

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

City of Germantown

August 17, 2023

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Heidi Grant, Tom Winning, Mark Heistand, Mike Kuhn

Also Present: Will Parsons, Community Relations Manager; Pat Higgins, Economic Development and City Grant Writer; Keith Brane, Planning Consultant; Judy Gilleland, City Manager; Lynette Dinkler, City Attorney

**The meeting was called to order by Tom W at 9:02 am**

### **Approval of the minutes**

Tom W motioned to approve the minutes from the July meeting, this motion was unanimously approved.

### **Updates on Downtown Redevelopment Plan**

Pat H shared that the consulting team is making final revisions to the plan. They have asked the ED Committee to provide any last minute thoughts and recommendations. Mike K shared that the City Council did not have any initial criticisms of the plan. Judy thought that the report was well received at the Council meeting and that Council seemed excited.

### **Community Improvement Corporations**

Lynette D spoke to the Committee briefly about Community Improvement Corporations (CICs). Looked at what the goals of Germantown would be and how creating such an entity could help accomplish this. Judy G said that the consulting team did recommend that Germantown form a CIC. The prime goal would be enabling the private sector to contribute funds towards the growth of the community. Early work has already begun to network with local people that could potentially donate to this type of organization. Lynette suggested that the ED Committee find out how much it would cost to establish a 501(c)3, and that an auditor would need to be consulted. The end result of an organization such as this being created is that there would be funds that would be used for the revitalization of Germantown that would come with less red tape.

As far as this revitalization, one of the main foci would be supporting local business owners, especially those just getting started that lack expertise on the process. Funds could be used to help purchase them an architect. There are currently about 6-8 vacant commercial buildings downtown that ideally would be filled with new merchants.

### **4 Way Stop Proposal**

The Downtown Redevelopment Plan recommends creating a 4 way stop at Market and Main. Judy G informed the committee that this engineering study would cost about \$4000. She further clarified that even seemingly simple steps such as this will take money, and that until a CIC or similar is created, the City will have to fund these ideas to keep momentum going.

### **Awards and Celebrations**

The Chamber of Commerce has begun doing grand opening ribbon cutting events for new businesses. At their most recent meeting, there were talks of bringing back an event in Downtown Germantown for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. The owner of New View is also currently looking into getting videos made about the local businesses in Germantown. The City would also look to further utilize the City Beautiful Commission on giving out awards and recognition.

### **Mural Committee**

Forming a committee for mural creation in town was found to be a useful idea. Grants will most likely need to be procured in order to actually see murals being painted in town. Another aspect the committee would have to consider is what type of art/style the murals should be. Mark H mentioned that there are 2 retired art teachers from Valley View Schools that live in the area and would probably be interested in joining such a committee. Mike K's aunt and Pat H's son could also be potential advisors. It was agreed upon that there will need to be a mix of art and business-minded people on the committee. Heidi G expressed interest in being a part of the committee and helping to get it started.

### **Streeteries**

Heidi G shared that the Florentine looks great with its tables and chairs out front.

Judy G has been in discussion with Alleyway Cafe on getting some tables set up in the alley adjacent to their building. Will P was tasked with speaking with the neighboring businesses to make sure everything being done is understood and amenable. It was shared that Tipp City has streeteries in their allies and they look very nice. It was also mentioned that focusing on alleys will also allow for changes and adaptations in the future and enables the initiative to begin for less money.

### **Downtown Manager**

This is a role outlined in the upcoming Downtown Redevelopment Plan. For the first year, the duties of this role will most likely be carried out by a combination of City staff and consultants. There is currently a lead on an individual who could be well suited for this position, but nothing is for sure.

### **Matching Funds**

Judy G has had meetings with the Finance Department and is confident that there will be \$25,000-\$50,000 for downtown projects in 2024. So, matching funds would be beneficial. A CIC could be useful in this regard.

### **Comments from Mike Kuhn**

The old hardware store is very nearly completely cleaned out. He is looking to create a small market with booths to be used as a pop-up business incubator. People could move from these booths into open retail spots in the downtown. He also shared that there is a person that is interested in potentially opening a home décor store in town.

**The meeting was adjourned at 11:18 am**