ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
MEETING MINUTES OF July 28, 2010
ROOM 2404 – 7:30 P.M.
LORRAINE H. MORTON CIVIC CENTER


MEMBERS ABSENT:  Ald. Burrus and Dan Mennemeyer

PRESIDENT OFFICIAL:  Ald. Wynne, Chair

STAFF PRESENT:  Marty Lyons – Interim Director, Community & Economic Development Department, Annette Logan – Economic Development Planner, Johanna Nyden - Economic Development Planner

OTHERS PRESENT:  Beth Bortz - Asha Salon Spa, Carolyn Dellutri – Downtown Evanston, Laura Folkl – Downtown Evanston, Steven Rogin, Michael Vasilko, members of the Evanston Media, other members of the public

I. CALL TO ORDER – Chair Wynne announced there was quorum and called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.


III. CONSIDERATION OF STORE FRONT IMPROVEMENT APPLICATION FROM ASHA SALON SPA – 1604 SHERMAN AVENUE

Johanna Nyden, Economic Development Planner gave a brief update and review of the application and explained that the rebate would come from funds from the Washington-National Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District. Based on the 2010-11 City of Evanston Adopted Budget, there is a $6,095,963 ending fund balance of this TIF. Staff recommended approval at no more than $16,000 on a 50/50 cost-sharing basis of total project cost.
ACTION TAKEN: Ald. Grover moved to recommend to City Council approval of the request for funds from Asha Salon Spa in the amount of $16,000. Ald. Jean-Baptiste seconded the motion. Ald. Rainey offered an amendment to the motion that funds would be awarded at half the total final project cost and no greater than $16,000. Ald. Grover and Ald. Jean-Baptiste accepted the amendment. The Committee unanimously approved the motion.

IV. ALDERMANIC REQUEST: DISCUSS AND CONSIDER APPROVAL OF FUNDS FOR HOWARD STREET BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

ACTION TAKEN: Ald. Rainey moved approval for $9,000 in funds from the Neighborhood Business District Improvement Program to support business activities along Howard Street. Ald. Grover seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously approved the motion.

V. REVIEW DOWNTOWN EVANSTON INTERIM REPORT

In coordination with the report included in the meeting packet, Carolyn Dellutri, Executive Director of Downtown Evanston gave a presentation of upcoming and past events and programs of Downtown Evanston. She presented information on new businesses that have come to Evanston and ones that will soon be arriving. There was general discussion among members of the Committee of the work completed and underway by Downtown Evanston.

VI. DISCUSSION OF REVISED FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Annette Logan gave a presentation on revisions to the façade improvement program and the draft grant application. Ald. Rainey requested further information be included in the application that defines what a façade is and what work is eligible. She would like to see this information included in the “Purpose” section of the application. Discussion among the Committee also included adjusting the size of eligible storefront from 150 feet to something smaller. Discussion among the Committee also included making the small window signage that indicates participation in the City of Evanston’s façade program voluntary and not mandatory.

Carolyn Dellutri expressed concern over the fact that the program would exclude national tenants with more than 10 franchises from participation in the program. Ald. Rainey indicated that this program is designed to provide assistance for the “mom and pop” stores. Additional concern was raised over the eligibility of property owners that invest in their buildings and the potential ineligibility if a national tenant locates in the building after reinvestment. Committee members directed Staff to conduct further
research into the eligibility and ineligibility of national tenants for façade improvement funds.

**ACTION TAKEN:** Staff was directed to provide revisions to the draft façade grant application and circulate among members of the Committee.

VII. REVIEW OF BUSINESS ATTRACTION PLAN FOR ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION RFP

Johanna Nyden provided an overview of Staff’s review of the responses to the RFPs for the Business Attraction and Revitalization Plan. Ms. Nyden explained that three responses to the RFP were received, reviewed, and scored according to a set of criteria described in the packet memorandum. Based on this criteria and interviews, Staff recommended the consulting team of Ticknor & Associates and Teska Associates, Inc. to complete the Business Attraction Plan for Economic Revitalization. Ald. Rainey asked how many plans Teska Associates had produced for Evanston and that had never been implemented. Ms. Nyden did not know the answer to this question but indicated that this plan and this team were offering a strong implementation program and the focus would not be in developing a plan that could not be implemented.

**ACTION TAKEN:** Ald. Jean-Baptiste moved to approve the recommendation to engage Ticknor & Associates and Teska Associates, Inc. to complete the Business Attraction Plan for Economic Revitalization. Ald. Fiske seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

VIII. ALDERMANIC REQUEST: PRESENTATION OF FINE ARTS AND PERFORMING ARTS DISTRICT

Evanston Resident, Michael Vasilko provided a presentation on his proposed concept of a fine arts and performing arts district along Evanston’s lakefront. During the presentation he provided information on national models for waterfront development and performing arts venues. He suggested this would be an opportunity to create jobs and revenue for the City of Evanston. He proposed that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act could be a source of funds to pay for this.

Committee discussion included thanks and praise for Mr. Vasilko’s vision, ambition, and effort to present the concept. Ald. Fiske inquired what the preliminary cost to create the district would be. Mr. Vasilko indicated he had received estimates of $250 million. Several Committee members indicated that this was too low of an estimate. Ald. Wynne was concerned that the Army Corps of Engineers had indicated that the City of Evanston learned during the proposed marina at Calvery Cemetery that the City of
Evanston did not have the right to disturb the lakefront. Ald. Jean-Baptiste suggested that everyone keep an open mind to considering this type of proposal and that overtime plans can change. Ald. Fiske suggested that the City identify ways to bring elements of the plan to other parts of Evanston. Ald. Rainey did not support the “money pits” in the concept – the opera hall and performing arts. She did support a more active lakefront similar to areas of along the waterfront in Michigan. Both Alderman Wynne and Alderman Fiske indicated that they would not support this plan.

**ACTION TAKEN:** No action was taken. Committee members requested to keep this item on the agenda for the next Committee meeting to discuss next steps.

**IX. COMMUNICATIONS**

Several members indicated they would not be in town for the August meeting. Requests were made that the August meeting of the Economic Development Committee be canceled. It was decided to hold the next meeting of the Economic Development Committee in September.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 pm.

**NEXT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING:** September 22, 2010

Respectfully Submitted,

Johanna Nyden

Johanna Nyden
Economic Development Planner