ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES
November 28, 2012

Attendees:


Committee Members Absent: J. Grover, A. Rainey, M. Tendam

Staff: S. Griffin, J. Nyden, R. Voss, M. Jones

Presiding Member: J. Fiske

I. Call to Order / Declaration of Quorum
With a quorum being present, Chair Fiske called the meeting to order at 7:38 pm.

II. Approval of the Meeting Minutes of October 24, 2012

Mr. Mennemeyer requested a change on page 3, 3rd paragraph of the minutes stating that he wanted to clarify that Ms. Treishmann’s lawyer advised her.

Ald. Burrus moved to approve the amended meeting minutes of the October 24, 2012 Economic Development Committee meeting, seconded by Ald. Holmes.

The meeting minutes of the October 24, 2012 meeting were approved with suggested changes unanimously, 8-0.

III. Consent Agenda
A. Façade Improvement Program Applications
   i. Request for funding assistance from Bramer Animal Hospital (1021 Davis Street)

Ms. Nyden gave a brief overview of the proposed project and introduced Dr. Jim Hagedorn who stated that the façade improvement will be used as a springboard for improvements Bramer Animal Hospital wishes to pursue. Mr. Zenkich inquired about the total amount spent on façade projects this year. Ms. Nyden provided the location in the staff memo that indicated the total annual expenditure, but a more detailed listing of projects and funds that have been allocated can be provided for the entire year at the next EDC meeting.
Ald. Holmes asked whether the façade money not spent will rollover into a new budget for 2013. Ms. Nyden stated that any unspent façade funds will not rollover into the 2013 budget.

**Ald. Burrus moved to recommend approval of the request, seconded by Ald. Holmes.**

The façade request from Bramer Animal Hospital was recommended for approval pending the applicant provides an Evanston-based bid for the proposed work, 8-0.

**ii. Request for funding assistance from Chicago’s Home of Chicken & Waffles (2424 Dempster Street)**

The applicant not being present, Mr. Griffin provided an overview of the proposed project and explained that there were unforeseen costs incurred by Chicago’s Home of Chicken & Waffles due to having to add a sewer lateral to the building. He also stated that while the applicant had gone ahead and purchased an awning, the current request is for assistance with the purchase of an illuminated channel letter sign.

Alderman Holmes asked whether “in Evanston” would be included in the title. Staff confirmed it would, citing the quotes provided by the applicant that included “in Evanston” as part of the signage quote.

Mr. Mennemeyer asked for clarification on whether Darnell Johnson, owner of the restaurant, was attempting to cover the unforeseen costs of installing a new lateral by asking for assistance with signage. Mr. Freeman then asked how Mr. Johnson did not know of the lateral requirement. Mr. Griffin responded that Mr. Johnson was unaware that the existing lateral and gas line served multiple properties when he purchased the property.

Ald. Fiske and Ms. Summers indicated they were not supportive of façade projects seeking funds due to unanticipated construction costs. Ald. Burrus stated that $200,000 was already given and that a bad precedent would be set by allowing a business to return to the source of funds due to a lack of proper planning.

Mr. Zenkich asked how staff came to its recommendation. Mr. Griffin responded that he would have preferred that this request came with the initial construction loan but that while many of the façade grants go towards existing buildings, the fact that the restaurant is an entry feature to Evanston as well as a revitalization of a previously vacant building made this a project worth further consideration.
Ald. Holmes expressed that she was encouraged by businesses that come to Evanston. She continued, stating that some landlords have made short cuts that are not on plans which cause problems for future tenants who have to be responsible for repairs and upgrades. She indicated that there is money left in the fund for façade grants and that this would be a good use of taxpayer funds because there would be a return on investment.

Ald. Burrus explained that having extra money in the Façade Improvement fund does not necessitate a need to spend it all. She explained that the unused money goes back into the fund as a carryover amount. In response to Ald. Burrus, Ald. Holmes indicated that she believes this project will help the community. Ald. Wynne stated that she believes the façade grant will be put to good use and suggested that the money should be granted because the restaurant will help create a more attractive entry into the City.

Ald. Fiske asked if the signage was included in the original proposal Chicken & Waffles had approved and reiterated her concern about the perception being that Mr. Johnson had a plumbing issue and is now asking for façade funding because of it. She continued, stating that other businesses experience similar issues and have not approached EDC for funding. She expressed that she could not support the project due to an issue of fairness.

Ald. Wynne motioned to recommend approval of the request, seconded by Ald. Holmes.

The façade improvement request from Chicago’s Home of Chicken & Waffles was approved, 5-3, for an amount not to exceed $7,947. Ald. Fiske, Ald. Burrus and Ms. Summers casted dissenting votes.

IV. Items for Consideration
A. 2013 Meeting Dates
Ald. Burrus also asked staff if there was any reason to hold a December Economic Development Committee meeting. Mr. Griffin stated that there were no projects seeking business before the Committee. Assuming there would be no pressing business before the Committee, other Committee members indicated their desire to not hold a meeting if feasible.

Ald. Wynne moved to recommend approval of the 2013 meeting dates and cancelation of the December 2012 meeting, seconded by Mr. Freeman.

The meeting dates were recommended for approval, 8-0.

V. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION
A. Update on City of Evanston Wayfinding Program
Ms. Patricia Saldana Natke, Principal and Partner of UrbanWorks, introduced herself and her team, including Carolyn Souza, also of UrbanWorks, and John Bosio, Partner at Merje. She and Mr. Bosio presented an overview of the wayfinding project and the progress that has been made, summarizing the work each has done with their respective companies. Ms. Natke also showed some example of signage from other municipalities, emphasizing the uniqueness of each.

The Committee members brought up the following concerns and questions:

- Scope of the overall project;
- Scale of potential signage;
- Regulatory vs. Non Regulatory signs;
- Business District signage;
- Source of funding for the project; and
- Timing of the signage program.

The consultants addressed these questions and explained the following:

- The need for Committee members to submit names of potential stakeholders who could be interviewed in January and fell in the categories of interested parties, approving agencies and destinations.
- Clarification on the concentration on wayfinding signage and not regulatory signs for this project.
- Emphasis that while there is a specific scope for the project, signage will be designed in a comprehensive manner, allowing a variety of signage to be added in the future that will maintain a cohesive look.
- A schematic will be provided of proposed sign designs.

The project will be completed according to the magnitude of the signage then priorities will be set according to the scope of the program and funding that is available. Funding for the project will be through the Capital Improvement Program budget. Members were asked to provide Mr. Voss names and contact information for stakeholders for the planning and development of signage.

**B. Update on the Economic Development Summit**

Mr. Griffin presented the activities and work that has been done following the Economic Development Summit in May 2012. These activities have included: rolling out a new Economic Development website with new branding; engaging the summit’s health & wellness groups; holding meetings with stakeholders of the summit’s baby boomer group; engaging RISE and Evanston Inventure to begin an ambassador program to assist in interviewing businesses; starting the Roadmap to the Arts initiative; and creating a more focused effort on retail attraction.

Ald. Fiske requested that staff take a look at incentives for retail and consider ways to assist retail start-ups and include them in entrepreneurial outreach.
C. Economic Development Committee Workshop- January 2013
Ms. Nyden gave a brief overview of what the workshop could include and proposed the January 30, 2013 as a date to hold the workshop. The committee agreed on that date.

VI. Communications
Announcements/Updates from EDC Members
Mr. Zenkich requested an update on Curt’s Café. Mr. Griffin summarized the next steps and the committee briefly discussed the various concerns raised at the October EDC meeting.

Real Estate Transfer Tax Report
Monthly Economic Development Communication

The Committee acknowledged each of the items under Communications.

VII. Adjournment

Mr. Freeman moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ald. Burrus. The Committee voted 8-0 unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Meagan Jones