

Mayor's Minute- January 30, 2025

January has started off with a roar! First the weather and also the things that are happening here in City Hall. The Council and the Staff here in the office have been working to develop the resources we need to stimulate economic growth here in town. Our business environment in Bunker Hill is challenging and for a business to be able to thrive here, we as a city need to pull together and make some changes. Bunker Hill has lost a few businesses in the past year and we have several others who are going through significant upheavals. What can we do to help these businesses? How can we replace the ones that we have lost?

One of the ways we can bring people to town is by marketing and advertising. The City has reached out to Great Rivers and Routes marketing company. Mr. Cory Jobe and Ms. Lindsay Laird met with members of the Council, Chamber, and residents who are interested in stimulating growth in Bunker Hill and suggested several things to begin working on. First, he suggested that we update our town's attractions, businesses and organizations to his website. It is a free service and a widely used website for this area. The clerk is currently working on providing this information to his organization. The City will also look into updating our own website and try to make it more tourist friendly and informative.

Secondly, he suggested that we look for a consulting group to help our town develop a robust economic development plan. This type of comprehensive plan will give direction to motivated individuals, organizations, and the city to help coordinate and guide our efforts. Developing this type of plan is a large commitment and there are several other steps to be accomplished before pursuing this option.

A third avenue that was discussed is the formation of a grassroots Economic Development Board for Bunker Hill. This would be a committee independent of the City or Chamber that will focus on creating a business-friendly, stable environment and attracting businesses to our town. Ideally, this group will work with the City and the Chamber to maximize the resources of all three organizations. There have already been several people who have expressed interest in creating this type of organization. If you are interested, please contact Heather Kraus, City Clerk at the office. She will put you in contact with other motivated individuals who have a vision for Bunker Hill's business environment.

A final discussion concerned the attitude of the town, in general. Several concerns were mentioned: communication between groups and organizations and working together; overcoming negative attitudes about Bunker Hill; changing the focus from criticism and competition to partnerships and support; and creating a "Bunker Hill as a destination" mindset. Many people are leaving large cities for small ones like Bunker Hill because they want to belong, feel safe, and develop relationships with the people they live around. We have this! We can foster these characteristics and improve on the amenities that Bunker Hill has. We have history, parks, great schools, several unique businesses and organizations that can draw people in. We are safe, centrally located, rural and quiet. There is so much to work with here!

The City is continuing to develop networks with people who can bring contacts, ideas, and strategies to the table. We will be meeting soon with representative from SIUE to tap into the University's resources and there are upcoming "listening sessions" planned for the community to share with us your ideas and concerns about economic growth.

Next time I reach out to you, I am hoping to be able to update you all on further grant opportunities, community interest listening sessions and more resources for stimulating growth here in Bunker Hill.

Until next time,
John Chapman, Mayor.