

**COMMON COUNCIL
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
DECEMBER 4, 2024**

The City of Noblesville Economic Development Council Committee met on Wednesday, December 4, 2024 in the Council conference room at City Hall. Megan Wiles called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. with Mark Boice and Todd Thurston present. Pete Schwartz was absent.

Also present were City Clerk Evelyn Lees, Economic Development Director Andrew Murray, Economic Development Assistant Director Chuck Haberman, Economic Development Manager Amy Smith, Economic Development Manager Kayla Robinson, Economic Development Coordinator Sarah Davis, and Rachel Painter of BlueSky Commerce.

1. Opening – Presence of a quorum.

A quorum was present.

2. NEW BUSINESS

- a) Operations. Addition to Economic Development team.
 - i) Kayla Robinson

Mr. Murray introduced Ms. Robinson to the committee. He stated Ms. Robinson had been with the City for three months. Ms. Robinson stated she was a graduate of Ball State University. She stated she worked with the Indiana Economic Development Corporation for two years, but she preferred a local focus. She stated she enjoyed her work with the City.

- b) Workforce Update. Updated workforce data and Make My Move outcomes.

Mr. Haberman displayed a PowerPoint presentation. He reviewed workforce data. He stated the Labor Force participation rate for Noblesville was approximately ten percent higher than the rate for Indiana. He stated the median worker age was 34.4, younger than the Indiana median age of 38.

Mr. Haberman reviewed outcomes of the MakeMyMove program. He stated 79 participants had moved to Noblesville, adding a total of 197 residents. Mr. Thurston asked where the participants had moved from. Mr. Haberman replied most had moved from southern states. He stated the program had provided good advertising for Noblesville.

- c) Marketing.

Ms. Davis reviewed updates to the department's website. She stated with Ms. Painter's help, the entire website would be redone. She stated the site focused on Commerce, Culture, and Community. She stated blog posts by staff would be included soon. She stated TopShot Aerial Photography had been contracted to provide various photos and video footage. Mr. Haberman displayed a compilation video promoting Washington Business Park. Mr. Murray stated the

website was very important to marketing the City. He stated brokers and site selectors go to the website first. He thanked his staff and BlueSky Commerce for their work. Mr. Thurston asked where existing businesses could go to find new sites to expand. Ms. Davis replied the Choose Noblesville website was dedicated to supporting existing businesses. She stated the Choose Noblesville website was completely separate from the other website. Mr. Murray stated staff were working to improve small space availability of 1,000 square feet or less. He stated Community Engagement Manager Aaron Head helped staff with Downtown spaces. Mr. Haberman displayed the Choose Noblesville website and reviewed its features. Ms. Painter stated development of the website was data driven. She stated last year local businesses went to the website looking for permits. She stated buttons were added for site selectors. She stated staff were featured on the first page, so they would be easy to contact. She stated the site also pointed to the department's LinkedIn page.

Ms. Painter stated users were spending more time on the department website, and approximately 72 percent of users were new. She stated most users find the site through a web search. Mr. Thurston asked if staff could tell what users do on the website. Ms. Painter stated they had collected a lot of data. Mr. Haberman stated changes to the website were made based on the data. He stated the website was reorganized so that users could follow the intended path. He stated the data is monitored monthly. Ms. Painter stated changes follow a 90-day cycle. She stated marketing targeted large cities. Ms. Davis stated the LinkedIn page also had been enhanced. Mr. Murray stated more content had been added. He encouraged the committee to like and repost the content. Ms. Robinson stated the LinkedIn page was perfect to reach chief executive officers of target industries. Mr. Thurston stated short videos are popular on websites. He stated videos of new businesses talking about why they chose Noblesville would be good. He stated many people would not take time to read a website, but they would watch a 30-second video. Mr. Haberman stated video testimonials were in development. Ms. Davis distributed a brochure promoting Innovation Mile that was produced by consultant Jones Lang LaSalle IP, Inc. (JLL).

- d) Business Attraction & Retention. Update and showcase business retention and expansion strategy.

Mr. Haberman reviewed attraction statistics: \$671,000,000.00 in new private investment; 227 new jobs; more than 885,000 square feet of new commercial space; and more than 1,400 new residential units.

Ms. Robinson stated the business retention strategy for 2025 would focus on well-being. She stated 60 to 80 percent of new jobs in the City were created by existing businesses. She reviewed the four pillars of the strategy:

- i) Engagement – Retention
- ii) Expansion – Marketing Goals
- iii) Providing Support and Connecting Businesses
- iv) Partnership – Collaboration with Stakeholders

She stated 18 site visits were planned by 2025. Mr. Haberman stated site visits were difficult to schedule. Mr. Murray asked the committee to help promote existing businesses. Mr. Thurston

asked how site visits were categorized. Mr. Haberman stated staff were working to strike a balance between different types of businesses.

Ms. Robinson stated staff would highlight why businesses should be in Noblesville and celebrate when they reach milestones. Mr. Murray stated the business retention program would be rebranded in 2025. He stated the current “Stay Here. Grow Here.” brand had been used for many years and was growing stale. He stated resources for state and local incentives would be included. He stated Indiana is ranked first for business, and Noblesville is first in Indiana. He stated staff planned to continue forming partnerships, including with the Council. Mr. Haberman stated the Chamber of Commerce had been a very helpful partner.

- e) Economic Development Finance.
 - i) Tax Abatement Fee

Ms. Smith distributed a summary of the tax abatement fee model produced by Reedy Financial Group. She reviewed the various abatements in force. She stated the report would be updated annually.

She stated this was the first year to receive fees from recipients of tax abatements. She stated approximately \$58,000.00 in fees were anticipated next year, and approximately \$903,000.00 in fees were expected in the next 12 years.

- ii) RDC Annual Spending Plan

Ms. Smith distributed copies of the Redevelopment Commission TIF Spending Plan prepared by O.W. Krohn and Associates (Krohn). She stated the report is a new reporting requirement legislated in 2023. She stated to deviate from the plan, it must first be amended and resubmitted to the State. She stated Krohn helped structure the plan for maximum flexibility. She stated the Redevelopment Commission would still approve any spending of TIF funds. She stated the report was due by December 1, and it was submitted on November 22. She stated she was unsure how much the Department of Local Government Finance would monitor adherence to the plan. She stated the TIF proformas would be updated in January.

5. OPEN DISCUSSION/OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Murray reviewed current projects. He stated construction of the Arena at Innovation Mile was on schedule and on budget. He stated a ribbon cutting for the Indiana Joint Replacement Institute was expected in January or February. He stated several hotels had expressed interest in Innovation Mile. He stated part of the READI grant would be used to design a trail in the district. He stated Project Gatewood had filed a zoning application to construct a lakeside community directly north of Innovation Mile. He stated they had not requested incentives to date. He stated the development would help market Innovation Mile.

Mr. Boice stated he recently had lunch with a friend who is a lobbyist. He stated his friend brought three more lobbyists. He stated they were concerned about attracting business to Indiana

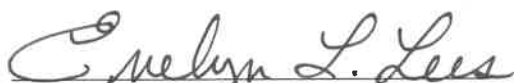
in 2025 with the new state administration. He stated they feared there would be a focus on social issues rather than promoting business attraction. Mr. Murray stated many changes are expected with the new state administration. Mr. Thurston asked how much changes at the state level would affect the Noblesville and Hamilton County. Mr. Murray stated Hamilton County is affluent, and many businesses made decisions based on quality of life in an area. He stated they would still check on the state, but it would not be a deciding factor. Mr. Thurston stated he was proud of Noblesville, and it was easy to sell. He stated the state couldn't really change that. Mr. Haberman stated Noblesville had its own reputation.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:57 a.m.



MEGAN WILES, COMMITTEE CHAIR



EVELYN L. LEES, CITY CLERK