



Kankakee City Council
Economic Development Committee
Thursday, Jan 22, 2026, 5:30 p.m.
Council Chambers 385 E. Oak St.

The regular meeting of the Economic Development Committee ("Committee") of the Kankakee City Council ("Council"), was called to order by Chairman Mike Cobbs on January 22, 2026 at 5:33 p.m. in the Council Chambers, proper notice having been given to the public and committee members.

The following Committee members were present: Alds. Mike Cobbs (6), Dave Baron (2), Cherry Malone-Marshall (1) and Lenora Noble (7), Danita Grant Swanson(4), Dale Tolly (3),Carmen Lewis(5). The following guests were present: Mayor Chris Curtis, Barbi Brewer-Watson, City Planner Elizabeth Kubal, Josh Jeffers, Lisa Wogan, and Angelina Gear.

There were no public comments.

There was a quorum present.

1. Presentation by **Jeffers Group Presentation on Mixed-Use Development**

- **Project Overview:** Josh Jeffers of The Jeffers Group presented plans for mixed-use development at the former Midland States Bank building, including a business accelerator ("CoLab") and 47 market-rate residential units.
- **Economic Impact:** Estimated to create 70 full-time jobs, 100 construction jobs, and serve 250 small businesses. Residential spending impact projected at \$5.7 million annually.
- **Financing:** The project seeks New Market Tax Credits (NMTC) and benefits from the Rivers Edge Redevelopment Zone designation, which provides a 25% state historic tax credit.
- **Market Rate Units:** In response to a question from Mayor Curtis, Mr. Jeffers stated that none of the residential units would be income-restricted; all would be market rate.

- **Timeline:** Targeting a September 2026 groundbreaking, contingent on securing NMTC allocations.

2. Visit Kankakee County Tourism Update By Interim Executive Director Angelina Gear

- **Visitor Activity:** In 2025, Kankakee reported 9.1 million total visits, with 1.1 million being unique out-of-market visitors. Tourism shows stable, steady growth at 1.4% year-over-year.
- **Short-Term Rentals:** 18 short-term rental properties generated \$500,000 in revenue in 2025, with occupancy averaging 50%. This represents a \$40,000 annual revenue opportunity for the city through an 8.25% tax.
- **Marketing Strategy:** Emphasized promoting Kankakee as a destination with diverse experiences, including dining, events, and trails, to encourage longer stays and repeat visits.

Director Barbara Brewer-Watson gave the director's report this information can be viewed in detail online.

Old Business

New Business

1. Grocery Feasibility Study Proposal: Mayor Curtis

- **Consultant:** Mike Melons, a grocery industry expert, proposed a market study to evaluate the viability of a grocery store on East Court Street.
- **Parking Concerns:** Highlighted the need for significant parking spaces (9-10 per 1,000 square feet) to attract grocery retailers.

- **Funding:** The study aligns with the state's grocery grant program, which prioritizes communities with comprehensive market studies.
- **Next Steps:** The committee unanimously voted to recommend the proposal to the full city council.

2. Indian Meadows Subdivision Discussion

- **Resident Concerns:** Residents expressed interest in accelerating the development of the subdivision into a fully functional neighborhood with homes, driveways, and amenities.
- **Incentives:** Discussion centered on extending incentives to existing residents and ensuring their inclusion in any new agreements.
- **Timeline:** Original agreements extend to 2038-2042, but the committee considered options for revisiting terms to address resident feedback.

Upon a motion by Ald. Tolly and seconded by Ald Noble, the Committee adjourned via voice vote at 6:34

The next meeting of the Committee will be February 26, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ald. Mike Cobbs

Chairman