

KENTWOOD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
MINUTES
April 17, 2023

Members Present: Green, Tyson, Deluccia, Blubaugh, Coughlin, Blubaugh (remote), Gaffin, Clements (remote)
Members Absent: Swoboda and DeBruyn, with notification.
Others Present: Lisa Golder, Economic Development Planner, Keith Morgan, Wyoming/Kentwood Chamber of Commerce, Brandon Simmons, Metro Cruise Event Manager

1. Roll Call
2. Approval of Minutes:

Motion by Green with support from Coughlin to approve the minutes of March 20, 2023.

--Motion Carried--

3. Discussion regarding Metro Cruise:

Brandon Simmons was present to discuss the possibility of EDC sponsorship for the 28th Street Metro Cruise. The Metro Cruise is no longer operated by the Wyoming Kentwood Chamber. Even though the Metro Cruise is in its 18th year, it is relatively new to Kentwood. The activities are being expanded into the Kentwood area and specifically, Woodland Mall. Over 200,000 people from the greater Grand Rapids area attended the Metro Cruise. Even though there were smaller events in Kentwood early in the history of the Metro Cruise, it wasn't until 2021 that there were more significant events in the city. The location of Woodland Mall and Rogers Plaza activities is to be called "The Main Event". The Metro Cruise has a strong business focus, and the operators of the Metro Cruise are partnering with businesses. There is a community focus with free activities for kids. A sponsorship from the city would allow the funding of these and other activities. Brandon reviewed the amount of money spent in local stores during Metro Cruise week. Brandon reviewed the two levels of sponsorship, (\$6,000 and \$12,000) and the benefits provided therein.

Discussion ensued about the extent of the Metro Cruise along 28th Street, the business impact, and the number of people that come to the event from outside the metro area. Deluccia said that the Metro Cruise activity at the mall was not a problem last year. Clements says he considers this as similar to Art Prize and that restaurants and other businesses in the area would benefit from it. DeLuccia said it might bring people to the mall area who had not been there since the renovations, even though it does not appear that the mall gets business from people in attendance at the Metro Cruise.

There was additional discussion regarding whether the Metro Cruise or sponsorship of the Metro Cruise is part of the EDC's economic development strategy. The city has not budgeted funds for this use of funds. After additional discussion, it was decided that the EDC will not sponsor the Metro Cruise in 2023. We can ask for statistics regarding the benefit received by local businesses to determine whether it makes sense for EDC sponsorship, and whether the sponsorship is consistent with our Strategic Plan.

4. Liquor License-Main Event entertainment

Golder said that Main Event Entertainment has applied for the quota liquor license. The EDC members reviewed the application. It was noted that some of the information the city usually gets from applicants is not provided because it is owned by a large corporation and is publicly traded. The owners indicated their investment would be around \$20 million dollars. The applicants feel that the application for the liquor license meets the city standards. They have indicated that they would pursue purchase of a private third party if the city does not pursue the quota license. Several expressed concern that a large company such as Dave and Busters would need the city's assistance to acquire the quota licenses; the city's quota license policy discourages awarding a quota license to a business with multiple locations.

Small Business Training Program

The EDC members discussed the Small Business Training Program that is now scheduled to take place over 4 Tuesday afternoons (May 23, May 30, June 6 and June 13th) from 3:30-5:30PM. Currently the program is targeted for businesses whose sales are under \$100,000. Morgan recommended expanding eligibility to a higher sales number. After discussion, the EDC members decided to eliminate the cap on sales for eligibility to the event. There were also changes recommended to the flyer that will be passed along to Sabo PR. There was discussion as to whether a business had to be located in the city to qualify. It was determined that a Kentwood resident with a business in another community would not be eligible for the program. Home-based businesses in Kentwood would be eligible.

5. The next meeting of the Kentwood EDC is scheduled for May 15, 2023.

Meeting adjourned.

Action Items for April:

Amendments to flyer for Business Training Program

List of eligible businesses

Discussion re Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund