



## DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

### *Economic Development Division*

#### m e m o r a n d u m

**TO:** Laurel Lunt Prussing, Mayor

**FROM:** Elizabeth H. Tyler, Community Development Director

**DATE:** March 3, 2008

**SUBJECT:** **Economic Development Activities Report for February 2008**

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### Projects and Events

#### **Downtown**

- Five-Points West – The City is renegotiating the development agreement for the inline shops. UI Credit Union opened at the end of the month and staff and UBA held a ribbon cutting event on February 28<sup>th</sup>.
- Staff is working with Rich and Associates on a Downtown Urbana Parking Study project. Business surveys were distributed and the consultants have commenced data gathering with help from City staff. Staff will be meeting the Rich and Associates later this week.
- Lincoln Square Village - Staff is reviewing plans for a new piano bar that will occupy ~8,000 sq. ft. off the Great Hall and will utilize the TIF RIP loan/grant program. A new jewelry store is also planned to open soon. Common Ground Food Co-op announced plans to locate on the east side of Lincoln Square later this year.
- Wenk Associates is finalizing the Boneyard Beautification Plan document.
- Staff is working with Norm and Carolyn Baxley on incentives for remodel of the former Brash Flower Shop building at 126 W. Main Street. Remodeling of the building is expected to be complete in the next month.
- Staff met with a potential buyer of the Historic Lincoln Hotel to discuss possible development options and incentives.
- Staff met with JSM to discuss proposed downtown projects, including the Denny's site.
- Staff met with Vermilion Development to discuss a possible redevelopment opportunity in downtown Urbana.
- Staff received plans for a coffee shop/bakery to be located in the Stratford Residences retail space on N. Race Street.
- ED Staff met with a gallery owner interested in sites to open a gallery and framing/painting restoration business in downtown.

#### **North Cunningham**

- CBA will be conducting the first public meeting visioning workshop and charette to take place March 4-6<sup>th</sup> for the Cunningham Avenue Beautification Study. CBA has already received input from various stakeholders and will be combining it into the public input to create some design concepts for the Cunningham Avenue corridor.

- Staff is reviewing plans for new apartments to be located around Eastland Suites and another set of plans for apartments to be built adjacent to Town and Country Apartments on Oakland Avenue.

### **North Lincoln**

- Hangar Orthopedics opened in a portion of the former Family Video building located at Lincoln and Fairview. The remaining portion of the building is currently for lease.
- Staff is working with a property owner interested in subdividing for a new hotel near the I-74 and Lincoln Avenue interchange.

### **East Urbana**

- Menards - The City and Menards are close to completing an annexation and development agreement related to the 300+ acre project on High Cross Road. Staff continues discussion with Menards and neighboring land owners regarding infrastructure and site planning. Menards moved the planned opening date of their store to early 2010. Menards has submitted revised subdivision plats for the entire site which staff is currently reviewing.
- Staff attended a retention visit with Solo Cup on February 20.

### **University Area**

- Gregory Place Phase 2 – Construction is moving quickly on the mixed-use project located across from Gregory Place.
- Trammell-Crow is getting ready to construct a 5-story, mixed-use building on University Avenue near the engineering campus. Trammell-Crow has closed on the property and plans are currently being reviewed.
- Staff is working with a development group on a proposed office/retail building at the SW corner of Lincoln and University.
- The City is coordinating with CBA and CCRPC on a University Avenue improvement project for the area between U of I campus and downtown Urbana.

### **Southeast Urbana**

- Staff should soon be receiving interior plans for review for the new Meijer store, which is now scheduled for an opening date in Fall 08.
- Atkins is marketing tenant spaces at The Pines at Stone Creek Commons on the southeast corner of Philo and Windsor Roads. Monical's Pizza and Busey Bank are now open. A grand opening event was held for Busey Bank on February 27<sup>th</sup>.
- Construction of the retail building at The Pointe on Philo Road is underway.
- Both the new Carle and Christie Clinic buildings at Windsor and Myra Ridge Drive are under construction and should be completed by Summer 08.
- SAA has completed work on the Philo Road beautification project and has submitted a draft master plan document for review.
- Construction continues on the new Walgreens on Philo Road. The property owners are soliciting tenants for an adjacent retail outlot to the north. The old Walgreens space is being marketed to new tenants.
- Staff met with a group interested in purchasing the former Centruce Bank building and converting to a fast food use.
- A portion of the Family Video on Philo has been leased and is being converted into a Little Caesar's pizza store.

### **Urbana Building Permits**

- 15 total building permits issued in February
- 0 new SFR permits issued under Build Urbana in February
- 2 total SFR permits issued in 2008
- 890 total permits issued under Build Urbana

### **Retention Visits & Contacts**

- JSM Development
- Common Ground Co-op
- Wade Franklin/Lincoln Square
- UI Credit Union
- Busey Bank
- Solo Cup
- Vermilion Development
- Flex-n-Gate

### **Other Items of Interest**

- ED staff attended various meetings for East Central Illinois Economic Development District, EDC Board and Committee, CVB, Chamber Government Council, UBA, and 40North/88West, Sustainable Urbana Initiative, and Urbana 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration.
- Public Arts Coordinator is working with the Public Arts Task Force and city staff to prepare a presentation to the City Council on the Public Arts Program Proposal and ordinance to establish a public arts commission and public arts program.
- Public Arts Coordinator continues to assist in the planning of the Urbana District of the Boneyard Arts Festival.
- Staff is in the process of negotiating agreements for the Downtown Newspaper Rack Project with an artist and the Champaign County Courthouse.
- Lisa Bralts began work with the City on February 25<sup>th</sup>. She is the new ED Specialist/Market Director.
- The Special Census is gearing up and enumeration should begin in March following the end of U of I's Spring Break.
- An RFP Review Committee is currently evaluating RFP responses from various firms for the City Marketing RFP and the Website RFP.
- ED staff attended an ICSC Midwest Alliance conference and networking event in Chicago on February 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. They met with developers and retailers and distributed marketing materials for available properties and development opportunities in Urbana.