ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

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


MEMBERS ABSENT: Ald. Fiske

PRESIDENT OFFICIAL: Ald. Wynne, Acting Chair

STAFF PRESENT: Lehman Walker – Director, Community & Economic Development Department, Dennis Marino - Assistant Director, Planning & Zoning, Johanna Nyden - Economic Development Planner, Annette Logan - Economic Development Planner Marty Lyons - Assistant City Manager

OTHERS PRESENT: Gay Riseborough, Adam Finlayson & Jen Goldstein - Grandmother Park Initiative, Jonathan Perman – Director, Evanston Chamber of Commerce, Carolyn Dellutri, Director – Downtown Evanston, Gina Speckman – Executive Director, Chicago’s North Shore Convention & Visitors Bureau, Dan Kelch – Owner of LuLu’s Restaurant and members of the local media

I. CALL TO ORDER - Acting Chair Wynne called meeting to order at 7:34 pm and immediately introduced the 2 new Economic Development Planners, Annette Logan and Johanna Nyden. She commented on the enclosed work plan and thanked them for sending it out electronically.


ACTION TAKEN: Chair Wynne moved approval, Ald. Burrus seconded. Committee approved, as amended

III. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STAFFING
Chair Wynne welcomed new Planners again.

IV. WORKPLAN FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY/MAJOR PRIORITIES & VISION STATEMENT
Lehman Walker, Director of Community & Economic Development introduced the draft work plan and explained that it is work in progress. All questions regarding the draft work plan are to be directed to him.

V. GRANDMOTHER PARK INITIATIVE – PROPOSAL TO TURN 1125 DEWEY INTO A TOT LOT

Gay Riseborough, Jen Goldstein and Adam Finlayson, all of the Grandmother Park Initiative presented the project to the Committee. Mr. Finlayson, treasurer said the group is requesting $50,000 from the Dempster Plaza Neighborhood Improvement Fund to create a tot lot at 1125 Dewey Avenue. The cost of the property is $70,000 including demolition and the taxes are approximately $9,000.

The site at 1125 Dewey previously had a home that burned down and it was at that time the neighborhood group was formed. The group stated that they had determined that there was a demand for the tot lot due to the lack of small parks in the area. They depicted this visually with a map. Washington School’s playground is nearby but has restricted hours for nine months during the school year. The groups has worked on this project for two years and have identified, Corlands, an organization that purchases land for public use and holds it until they are reimbursed.

Marty Lyons, Assistant City Manager explained that the Neighborhood Improvement Fund has been in existence since 1996 and referred to the memo prepared for the Committee members which explained an accounting error. The fund currently has a deficit of approximately $34,000. He explained that the error occurred because an inflation factor was not applied to the City’s portion of the tax bill. Mr. Lyons stated that the City’s Accounting Department reviewed the agreement and not sure why this error occurred. He also stated that the Evanston Plaza currently has low occupancy levels, which means the development is not generating enough sales tax revenue to replenish the fund.

After 90 minutes of discussion, Ald. Jean-Baptiste made a motion to continue consideration of proposed funding until the May 26th meeting because there were too many unanswered questions. Chair Wynne agreed and recommended that Doug Gaynor, Director of Parks and Recreation and Grant Farrar, City Attorney, and a representative from Corlands attend the May meeting. In the meantime staff should research funding and legal issues related to the proposal.

ACTION TAKEN: None. Vote postponed until May 26th Meeting

VI. REPORT & ANNUAL FUNDING REQUEST OF NORTH SHORE CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Gina Speckman, Executive Director of North Shore Convention & Visitors Bureau spoke to the committee and reviewed the items in the meeting packet materials. She reviewed growth in Bureau activities as they relate to Evanston. Ms. Speckman commented on the new Evanston photography available in the packet.
It was suggested by the committee to do outreach to non-profits who are not paying taxes and often hold their fundraising events outside of Evanston. Ms. Speckman agreed this was a good idea and Jonathan Perman, Executive Director of the Evanston Chamber of Commerce committed to writing a letter to all the non-profits to move this effort forward and promote the unique spaces in Evanston.

**ACTION TAKEN:** Ald. Rainey moved approval to grant the request of $65,563 to North Shore Convention & Visitors Bureau. Ald. Burrus seconded. Committee voted unanimously to approve.

**VII. COMPARATIVE SALES TAX REPORTS PROVIDED BY THE EVANSTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

Jonathan Perman explained statistics provided to committee members comparing Evanston to nine other communities since 2005. He reviewed the unemployment figures and the retail sales tax.

**VIII. UPDATE ON EVANSTON PLAZA RECEIVERSHIP**

Dennis Marino, Assistant Director of Planning and Zoning announced that Evanston Plaza is currently in receivership with Foresite Realty (of Rosemont) and that they were appointed by the Court. He announced that Foresite Realty will hold a tenant meeting on May 20th (time to be determined).

Mr. Marino also reported that he, Lehman Walker, and Ald. Jean-Baptiste walked the site with Len Richards and addressed some of the issues like landscaping, signage, common area maintenance fees (CAM), and the need for new tenant initiatives.

Foresite agreed to landscape the property the same as what Freed had done in the past and Mr. Marino told committee members that the approximately $1.2 million in taxes were paid by a third party. Foresite is also reported to having committed to work with tenants to resolve outstanding issues.

A committee member asked if the committee could attend the May 20th meeting if they would like to, as well as the President of Crain Street Commons, located across the street. Chair Wynne suggested the President give Mr. Marino his contact information before the end of the meeting.

Mr. Marino suggested members visit website: [www.foresiterealty.com](http://www.foresiterealty.com).

**IX. ALDERMANIC REFERENCE: CONSIDERATION OF THE NEED TO ESTABLISH A BUSINESS ADVISORY CENTER**

Mr. Walker, announced that a draft report of this concept will be available at the next meeting.
X. **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GRANT APPLICATION FORM**  
Mr. Walker, stated that staff will work with a Sub-Committee to revise the previously very complex form to a simpler form. The Sub-Committee will meet in late May or early June.

XI. **DISCUSSION: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT MEETING: OPTION FOR A NEW DATE**  
Mr. Walker indicated that the Summit would be rescheduled and that staff would poll Committee members to identify a suitable date for holding the event.

XII. **COMMUNICATIONS:** Real Estate Transfer Tax Report MARCH 2010

**NEW BUSINESS**  
Ald. Rainey announced that 415 Howard was placed in receivership and the property was purchased the week prior by Cross Beam Capital. She explained they have plans to freshen up the building with new lighting, plans to work on the outside of the entry way and lobby and proposing a new color for the building.

Ald. Rainey reported that she and Mr. Walker walked two blocks on Howard Street and discovered many issues like hanging facades, window issues and misspelling of words on signage. As a result, many businesses were issued with code violations.

XIII. **ADJOURNMENT**  
Chair Wynne moved adjournment, Ald. Grover seconded.  
The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 pm.

**NEXT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING: MAY 26, 2010**

Respectfully Submitted,  

**Annette Logan**  
*Economic Development Planner*