ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES
OF WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2009

ROOM 2404-7:30 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ald. Jean-Baptiste, Ald. Tisdahl, Robert Creamer, Dan Mennemeyer, *Seth Freeman


PRESIDING OFFICIAL: Ald. Tisdahl, Chair

OTHERS PRESENT: Plan Commission Members: David Galloway, Albert Hunter, *Seth Freeman

STAFF PRESENT: Dennis Marino-Interim CD Director, Morris Robinson- Economic Development Planner, Paul Schneider, Rajeev Dahal, Ricky Voss

OTHERS PRESENT: John & Linda Coonen- CMSA, Robert Jacobi-President, Arc Technology Group, Joe Scarry-Engagement Director, Arc Technology Group, James Considine-Chief Planner, TYLINTERNATIONAL

SUMMARY OF THE MEETING:

I. Chair Tisdahl called the EDC Meeting to order at approximately 7:40 P.M. and asked for a motion to approve the previous meeting minutes.

II. Ald. Jean-Baptiste moved approval of the EDC Meeting Minutes of August 6, 2008 and Member Creamer provided a second. The EDC voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

III. CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM ASSOCIATION (CMSA) EXPO TO BE HELD IN EVANSTON: INTRODUCTION & INFORMATION PRESENTATION.

Chair Tisdahl announced that the first business agenda item was an informative presentation by principals of the marketing firm of Content Management System Association, Inc. (CMSA) which has planned an expo to be held in Evanston. Staff member Robinson introduced John and Linda Coonen of CMSA and Robert Jacobi and Joe Scarry, President and Engagement Director respectively of Arc Technology Group, to the members of the EDC.
Staff member Robinson advised the EDC that the upcoming expo will bring 300 to 400 attendees to Evanston and that the downtown in particular and Evanston and surrounding areas in general will get a substantial revenue boost from the three day affair. The intent is to establish the City of Evanston as the official host city for the expo each year.

Mr. Coonen continued with the presentation by advising the EDC that the CMSA hosted Expo Learning and Business Conference will be held at the Hotel Orrington Conference center from April 29, through May 1, 2009 and that Arc Technology Group is a major, local sponsor. It is expected that 350 or more participants from around the globe will attend the conference. As conference host, CMSA primary objective is to assist participants learn the latest in web technology and creativity and demonstrate ways to improve the way in which they communicate on the web. CMSA is the best place to connect to the world’s top content management experts. Attendees will learn from experts in Joomla, Drupal, and Alfresco while establishing career networking connections that can profoundly impact the way they conduct their business. The merchants in the host community will share in the same benefits as well as benefiting from the revenue generated from the conference.

Mr. Coonen informed the EDC that CMSA is especially proud of the fact that they are the leading edge in the fast growing Open Source technology sector which provides free programs to users but does not provide the requisite use training. The expo is designed to meet that need. The registration fees for the entire conference is approximately $540 and local business owners are encouraged to participate as are students in the high school and middle schools. CMSA, with the help of sponsors will be in a position to provide registration discounts, reducing the cost for students to attend for one day to probably $50 or slightly less.

Ald. Jean-Baptiste made the suggestion to distribute expo information material to the school districts as soon as possible and to continue working with city staff to promote the conference. Asked if he had met with any Northwestern University personnel, Mr. Coonen advised the EDC that a series of meetings have already been held with the Evanston Chamber of Commerce, EVMARK and city staff and they have been pleased with the level of proactive support that has been offered from leaders in the city.

EDC Member Mennemeyer identified himself as a board member of the Chamber of Commerce and that Jonathan Perman, the Chamber’s Executive Director could provide an entrée to the appropriate people at NU. Mr. Coonan commented on the exceptional assistance they have received from Mr. Perman. Mr. Jacobi and Mr. Scarry of Arc Technology briefly described their sponsorship participation with the expo and related some positive business experiences they’ve had resulting from the expertise they have acquired in the use and application of Open Source programs.
Various members of the EDC commented on the positive aspects of Evanston serving as the host city for this and future expositions and that every effort should be made to market the city in that respect. Mr. Freeman asked Mr. Coonen to again explain Open Source technology for the benefit of the audience and Mr. Coonen complied.

ACTION TAKEN: The EDC endorsed the Expo and instructed staff to provide support where possible to assist in making the Expo a success. No formal vote was required.

IV. EVANSTON MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN
PRESENTATION: PLAN COMMISSION MEMBERS INVITED

Chair Tisdahl informed the EDC that the next agenda item was a presentation of the draft Multi-Modal Transportation Plan and welcomed some members of the Plan Commission who were invited to the presentation. A copy of the hefty draft plan was distributed to each EDC and Plan Commission member prior to the EDC Meeting.

City staff members Paul Schneider, Director of Transportation, Rajeev Dahal, Sr. Traffic Engineer, Ricky Voss, Parking Manager together with Mr. James Considine, Chief Planner with TYLININTERNATIONAL and consultant to the city were present for the discussion and feedback session. Staff member Dahal provided a brief overview of the purpose of the report, indicating that it was a year in the making and introduced Mr. Considine. Mr. Considine began the power point presentation with a brief overview of the methodology used in data collecting and analysis. The comprehensive plan was developed from the compilation of several lesser reports.

Mr. Considine informed the EDC that the purpose of the plan is to shape long-range planning efforts for the future transportation system. The plan takes into consideration the connectivity of the whole system and addresses all transportation modes to include alleys; bicycle; parking; pedestrian; transit and vehicle. Mr. Considine referred the EDC to the recommendation Summary included with the Plan Book which was used as a guide for the discussion/feedback session

A lively discussion ensued with many question raised particularly from EDC members Freeman and Mennemeyer who both praised the document. It soon became apparent that more time would be need to address the many questions posed and member Freeman asked if there would be more forums or opportunities to address the issues raised. Staff member Dahal advised the EDC that it was the intent to present the final plan to the City Council at the last meeting in March 2009. Ald. Jean-Baptiste strongly suggested that additional opportunities to provide feedback for the plan be made available.
Interested parties can find the draft Multi-Modal Transportation Plan on the City web site, cityofevanston.org, and can peruse hard copies in the offices of the City Clerk; the Planning Division and the Traffic Engineer. All offices are located at the Evanston Civic Center, 2100 Ridge, Avenue, 60201.

**ACTION TAKEN:** After continued discussion, the EDC came to a consensus that additional forums are needed to provide opportunities for feedback to the plan prior to presenting the draft report to the City Council for approval. This was not a vote actionable agenda item.

**V. CURRENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT UPDATES:** Staff member Marino provided the EDC with brief status reports on the Winthrop Club condominium project; 708 Church Street, The Mather Project, the two Carroll Properties Projects 3 year time extensions and others.

**VI. OTHER BUSINESS:** There were no other business issues.

**VII. COMMUNICATIONS:** The articles and data reports contained in the EDC packets were acknowledged.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, Chair Tisdahl adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:55 P.M.

The next scheduled Economic Development Committee Meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 25, 2009 at 7:30 P.M. at the Civic Center in Room 2404.

Respectfully submitted,

Morris E. Robinson
Economic Development Planner