

**City of Marine City  
Community and Economic Development Board  
September 27, 2023**

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Community and Economic Development Board was held on Wednesday, September 27, 2023 at 260 South Parker Street, and was called to order by Chairperson Moran at 6:02 pm.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairperson Moran.

**Present: Planning Commission Representative (Chairperson) Joseph Moran; City Commission Representative Jennifer Vandenbossche; Board Members Cheryl Ross (telephonically); Chamber of Commerce Representative Paul Merchant; Business Representative David Warner; City Manager Adkins; Deputy Clerk Michele Goodrich.**

**Absent: Board Member Heather Hatcher; TIFA Board Representative Bob Weisenbaugh;**

Motion by Board Member Merchant, seconded by Board Member Warner, to excuse Board Members Heather Hatcher and Bob Weisenbaugh from the meeting. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

### **Communications**

None.

### **Approve Agenda**

Motion by Board Member Vandenbossche, seconded by Board Member Merchant, to approve the Agenda. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

### **Public Comment**

None.

### **Approve Minutes**

Motion by Board Member Merchant, seconded by Board Member Vandenbossche, to approve the Community & Economic Development Board minutes of August 23, 2023. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

## **Unfinished Business**

### 13 Ways to Kill Your Community: Number 5: Shop Elsewhere

Board Member Moran challenged the Board to think about different ways to encourage shopping and patronage outside of the downtown business district. Board Member Merchant stated his opinion that residents tend to not shop downtown however, the scenic view of the water was the draw for outside shoppers.

Board Member Moran questioned how the City could support manufacturing plants and non walk-in businesses and how the City could make their experiences better. Chamber of Commerce President Laura Merchant informed the Board that the Chamber had held an event geared toward manufacturing and that they had plans to hold a job fair aimed at recruitment and retention of employees. City Manager Adkins suggested the creation of a “New Business” packet filled with informational handouts and welcome letters. The Board discussed having similar packets available for existing businesses when the renewal period comes up. Chamber President Merchant stated that they would be holding additional “Let’s Connect and Grow Together” events. Board Member Ross stated that she would help put together packets.

Board Member Warner suggested featuring articles in the Chamber newsletter highlighting different businesses that people may not see and stated it was important to get encourage businesses to get involved. Chamber President Merchant stated that businesses in town should support one another and that showing support was vital and believed that support was currently lacking.

### Redevelopment Ready and Best Practices

City Manager Adkins gave a brief overview of Best Practice #1: Plans and Engagements. He informed the Board that the City was engaged in the revision of the Master Plan and Master Recreation Plan which will tie into stand alone Capital Improvement Plans, a Downtown Plan, and Economic Development Plan which will be springboards for everything else including funding and development.

Board Member Moran agreed that comprehensive planning docs were necessary and that the City needed plans with goals and action steps and that the community should value the outcome.

## **New Business**

### St. Clair County EDA – Kristy Jones

Kristy Jones with the St. Clair County Economic Development Alliance (EDA) spoke to the functions of the EDA throughout St. Clair County and Marine City, specifically. She informed the Board that the EDA was charged with bringing business and investment to the County, within the framework of what a community wanted, and they focused on talent

attraction and retention and small business retention. She advised that the EDA worked with Quality of Life projects including housing and land development. Ms. Jones stated that the City was able to prioritize real estate available in town and the EDA could put that information up on their website as another marketing avenue. City Manager Adkins discussed the importance of educating and reeducating the public on the functions of the EDA and how that partnership ties into a relationship with the MEDC. He informed the Board that the EDA was a pipeline into County Planning and would help with business attraction, retention and expansion services.

#### Business Attraction & Retention Strategy – Discussion

Board Member Merchant stated that the Chamber was in league with the City and CED Board and together the groups could do more and reach a broader audience. He advised that the “Discover 48039 Marine City” initiative was on Facebook and that they were able to spotlight all people and groups in the area. He updated the Board on when the Chamber mixers were, every 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month and that the annual Chamber meeting would be October 18 at the Rivera at 6:30.

Board Member Merchant updated the Board that Merrytime Christmas would be coming up and that the event brings 1000s of people to Marine City and they were looking at housing pop-up shops for more exposure for the businesses. Chamber President Merchant informed the Board that they were hoping to invite non-downtown businesses to set up shop for the day.

#### Christmas Decorations

The Board was informed that the current Christmas decorations were aged and that the Christmas trees at 300 Broadway were cut down and the City was looking at options for a replacement tree. The Board discussed capital fundraising for Christmas decorations and what setting up an endowment with the St. Clair County Community Foundation would entail for people who want to monetarily contribute to the City.

#### **Open Discussion**

Board Member Merchant questioned the parameters of the Social District. City Manager Adkins updated the Board to the status of the District and informed them that the City would be having a meeting with participating businesses in the future to ensure the City and businesses were “on the same page.”

City Manager Adkins informed the Board that the City would begin working with the EDA to advertise vacant building and real estate in an effort to attract new business. He stated that he had a virtual meeting with the MEDC regarding the 300 Broadway CDBG grant that was not funded and informed the Board that the push was for outdoor spaces and the City’s grant was primarily for an indoor building however, he had made great connections moving forward. He also updated the Board that he and the mayor would be working on a segment highlighting Marine City for CTV.

**Adjournment**

Motion by Board Member Vandenbossche, seconded by Board Member Merchant, to adjourn at 7:32pm. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Goodrich  
Deputy Clerk

Jason Bell  
City Clerk