ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Tuesday, April 29, 2014 – 7:30pm
Rotary International Headquarters, Room 1A & 1B, 1560 Sherman Ave., Evanston, IL

Members Present: Alderman Burrus, Alderman Holmes, Alderman Rainey, Matt Rodgers, Alderman Tendam, Alderman Wynne, Raymond Zenkich

Staff Present: Wally Bobkiewicz, Meagan Jones, Jennifer Lasik, Johanna Nyden, Melissa Parker, Jonathan Williams-Kinsel, Paul Zalmezak

Members Absent: Alderman Fiske, Alderman Grover, Scott Peters, Jeannemarie Sierant

Others Present: Alderman Donald Wilson

Presiding Member: Alderman Wynne

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM
   With a quorum present, Alderman Wynne called the meeting to order at 8:05 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 26, 2014
   The meeting minutes of March 26, 2014 were unanimously approved 7-0.

3. INTRODUCTION OF DOWNTOWN EVANSTON EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
   Andrew McDonald, Downtown Evanston Board of Directors member, introduced Annie Coakley as the new Executive Director.

4. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION
   A. Creation of Special Service Area for Dempster/Chicago/Main
      Alderman Wynne moved this agenda item to be the first item for discussion.

      Johanna Nyden, Economic Development Division Manager, stated that this was a grassroots effort brought to the City from the business districts. She asked for direction from the committee whether or not to move forward by retaining a consultant to go through the formal process.

      Tim Peterson, Squeezebox Books owner and President of Chicago/Dempster Merchants Association, shared that he along with 60 other landlords around Chicago Ave. and the Main St. district are very enthusiastic about the notion of having more funds to deal with infrastructure and beautification of the entire area.

      Alderman Rainey said she believes this is a wonderful idea because it is a way for property owners to take charge of adding more revenue to the pot and spending on things they want. She discouraged the group from considering the SSA funding as a means of seeking city matching funds as has been the case with the downtown SSA.
Alderman Wynne asked those merchants that were in attendance to stand. There were 12 people present in support of the creation of the special service area.

Mr. Raymond Zenkich asked if there a different dynamic to engage the larger chains than some of the local merchants as he did not see the chain stores on the petition.

Mr. Peterson replied that they were trying to get directly to the owners of the building to support it rather than having the manager of a larger chain.

Alderman Rainey moved to engage staff to identify a consultant to assist in the completion of a SSA and recommend approval of the special service area forward to City Council. Mr. Zenkich seconded. A voice vote taken and it was approved unanimously 7-0.

B. Improvements to Rotary International/Pivot Point Headquarters
Mr. Wally Bobkiewicz, City Manager, stated that this marks the opportunity to bring the discussions with Rotary International and Pivot Point together on their vision for the building. He shared that this part of downtown hasn’t been talked about a lot in recent months and the number of people that occupy the building is very important as a large tenant. Taken together, Rotary International and Pivot Point are among the important employers for a lot of reasons including their global reach.

Mr. Robert Passage, Chairman and CEO of Pivot Point International, presented the history of Pivot Point as a family-owned company along with their community involvement. They want to be the global leader in hair and beauty education and want Evanston to remain their international headquarters. They bring to Evanston approximately 250 people each day including employees, students, salon clients and consumer purchasing retail products.

Mr. Passage indicated that they were requesting assistance from the City with the annex to create a better exterior which would include a canopy and new signage. He had staff share the estimated project costs, blueprints, and design concepts of the future space.

Mr. John Hewko, General Secretary for Rotary International, presented an overview of Rotary International which included what they have been doing for the community over the past 60 years. He explained that Rotary International is a worldwide organization that brings together community leaders to take action to solve problems and make connections.

He stated that the corporate mission is to eradicate Polio. Since 1985 their efforts have protected more than two billion children in 122 countries and Rotarians have contributed 1.2 billion to help the cause. Their hope is to eradicate Polio by 2018.

Mr. Hewko shared the vision for the space which would be to provide a world class visitor center and conference center that engages people from all continents which are still in the concept stages.

A representative of the architecture firm commissioned to redesign the space led a tour of the property Alderman Rainey asked Mr. Bobkiewicz to zero in on exactly what the committee was being asked for.
Mr. Bobkiewicz responded that the presentation was intended to inform the committee of the planned renovations and the planned return at a future date with a public/private partnership funding agreement. The next step would be for the long-term lease extension for Pivot Point and preliminary discussions have already occurred.

Alderman Rainey asked if any of the proposed improvements were going to require change zoning variations.

Mr. Bobkiewicz replied not at this point. The signage would be the only issue with the request of a video monitor which isn’t currently allowed. It would be asked to be considered.

Alderman Rainey asked what the timeframe would be.

Mr. Bobkiewicz sensed it could be as soon as perhaps June.

Alderman Rainey stated that the presentation couldn’t have been more helpful and believed any involvement the City could have would bring them more notice.

Mr. Bobkiewicz indicated that this was pure economic development to revitalize this area and would serve as a catalyst for other projects as well.

Alderman Holmes asked in terms of conferences what kind of numbers they were trying to attract here.

Mr. Hewko answered that they can host about 280 people at the Hyatt by O’Hare and it would be at least that size in Evanston.

Alderman Holmes asked Pivot Point if there were plans to help ETHS students that don’t go to college.

Mr. Passage responded that there have been large numbers of students that have toured and have conducted on sight demos in ETHS. Students signed up and participated in a boot camp. They intend to continue to do those types of things.

Mr. Bobkiewicz indicated that Mayor Tisdahl helped to make all of these connections and is interested in that as well.

C. Economic Development Fund Support for Custer Street Fair
Jennifer Lasik, Cultural Arts Coordinator, presented a pilot program for funding arts-based fairs/events in Evanston. She recommended that Custer Fair, organized by Mr. John Szostek, would be the best candidate for the pilot program.

Mr. Szostek shared that they want to get more Evanston restaurants involved but they faced resistance. There are health standards that only people that have the proper setup for festivals can participate and they can’t afford the coolers and whatnot. They have reached out to the food trucks and their issue was they are usually invited at no cost and they are not used to paying fees to be involved. They cut the cost to attract them but that didn’t help.
The other issue was they can sell out and restock at night but be done by 1:00 p.m. the next day.

Mrs. Lasik recommendation was to establish a pilot program and Custer Fair would be the first candidate. We want this to be a tool to draw people to bring people to the City and the sheer volume of what they have shown could be used as a benchmark. She also stated that it shows that they are not just a fair but they are a consumer. They have over $135,000 invested in the fair in the products and services they use. It is a big deal for a weekend event.

Mr. Bobkiewicz recommended the Custer Fair be the first of the pilot program and that the City would rebate up to $10,000.

Alderman Rainey moved to use Custer Fair as a pilot program and will give fees up to $10,000. Alderman Burrus seconded. A voice vote was taken and it was unanimously approved 7-0.

D. Relocation of Police Outpost/633 Howard Street for Commercial Purposes
Mrs. Nyden expressed that the Howard business street district was really taking off and the block with Peckish Pig had dramatically changed. Staff requested to move the Police Outpost and use it for a commercial use.

Alderman Rainey moved to move the Police Outpost and Alderman Burrus seconded. A voice vote was taken and it was unanimously approved 7-0.

E. Proposed Changes/Additions to Great Merchant Grant Program
This item was held until the next meeting.

F. Proposed Changes/Additions to Façade Improvement Program
This item was held until the next meeting.

5. COMMUNICATIONS
   A. Status on Wayfinding Signage Program
   B. Now We’re Cookin’ Quarterly Report
   C. Announcements/Updates from EDC Members
   D. Monthly Economic Development Communication

6. ADJOURNMENT

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 28, 2014

Alderman Rainey moved for adjournment and Alderman Tendam seconded. The meeting was adjourned 9:22 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Parker
Administrative Secretary