

Chamber of Commerce In Culver
Board of Directors Organizational Meeting – 2007
December 9, 2006 – 8:00 AM

The board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce in Culver met at The Culver Coffee Company to review goals for 2007. Present were: Mike Stallings, Judi Dodge, Greg Fassett, Scott Huberty, Ben Schaller, Dawn Minas, Rick Tompos, Dick Brantingham and Ralph Winters. Julie VandeWater Bailey was absent. Jon Guenin, town manager, and Bobbie Ruhnnow, executive secretary were also present.

Stallings, incoming president, called the meeting to order at 8 AM. First discussion item was the reservation count for the Awards Dinner, December 12. Directors agreed that a good attendance was important and calls would be made to try to increase the number.

Discussion Items

Stallings introduced two issues for discussion: 1. Money – What do we need to survive? 2. What can the Chamber do for their members – what is expected? Fassett referred to the September 5, 2006 general meeting where members gave opinions on their vision of the Chamber's goals. A synopsis of this meeting prepared by Patty Stallings was given to directors.

- A. Introduce new businesses to community at meetings.
- B. Create a pamphlet outlining what the Chamber is, what it does for business.
- C. Create a sub-committee to formulate pamphlet.
- D. Tie Second Century Committee accomplishments to Chamber.
- E. Review Indiana Main St. Program i.e. Downtown Preservation
- F. Review how we promote membership – form a committee
- G. Coordinate with local government – form a committee
- H. Revitalize the Retail Merchants Association, if possible

Stallings questioned how we could coordinate with local government. Winters, town council member, and Guenin, said it was important that input from Chamber members individually and as a group decision, needed to provide information in a timely fashion for council consideration prior to any agenda item the council may be ready to act on. Noted the Chamber's involvement was instrumental in getting a town manager.

Publicity on Chamber meetings and accomplishments is very important, directors agreed. Huberty pointed out that at the new medical clinic opening in Mishawaka, the Mishawaka Chamber of Commerce was highly visible and participated in the ceremonies.

Agreed that Chamber should be promoted as "Shareholders in the Community" and "Community Ambassadors". Chamber membership should reflect businesses, elected officials, media, property owners, clergy, educators, bankers, and students. Tompos showed a comprehensive pamphlet produced

by the Culver Chamber of Commerce in 1960. He said he felt the Academies would be amenable to printing the document at no cost to the Chamber.

Fassett said it was important the members be identified as Chamber reps and would provide name badges for distribution.

Discussion of assembling a Welcome Package was held. Ruhnow noted the Chamber used to sponsor a Welcome Wagon program that served the purpose of welcoming new residents/businesses. Individual storeowners gave gift certificates, etc., which helped, introduce their business to newcomers. Information on the community was also provided.

Sub-Committees Formed

A. Membership

Goals: A personal approach works best – Stallings recommended contacting summer residents for private memberships as a way to “support the community:

Committee: Fassett, Schaller, Dodge and Minas

B. Government Relations

Winters advised that it would not be a proper policy to ask he or Guenin to present issues or requests to the council or zoning boards as a conflict of interest issue.

Committee: Stallings, Brantingham and Kevin Berger

C. Second Century Committee liaisons

Committee: Tompos and Brantingham

D. Retail Merchants Association

Committee: Minas and Dodge

E. Publicity/Information Packet

Would a community calendar posted on the web site be feasible? Information on directors meetings and general meetings should be given to the local papers for publication.

Develop a pamphlet giving local information on utility hook-ups, trash pick-up, school info, town government info, etc.

Committee: Fassett, Dodge, Tompos, Ruhnow

F. Communications

Assemble a community calendar for the web site, if feasible. Guenin has informally kept one at town hall, but directors agreed the Chamber could be a “clearing house” for this type of info. Explore additional opportunities to get Chamber message out to the public.

Committee: Schaller, Tompos, Guenin

Stallings asked committees to meet as soon as possible and be ready to give updates by January 30th board meeting.

Dinner Meeting Discussion

Local businesses could be given an opportunity to give a five or ten minute review of their business or product. They can be listed on the postcard as sponsors of the meeting and if desired, can give a small handout promoting their products.

Dodge suggested a meeting of businesspersons would be beneficial that would include non-member businesses.

Minas will develop a schedule of dinner meetings beginning with February at The Culver Coffee Co. with a wine-tasting event.

Financial Report

Tompos gave directors a financial report and explained that there is a variance of \$892 debit in projected budget expenses and actual expenses. Actual over run is \$1,023 but due to a donation of \$487.50 not anticipated, the debit was reduced accordingly.

The good news he noted was that we did not have to draw money from our account at MCCF. Interest rates were extremely favorable this year.

The one time expense of \$500 filing fee to incorporate at Chamber of Commerce in Culver can be eliminated from budget and Tompos suggested we save \$300 by not joining the Indiana Chamber of Commerce since we received no benefit from the membership. The expense of \$1,200 for banners will be eliminated. Postage expense can be reduced but added to cost of Destination Culver printing as we purchase stamped, return address printed envelopes from Bowen Printing. Our cash on hand to begin 2007 is \$2,600.

The membership dues for 2007 were discussed. Directors decided to let businesses know there will be no increase in dues for 2007 and advertise that we are "action oriented" to members. Summer memberships should be sold at \$75 and an active campaign to encourage private memberships should be undertaken. Tompos made the motion to keep the dues structure the same as 2006 and act as an action oriented focus group. Motion seconded unanimously and approved.

Wrap up

On December 28, 2006, the town council will consider a recommendation from the Culver Plan Commission to rezone a single R1 parcel on S. Main Street to Commercial 2. This will bring the parcel into compliance with the remainder of the block. Collins & Collins Realtors are proposing the rezoning to build an office/apartment building on the rezoned parcel and adjacent parcel already zoned Commercial 2. The rezoning will offer a positive economic impact on the TIF district if allowed. Individual board members were urged to attend the meeting to express their support or opposition.

Meeting adjourned at 12 noon.

Bobbie Ruhnow
Executive Secretary

