

**MINUTES
DOWNTOWN PLAN COMMITTEE
EVANSTON PLAN COMMISSION**

Tuesday, September 11, 2007 / 8:00 a.m.
Evanston Civic Center, Room 2404

MEMBERS PRESENT.....Larry Widmayer (Chair), James Woods,
.....David Galloway, Diane Williams (Evmark), Stuart
.....Opdycke, Robin Schuldenfrei

STAFF PRESENTDennis Marino, Tracy Norfleet

CONSULTANTS PRESENTTom Smith (Duncan Associates)

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I. CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chair Widmayer called the meeting to order at 8a.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The August 14, 2007 minutes were approved.

III. DISCUSSION

• DOWNTOWN PLAN PROJECT UPDATE

Mr. Tom Smith, consultant, stated that the consulting team is in the process of drafting the plan and met with staff on Monday, September 10, 2007 for feedback. The Downtown Plan Committee requested to see the draft plan at the next meeting.

• BEST/CURRENT DOWNTOWN PLANNING PRACTICES FROM OTHER CITIES

Member Schuldenfrei introduced a guest speaker, Ms. Ellen Shepard, the Executive Director for the Andersonville Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Shepard gave a presentation that began with a brief history of the neighborhood, followed by a description of the retail character of the business district (i.e., a proposed historic district with mostly local businesses). She gave general characteristics of local businesses and summarized the results of a recent study of the economic impacts of local businesses in Andersonville. The Chamber’s web site is <http://www.andersonville.org/> and the Andersonville Study of Retail Economics can be accessed at <http://www.andersonvillestudy.com/>

Discussion followed regarding:

- Taxes – impacts of increases and Cook County tax structure on local businesses
- Rising rents vs. revenues
- Definitions – local businesses, chain stores (national, regional, local)
- Need for public/private commitments

- Market and leakage – Andersonville/Edgewater and Evanston/North Shore/Rogers Park
- Importance of ‘unique chains’ that are not typically found in a mall (e.g., Design Within Reach, North Face, Levis, Whole Foods)
- Importance of local chains (Ann Sather, Lou Malnatis)
- Similar studies to Andersonville - San Francisco, Oak Park
- Andersonville case study applicability to Evanston’s neighborhood business districts (e.g., Central St, Main St, perhaps Davis St in downtown)

Chair Widmayer thanked Ms. Shepard and commended the Andersonville Chamber of Commerce for their efforts. He suggested a number of things that Evanston can do to strengthen local businesses and make them more appealing to landlords, such as:

- Northwestern University could classes on business practices for new business owners.
- Buy local campaigns.
- Help new businesses get through the City’s regulatory process.

- **DISCUSSION OF DOWNTOWN ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER**

Due to a lack of time, this item was held until the next meeting.

IV. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING / ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 3, 2007 at 8am in the Civic Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Tracy Norfleet
Planning Division