 huge that space is. It was an A & P, then they added  
9 space on the west side of it. When it's all an open  
10 space filled with furniture, it's just huge. It struck  
11 me how large it was because it doesn't have all the  
12 shelving and all the other things in there, but that  
13 kind of takes away from the sense of how large it is.

14 Lake Shore Wellness. I think this  
15 address is incorrect. Are we sure it's 1607 West  
16 Columbus? I don't think we go that far west.

17  
18 MR. VALDEZ: City doesn't go that far  
19 west, no.

20 MR. MORRISROE: I'll check that. I  
21 noticed that today, and maybe check that with Rose, from  
22 the Business Department.

23 So that's the new business list for  
24 December.

25 MS. MEDINA: Did we discuss 4802  
Drummond?

MR. MORRISROE: I'm sorry. That's a  
small convenience store. It was notorious a few years  
ago. There was a murder committed there.

MR. AVITIA: It's right on the corner.  
It's a grocery store that opens and closes all the time.  
They are never able to maintain a business.

MR. MORRISROE: The last owner had put in  
safety windows, if I recall. Those are still there.

MR. AVITIA: Safety windows are still  
there, but it's not a good location anymore. It used to  
be at one time. It's a small neighborhood store. I was  
going to see how they continue doing.

MR. VALDEZ: It's my recollection, I  
think somebody was fatally shot there.

MR. MORRISROE: Yes, that's what I was

1 referring to before.

2 MS. MEDINA: There were robberies too.

3 MR. AVITIA: There's been two or three  
4 robberies there. So whoever took it over, I hope he  
5 understands -- or she understands -- what they are  
6 getting into.

7 MR. MORRISROE: Thank you for mentioning  
8 that.

9 MR. AVITIA: Next we have Redevelopment.

10 MR. MORRISROE: Redevelopment, any  
11 questions or comments on that?

12 MR. AVITIA: No. Since we have no  
13 public, no comments. We'll move on to Commissioners  
14 comments. Leon, do you have any comments?

15 MR. VALDEZ: Yes. I think during this  
16 past year, it's a blessing that we have a third member,  
17 and also the effort that Mr. Morrisroe and Belinda put  
18 forth. I would like to thank you, of course, you are  
19 here a lot too helping us out. But I want to wish  
20 everybody a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.  
21 God bless each and every one of you guys.

22 MS. MEDINA: I don't have anything.

23 MR. AVITIA: I would just reemphasize  
24 what Leon said about being grateful about the help and  
25 service you guys have given us. And from the Commission  
and the Commissioners, we hope you have a good holiday  
season and good healthy new year. When you get to be my  
age, we look at the perspective of staying healthy a lot  
more. Happy New Year.

Next meeting will be on Thursday,  
January 23rd, 2020, at 4:30 p.m., same location.

Motion to adjourn?

MR. VALDEZ: So moved.

MS. MEDINA: Second.

Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None  
Opposed: None

1 MR. AVITIA: Motion carries. Meeting  
adjoined.

2 \*\*\*\* Meeting adjourned \*\*\*\*

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4  
5 Approval of the Meeting Minutes of Wednesday  
6 December 18, 2019

7 Approved and signed \_\_\_\_\_

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10 \_\_\_\_\_  
Jesse Avitia, President

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Leon Valdez, Vice-president

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Delainah Medina, Member

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Belinda Bonilla, Secretary

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## C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Peggy S. LaLonde, a competent and duly qualified court reporter, do hereby certify that I did report in machine shorthand the foregoing proceedings and that my shorthand notes so taken at said time and place were thereafter reduced to typewriting under my personal direction.

I further certify that the foregoing typewritten transcript constitutes minutes of the said proceedings taken at said time and place, so ordered to be transcribed.

Dated at Munster, Indiana, this 27th day of December, 2019.

*Peggy S. LaLonde*



Peggy S. LaLonde, CSR, RPR