

**Minutes  
August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
Village of Bartlett  
Economic Development Commission**

**1) Call to Order**

**T. Smodilla called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.**

**2) Roll Call**

**Present: S. Gandsey, M Hughes, N. Gudenkauf, J. LaPorte, A. Lewensky, R. Perri, T. Smodilla**

**Absent: C. Green, G. Kubaszko**

**Also Present: T. Fradin, Economic Development Coordinator;  
S. Skrycki, Assistant Village Administrator;  
J. Dienberg, Management Analyst**

**3) Approval of Minutes**

**A motion was made to approve the minutes from the May 13th, 2019 meeting.**

**Motioned by: S. Gandsey**

**Seconded by: M Hughes**

**Motion Carried**

**4) BEDA Application for the Still Bar and Grill**

**T. Fradin** presented a BEDA application for the Still Bar & Grill, stating that it has been in operation for five years. The applicants and building owners are business partners Brett Gaylord and Jim Leo. He added that Mr. Leo is present tonight.

They purchased the northern portion of Main Street Plaza in July 2013. That portion of the building includes the location of The Still Bar & Grill at 326 S. Main Street, the unit directly north of it that they propose expanding into at 318 S. Main Street and the unit housing JDN Heating & Air Conditioning at 314 S. Main Street.

Mr. Fradin asked that the commissioners note that this portion of the shopping center was constructed after the south portion of the shopping center was built. It was developed and owned by the Koehler family for several decades until it fell into foreclosure and was sold to Mr. Gaylord and Mr. Leo. The adjoining portion of Main Street Plaza remains owned by Mr. Ed Krueger, who has owned it for many years.

I worked with the owners when they first purchased the property and redesigned the space to open The Still, a restaurant featuring barbecue and southern fare, moonshine-inspired drinks and much more.

Ever since, they have expressed a desire to upgrade the façade and modernize the look of their portion of the building to beautify their space and attract customers. They have periodically inquired about any assistance that the Village may be able to provide in that regard.

With the creation of the BEDA program in spring 2018, staff apprised Mr. Gaylord and Mr. Leo that a portion of the funds used to upgrade their property may be rebated as a grant via the program. I encouraged them to investigate the cost of upgrading the property.

It should be noted that the applicants included a description of approximately \$300,000 worth of expenditures made while renovating the space to its current state five years ago. Staff has explained to them and several other business and property owners who made improvements prior to the creation of the BEDA program that the starting date for the program was May 1, 2018, thus no expenditures made prior to that date are eligible.

They included it for informational purposes only and for the EDC's consideration. The application also includes information on property tax payments made although that, too, is included for informational purposes only and demonstrates the high amount of taxes levied by the Cook County Assessor. Staff has verified that the property taxes are up to date per the attachment.

The applicants' current plan is to expand the restaurant into the adjacent space and to make improvements to the entire restaurant and bar and further upgrades to the property. They would like to provide an area for occasional live entertainment and larger events than they can currently handle.

A detailed quote in the amount of \$52,535 from Lionhart Construction is included, including nine work items proposed.

Some of the items pertain to the interior only, such as expanding the space and adding additional seating, while others will beautify the exterior, including updating the façade and upgrading parking lot lighting.

Mr. Fradin shared that to date, BEDA applicants have included two restaurants, an existing small grocery store that would like to add hot food items and a major multi-million dollar overhaul of Bartlett Plaza to the Streets of Bartlett.

This application fits well into the Village's plans to revitalize the downtown commercial district into a walkable, lively area offering eating, drinking and live entertainment. Also, as the Village strives to implement the TOD Plan and an Overlay District, this is the type of project that can fit into both by beautifying both a building's interior and exterior.

Staff recommends a grant in the amount of \$15,000, which amounts to 28.5% of the total project costs. Mr. Fradin asked if the EDC had any questions for staff or Mr. Leo.

**A. Lewensky** asked if this was the first application of the new fiscal year.

**T. Fradin** stated that that is correct, and added that the BEDA budget for this fiscal year is \$250,000.

**T. Smodilla** started by thanking Mr. Leo for his commitment to the community and added that she and her family have enjoyed the Still over the years. Commissioner Smodilla expressed concern with the cohesiveness of upgrading and beautification of the façade of one parcel and not the other. While she expressed enthusiasm for Mr. Leo's intended investment, she asked if there was any way to help move the Southern parcel forward in doing similar work to add cohesion.

**J. Leo** shared that he had a similar concern. He stated that they have worked to ensure that while it will look different, that it will flow between the two buildings, adding that it will make it look newer and cleaner, but won't clash with the neighbors.

**T. Fradin** shared that staff understands the concern, but shared that he has optimism that this improvement would only encourage the owner, or a future owner, to rehab the neighboring portion. He also stated that he does not believe that the current owner has any interest in taking on any rehabilitation projects such as this, and is more so looking to divest himself from the property. He added that staff would also encourage another owner to also take advantage of the BEDA program.

**T. Smodilla** added that by making the center more updated and having continuity, that it may ease the ability to sale the property.

**M. Hughes** agreed that the improvements would help to sell the property.

**A. Lewensky** added that it may even be beneficial to reach out to the contract to see what the cost of renovating the façade of the entire center would be.

**R. Perri** stated that in an ideal situation, both would be rehabbed at the same time. However, he also added that somebody has to take the time and money to start the process to start the momentum in the area. He commended Mr. Leo for his initiative.

**S. Gandsey** asked about the increased level of business expected with the build out.

**J. Leo** stated that they are looking to add 15-20 seats in the new area and expect about a 25% increase in sales. He stated that they will be expanding the bar, adding in a stage and relocating the video games to make room for some high tops.

**A. Lewensky** that he went in to the Still for the first time recently and really enjoyed himself. He admitted that it was his first time in because the outside appearance was not as appealing, and expressed enthusiasm that updating the façade could bring more people in.

**T. Smodilla** asked if they would only be upgrading the parking lighting on their portion of the lot. She expressed concern with it only being one section of the lot.

**S. Skrycki** also agreed with the sentiment and added that staff would reach out to the owner of the other portion and discuss using the BEDA program to help bring continuity to the center. He added that this wouldn't be the first time staff has done so, and hopes for a different result, as staff has more details on the BEDA program.

**T. Smodilla** summarized by stating that she is happy to see an owner not only make improvements to the interior, but the exterior as well. She wants to see business owners take pride in ownership as residents do. Her only concern with this project is neighbor not being as assiduous affecting Mr. Leo's business.

**J. Leo** stated that while it is a concern, he commended his neighbor for always keeping up on the property and having it well maintained, with his only complaint being that the façade is dated, with the inside being well maintained.

**S. Gandsey** asked how this fits in with the form based coding.

**T. Fradin** stated that this building does not fit the form based code, and does not put any restraints on Mr. Leo, and added that it only really applies to new construction.

**S. Gandsey made a motion to recommend awarding \$15,000 to The Still Bar and Grill to the Village Board for approval.**

**Seconded by R. Perri**

**Motion Carried**

**5) BEDA Application for the Streets of Bartlett**

T. Fradin presented a BEDA application for Bartlett Plaza (being renamed Streets of Bartlett), which had been on the market for several years and, although several would-be purchasers had pursued the property, it had not transacted until recently.

Due to multiple factors, the former Bartlett Fresh Market space has remained vacant since fall of 2010, being the longest-term vacancy in the Village. The 31,860 SF space requires numerous improvements to bring it up to current Code and available for occupancy. Furthermore, most other aspects of the overall shopping center had suffered from deferred maintenance and would have to be extensively renovated in an effort to attract new businesses to the center and downtown Bartlett in general.

Economic Development staff marketed the space and cooperated with several commercial brokers over the years in an effort to attract tenants to Bartlett Plaza and to attract a buyer to the center who shares a common vision with the Village to improve it and make it more viable, increasing its value, occupancy and creating additional shopping and dining opportunities as well as increased employment for area residents.

Mr. Fradin introduced the applicant, Manny Rafidia, who through his holding company, R. Group Properties & Management has purchased and improved eighteen shopping centers throughout

Illinois, Ohio and Arizona. Local centers include Prospect Crossing shopping center in Prospect Heights, Century Plaza Center in Palatine, Cross Creek Commons in Roselle, Montgomery Plaza in Montgomery and Lake Street Commons and Lake Street Plaza in Addison.

After working with Staff and the long-time original developers and owners of Bartlett Plaza, Mr. Rafidia closed on the purchase of Bartlett Plaza and has embarked on the redevelopment of the shopping center, which will be re-named Streets of Bartlett as part of its resurgence and rebranding.

Mr. Fradin shared that as of this meeting, 36,660 out of the total 86,094 SF in Bartlett Plaza remains vacant, thus it continues with a high vacancy rate of 42.6%. The Village's overall retail/commercial vacancy rate had declined from 17.7% to 7.1% over the past two years. This acquisition will help further this positive trend within the Village.

With an initial BEDA grant of \$50,000 applied for and approved last October, Mr. Rafidia has now submitted a second grant application seeking the same amount.

Mr. Rafidia has already obtained several permits to begin renovation of the façade as he showed to Staff, the EDC and Village Board last fall in his initial application.

Mr. Fradin shared that additionally, Mr. Rafidia was approved this past February for seven Special Use Permits and four Variations in support of his redevelopment of the center.

The four Variations relate to the site plan and include a reduction in required parking spaces, increasing the monument sign area, increasing the monument sign height, and reducing the monument sign setbacks.

Tenants of Bartlett Plaza have long wanted to obtain more prominent signage, and Mr. Rafidia is accommodating them in the redevelopment of the center.

Mr. Fradin then introduced the details of Mr. Rafidia's new application, stating that both of Mr. Rafidia's BEDA applications have requested a \$250,000 incentive from the Village; however, he has been made aware that the maximum BEDA grant amount is \$50,000.

Because of the size and scope of this project, along with the fact that Bartlett Plaza/Streets of Bartlett is comprised of two separate PINs, Staff encouraged Mr. Rafidia to apply for a second grant to make it a \$100,000 incentive upon completion of this massive undertaking.

PIN 06-35-318-047 includes the former grocery store space and an Assessed Value of \$589,000 and PIN 06-35-317-042 is the L-shaped building anchored by Pasta Mia and Ace Hardware and has an Assessed Value of \$307,403 (both 2018 final). Assessed values are approximately one-quarter of estimated market value in Cook County.

He shared that in the attached contracts included in the packet that he entered into pertain to the exterior of the building and amount to a total of \$1,117,683. These are for jobs that are already underway including new windows and doors being installed on the south end of the

former grocery store building facing Devon Avenue, paving and restriping the parking lot, drywall and materials for the façade, labor costs for the façade remodel, roofing, landscaping, HVAC, and electrical upgrades.

We discussed that these current improvements add up to around \$1.1 million; however, Mr. Rafidia has indicated that once the exterior improvements are completed, he will be embarking upon extensive interior build-out which will add up to a comparable amount.

He has already obtained building permits to complete the initial buildout for Armanetti Beverage Mart. He is also seeking a permit to upgrade the lighting throughout the entire center as of this meeting.

Mr. Rafidia has signed a lease with an existing restaurant in the Village and is in negotiations with several other potential tenants, including other restaurants and an ice cream shop. There is a potential fitness business, as well.

He has assured Staff that he will be spending at least \$2 million on the entire project this year and will provide additional receipts totaling that amount when the entire project is completed.

Many aspects of the Village's Strategic Plan and the EDC's 2016-2020 Marketing Plan reference attracting business and investment into the Downtown and throughout the Village.

With the former Bartlett Fresh Market space having remained vacant for eight years as of this past November, it has proven a challenging space to attract an occupant considering the improvements that must be made to it.

The BEDA program was created to provide financial incentives to attract private investment and tenants to such challenging vacant spaces while enhancing the Village's sales tax receipts and increasing employment opportunities. It allows the Village to facilitate development and redevelopment deemed in its best interest by providing partial financing for economic development projects.

The program was continued into the second year and the funding was increased with a \$250,000 line item. This is the first application this fiscal year, with several others pending. Thus, staff is recommending a maximum BEDA grant amount of \$50,000 to Manny Rafidia, subject to documentation of \$2 million worth of expenditures including improvements to the roof, façade, parking lot, lighting, landscaping, HVAC, sidewalk replacements, a new sign and the build-out of the former grocery space into a space that meets current Village Code and contains an additional sales tax producing business in addition to Armanetti's liquor store.

Two \$50,000 grants amount to five percent of the total project costs for upgrading Bartlett Plaza and its conversion to Streets of Bartlett. Mr. Fradin asked if the EDC had any questions for staff or Manny Rafidia.

**M. Rafidia** introduced himself to the commission and also introduced his son Jeremy, who is beginning to enter into the real estate business.

**R. Perri** asked Jeremy if this is his first project like this.

**J. Rafidia** said that he has some experience in rehabbing a site, opening a business, running a business, but stated that this is his first time working on a project during this stage of the process. He added that his property that he operates in Palatine is completely leased out

**S. Gandsey** asked about the signage off of Main Street, and if they plan to replace the fabric banners with a full sized permanent sign.

**J. Rafida** stated that they would love to put in a sign at some point.

**M. Rafidia** added that they have retained all of their current tenants, and plan to bring in Armanetti's and a concept restaurant called "One Taco, Dos Tequilas" that will be a nice sit down restaurant/bar with 20 TVs, with an authentic Mexican Food. He also added that he is bringing in a silent partner who will partner in profits. After a few years and the partner fully learns the business, they will be sold half of the restaurant. He also added that they plan on bringing in an ice cream shop that specializes in Italian Ice, as well as relocating D'licious Crepes & Roti and Arts and Bartlett into the center. He stated that they are currently looking at either Planet Fitness or Crunch Fitness to fill the last opening of the old grocery space.

**M. Rafidia** then went on to state that they are interested in bringing the grocer Aldi into the current out lot on the property, stating that they will be reaching out to their corporate offices in the near future. He added that the two new signs will be up by the 15<sup>th</sup>, and that the parking lot will be done at the end of the month or into September. He stated that he hopes all of his renovations will be complete by the end of 2019.

**S. Gandsey** stated that the current tenants of the Martial Arts studio have had nothing but compliments of the communication with both Jeremy and Manny.

**J. Rafidia** stated that it is their goal to engage with the tenants early, so that they feel more welcomed rather than being an intimidating landlord.

**T. Smodilla** stated that she thinks that's incredibly important to the legacy businesses in that center. She commended him to his unique style in this industry.

**M. Rafidia** stated that to show that goodwill, they were able to get Pasta Mia a new patio within two weeks. He added that this is an example of they work with current tenants.

**A. Lewensky** stated that they would be heroes if they bring an Aldi into town. He asked if they plan construction on the parking lot, or if it will be as is.

**M. Rafidia** stated that they will be redoing the entire parking lot, and that Aldi could potentially go on the grass area.

**S. Srycki** added that Mr. Rafidia has agreed that the light poles that will go in will match those that currently exist in the downtown.

**T. Smodilla** commended the continuity and added that it is very important to the TOD plan.

**R. Perri made a motion to recommend awarding \$50,000 to The Streets of Bartlett to the Village Board for approval.**

**Seconded by S. Gandsey**

**Motion Carried**

**T. Fradin** stated that the EDC has spent many hours discussing what to do with this site, and expressed excitement to see work being done on the center.

**J. LaPorte** asked staff if they had a pulse on if Aldi will come or not.

**T. Fradin** stated that there has been interest, but in no means are they committed. He added that they are generally glad to see the improvements being made to the center, and that staff does not let more than two weeks go by without contacting them.

**S. Gandsey** asked if the developers would be interested in putting in a gathering area into the green space on the center.

**T. Fradin** stated that there are no plans at this time.

**T. Smodilla** expressed enthusiasm that the center is becoming a destination.

**S. Skrycki** stated that he has been awe since they first met Mr. Rafidia. He added that projects of this nature take years to even begin, and the pace of this development has been incredible.

**J. LaPorte** expressed concern over the location of an ice cream shop on the end of the center near Berteau, and said he was nervous about traffic.

**S. Skrycki** stated that it was actually being located on the interior of the center.

**T. Smodilla** asked if there is anything that the EDC can do to support his pitch to Aldi (Letters of Recommendation, etc)

**T. Fradin** stated that the EDC is doing their part through the BEDA program, as it is bringing development to the downtown and creating the necessary momentum.

**M. Hughes** asked if staff was married to the idea of Aldi, and if they have looked into any other grocers including Trader Joes.

**S Skrycki** stated that staff is not married to Aldi, however, it is the grocer that staff has the most momentum with. He stated that the out lot that Mr. Rafidia has put in is to the exact specifications/prototype of Aldi. He stated that if Aldi does fall through, then staff will continue to contact every single grocery store that they possibly can.

6) **Public Comment**

None

7) **New Business**

**T. Fradin** provided an update on staff's activity since the last meeting in May. He shared that staff hosted an open house for the TOD overlay district, and thanked the commissioners that attended. He also shared that staff attended the ICSC show in Las Vegas with Mayor Wallace in conjunction with the Access O'Hare West Group. Mr. Fradin also shared staff hosted a Google seminar at Bartlett Hills for the Business Community, he added that it was well attended and very helpful to local businesses.

He also shared that Cook County elected a new commissioner representing Bartlett named Kevin Morrison. He stated that Commissioner Morrison met with Staff and the Mayor in July. Staff drove him throughout the community, showcasing the developments in town while also sharing some challenges Bartlett faces due to being in Cook County. He shared enthusiasm for having an ally with the county to support Bartlett residents and businesses.

Tony then shared that the largest development (400,000 sq. ft.) in the Cook County portion of the business park (Project Oak) has an incentive package going before the Village Board in the upcoming meeting. He added that this is a Fortune 10 company.

He added that he attended a trade show involving Foreign Direct Investment recently and had a chance to network with trade delegates from throughout the world. He stated that the two buildings at Stearns and Munger had been approved and that he spent time marketing them at this show.

Tony then added that staff is working with a restaurateur that is looking to buy a downtown building to turn into a bar and grille. He stated that the building is between JC's and TL's.

Lastly, Tony shared that More Brewing is getting closer to building on the former Lucky Jack's site. He stated that they have submitted formal plans, and that the project continues to progress.

**S. Skrycki** stated that this is a project that staff has been working on for two years, and showed enthusiasm over the project.

**S. Gandsey** asked if staff could look into getting some of the temporary banners advertising businesses along Main Street could be removed/replaced.

**T. Fradin** stated that he would pass the information on to code enforcement to see what can be done. He added that staff wants to help businesses increase their visibility, but added that the point was well taken.

**T. Smodilla** shared that they are dingy, and detract from the downtown.

**S. Gandsey** asked for an update on the BEDA for Siri Indian Grocery Store.

**T. Fradin** stated that they have seen challenges in getting this project started, and added that staff has informed them that the grant may be rescinded if progress does not start. He added that a check is not cut until the project is completed, and that the Village will not front any of the money.

**T. Smodilla** expressed interest in creating a deadline for them to start work. She added that if they do not meet the deadline, they could always re-apply for the program. She also asked what would happen to the funds if the grant was rescinded.

**T. Fradin** stated that is the direction staff is leaning as well.

**S. Skrycki** stated that they would check with the finance department in regards to the question about the funds.

**8) Adjournment**

**A motion was made to adjourn the meeting.**

**Motioned by: S. Gandsey**

**Seconded: M. Hughes**

**Motion Carried. The Meeting Adjourned at 8:36 PM**