I. Call to Order
   A quorum being present, Chair Burrus called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

II. Consideration of Joint Transportation & Parking and Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes of October 26, 2011

   Ald. Grover moved approval of the minutes, seconded by Ald. Rainey. Unanimously approved (7-0)

III. Consideration of Meeting Minutes of October 26, 2011


   The minutes were approved unanimously, 7-0.

   Chair Burrus announced that the Consideration of Request for Financial Assistance from the Technology Innovation Center (TIC) will be deferred until a later to be determined meeting.

IV. Staff Report
   A. Update on Recent Economic Development Activities
      N. Radzevich reported that two individuals, Meagan Jones and Jim Furey, have been hired to fill the two new Economic Development Specialist roles.

      N. Radzevich reported that Christmas wreaths have been installed throughout the city and have been well received. The Gordon Food Service Marketplace ground breaking took place in mid-November. The city continues to coordinate with the CTA and merchant groups during the CTA viaduct replacement project.

      N. Radzevich announced that the Joint Review Board (JRB) is scheduled for Friday 12/16/2011 at 9AM and that IRMCO Holiday Party is scheduled for 12/9/2011 at Noon.
B. Announcements / Updates from EDC Members
A. Grover announced the recent opening of Stratosphere Networks in their new facility at 1732 Central Street and acknowledged the creative solutions proposed by economic development staff and Rickey Voss to identify appropriate incentives and parking solutions that enabled them to stay in Evanston. A. Grover identified this as the type of project we need to attract and retain young knowledge based workers in Evanston.

A. Rainey announced recent progress on a proposed wine bar on Howard Street, interest in the Dairy Queen site, and acknowledged the volunteers who participated in planning for the Howard Theater.

B. Burrus recently met with a number of Kellogg graduates seeking to open "knowledge based" businesses in the community.

J. Grover announced that she and Alderman Braithwaite attended the National League of Cities conference in Arizona and will be summarizing their activities in a report.

D. Holmes announced the opening of a new coffee shop, J. J. Java, at 911 Foster and the planned Emerson Square residential development.

V. NEW BUSINESS
A. Consideration of FY 2012 Great Merchant Grant Applications
J. Nyden presented the 2012 Great Merchant Grant application guidelines, summarized the total allocated for the program, the total requested, and total recommended (see below).

Allocated................$72,000
Requested............$72,070
Recommended.........$58,000

J. Nyden indicated that the total recommended by Staff reflects cost savings that could result from combining services/removing duplicate services. For example, several merchant groups requested funding for websites. There is likely an opportunity to reduce costs by coordinating efforts. In addition, two organizations on Central Street requested funding. Staff will work with the Central Street groups to coordinate a shared effort and will present their request at the December 14th Economic Development Committee meeting.

J. Grover asked what role Staff is playing in helping coordinate these efforts. J. Nyden reported that Staff holds monthly joint meetings with all of the merchant groups. J. Nyden also suggested that Staff will return to request additional funding if the coordination efforts fail.

D. Mennemeyer asked about status of Central Street.

R. Zenkich said the consolidation of common efforts is a good idea and asked if Staff would be using the City’s internet infrastructure.
N. Radzevich acknowledged that there is an opportunity to use the City’s existing website and potentially future tools that Staff is currently working on.

J. Nyden announced that each of the merchant groups would present their proposal and would appear in alphabetical order.

1. Chicago / Dempster merchants
Paul Giddings of the Chicago / Dempster merchants expressed appreciation for Staff’s efforts to limit CTA’s viaduct replacement project impact on the business district. Mr. Giddings presented his application request in detail.

D. Mennemeyer asked if there was a way to purchase banners in bulk to reduce the cost.

Paul Giddings responded that the production of the banners is likely not a bulk savings option because each district has unique banners. However, he suggested that there could be savings by coordinating with all business districts to use a single contractor to replace all business district banners on a regular interval.

Ald. Grover moved approval, seconded by D. Mennemeyer.

The Committee approved the request unanimously, 7-0

2. Dr. Hill
Muffy McAuley represented the Dr. Hill association. Also present were John Leineweber, Nell Funk, and [name] of Rex’s Place. Muffy summarized the merchant group request and discussed the importance of marketing the area.

D. Mennemeyer acknowledged the geographic challenges Dr. Hill faces and suggested the group reach out to Walgreens to help beautify the Simpson access point to the neighborhood.

D. Holmes agreed with D. Mennemeyer and suggested a number of neighborhood gateways need improvement including Church and Dodge. A. Rainey suggested Dr. Hill contact the owner of the former rail right-of-way to assist (Bob Parris).

C. Burrus suggested Walgreens throughout the city might consider contributing to landscape beautification.

S. Freeman suggested Dr. Hill use Evanston-based landscape companies. Mr. Leineweber and J. Nyden advised they have been using a firm that was identified and vetted by City of Evanston to benefit from a deeply discounted pricing structure.

Ald. Grover moved approval, seconded by Ald. Rainey.

The Committee approved the request unanimously, 7-0

3. Howard Street
Barbara Carlson presented the Howard Street Merchant’s plan.
Ald. Grover moved approval, seconded by D. Mennemeyer.

The Committee approved the request unanimously, 7-0

4. Main Street
John Szostek presented the Main Street Merchants application primarily focused on the Custer Art Fair coupon book.

J. Grover acknowledged how each proposal reflects the interesting assets and challenges of the individual business districts.

C. Burrus suggested Main Street consider pursuing a mobile phone “App” similar to the one used by Downtown Evanston.

Ald. Grover moved approval, seconded by Ald. Rainey.

The Committee approved the request unanimously, 7-0.

5. West End
Rick Prinz of Nature’s Perspective presented the West End Business Association’s application after expressing thanks for Staff support at recent meetings, the new banners and Christmas wreaths. The challenge facing the West End is to create an environment where people want to locate their business and where employees want to work.

[M. Wynne joined the group, bringing the committee to a total of 8 members.]

A. Rainey, C. Burrus, and D. Mennemeyer expressed concern that $3,500 of the request is for the annual block party, that it doesn’t necessarily meet economic development criteria, and that the funds be reallocated for another business district development activity and that the block party be self funded. Other events such as the MashUp were funded without City subsidy.

M. Wynne suggested that the event could be a way to facilitate interaction between the companies perhaps resulting in opportunities to leverage business from one another. Businesses often need encouragement to work together.

C. Burrus suggested the Chamber might be able to help facilitate business networking for the West End.

J. Nyden referred the committee to the program eligible expenses which includes community events.

A. Rainey suggested West End request reduced funding for this event, seek alternative funding from participating businesses, and propose another use for the funds.

C. Burrus recommended the West End return to next Economic Development Committee with a revised proposal.
6. West Village
Cindy Jevon presented the West Village proposal to use the funding for a merchant booklet with fold out map.

A. Rainey requested an update on the West Village Holiday Walk and the Evanston Homegrown Holiday Bazaar. Cindy Jevon and Paul Zalmezak provided the update for the event held on December 3, 2011 in the vacant Chinese restaurant space featuring local artists and farmer’s market vendors.

M. Wynne said she heard about a new business on Florence Ave (Defining Moments) who relocated from Wilmette.

D. Mennemeyer encouraged West Village to get more support from area businesses and to build the membership base before requesting merchant grant funding.

S. Freeman disagreed with D. Mennemeyer’s suggestion and expressed strong support for the proposal as a way to help build the business district.

D. Holmes encouraged D. Mennemeyer to assist Ms. Jevon in her membership efforts.

J. Grover encouraged Ms. Jevon to leverage the booklet to get additional members.

Ms. Jevon clarified that $8,600 of the funding will go toward booklet, the remainder will go toward the making it happen festival.

Ald. Rainey moved approval, seconded by Ald. Holmes.

The Committee approved the request, 7-1, D. Mennemeyer opposing.

PUBLIC COMMENT
Architect, Michael Vasilko expressed concern with the Committee suggesting that the West End Merchant group return with a new proposal that would rephrase “block party.” Mr. Vasilko also suggested that the Technology Innovation Center should be held to a measurable standard – a specific return on investment. Mr. Vasilko stressed that the TIC’s retention of 6% of graduated firms in Evanston suggests it is a failure and recommends a contract requiring firms to stay in Evanston for three years after they leave the TIC. Mr. Vasilko distributed a one page memo outlining suggestions that he argues would increase revenues and decrease need to raise taxes. In addition, the memo suggests the City of Evanston should establish an international sister city to establish global relationships. The memo included several newspaper articles as attachments.

VII. Adjournment
The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, December 14, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul Zalmezak
Economic Development Coordinator