

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

March 13, 2025

The Economic Development Committee of Chardon City Council met on Thursday, March 13, 2025, at 4:30 PM in Conference Room A of the Municipal Center.

David Lelko, Chairman of Economic Development Committee presiding.

Members of Economic Development Committee present: David Lelko, Daniel Meleski.

Others present: City Manager Randy Sharpe, Community Development Administrator Steve Yaney, Clerk of Council Amy Day, Heather Means, Christopher Grau, Michael Warsaw, Clay Craft, Jimmy Pritchett.

Mr. Lelko called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Meleski moved and Mr. Lelko seconded to approve the minutes of the Economic Development Committee meeting from March 6, 2024 as presented. Upon voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

Regarding Retail Strategies contract, representatives from Retail Strategies, Michael Warsaw, Portfolio Director; Jimmy Pritchett, Retail Recruiter; and Clay Craft, VP of Client Services, joined via Zoom and introduced themselves.

Michael Warsaw explained that Retail Strategies assists communities with recruiting retailers. He explained that currently they have over 100 prospects, with 11 being actively interested in the City of Chardon. He explained that they are still working on drawing a hotel to the City.

Mr. Warsaw stated that with Meijer as a catalyst to draw other retailers, it is an opportunity to be strategic about which companies they reach out to in order to avoid undesirable uses.

Mayor Grau asked Mr. Warsaw what his involvement is with the current owners and potential developers of the corner lots near Meijer.

Mr. Warsaw stated that Retail Strategies is having regular conversations with the owners of the property and is putting together a marketing package for them. Retail Strategies is making

sure the owner of the property and their brokers have the tools they need to sell the Chardon community.

Jimmy Pritchett noted that Meijer and the adjacent sites are their primary focus.

Mayor Grau asked if the City can let Retail Strategies know of the types of businesses that they prefer not to come to Chardon because of their impact on current businesses.

Mr. Warsaw stated that that conversation can be had confidentially.

Mr. Lelko asked if Retail Strategies and the Meijer property owner will be meeting as a team to promote the property at the ICSC show in Las Vegas.

Mr. Warsaw stated that Retail Strategies will make sure that the property owner connects with the retailers that have expressed interest in the property.

Mayor Grau asked what the City can do.

Mr. Warsaw stated that it would be helpful if the City can let them know of any large-scale, County-wide projects.

The Zoom ended with Retail Strategies.

Discussion occurred regarding whether to recommend extending the City's contract with Retail Strategies.

Ms. Means asked if interested businesses will go away if the City does not extend its contract with Retail Strategies.

Mr. Yaney stated that Retail Strategies provides a service that City staff cannot replicate due to the City's lack of staff and expertise. Retail Strategies can make sure the City is in front of businesses.

Mr. Sharpe stated that Retail Strategies is the City's advocate.

Ms. Means expressed concern that there has not been a lot of action by Retail Strategies over the last 2 years.

Mr. Meleski stated that the data Retail Strategies provides is valuable. He added that Mr. Yaney can provide the best assessment of what Retail Strategies provides.

Mr. Lelko concurred that he relies on Mr. Yaney's opinion.

Mr. Yaney stated that his recommendation is to keep them on for 3 years with a 90-day opt-out clause.

Ms. Means stated that the Economic Development Committee should meet with Retail Strategies on a more regular basis to review their progress.

Mr. Meleski moved and Mr. Lelko seconded to recommend Council consider Retail Strategies with a 3-year contract with a 90-day opt out each year.

Mr. Yaney recommended the contract date be moved to the end of June so that it is after the ICSC conference.

Mr. Meleski amended the motion to include whatever ancillary items Mr. Yaney thinks should be added into the contract that would be beneficial to the City.

Mr. Lelko concurred.

Upon voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - none.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS - none.

ADJOURN

Mr. Meleski moved and Mr. Lelko seconded to adjourn. Upon voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:23 PM.

Attest:

AMY DAY
Clerk of Council