



GROCERY STORE WORKING GROUP
Notes from Meeting

Wednesday, January 29, 2014 - 4:00pm
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, Aldermanic Library

Members Present: Mayor Elizabeth Tisdahl, Alderman Grover, Susan Rex, Gay Riseborough, Jackie Haimes, Kelley Elwood

Staff Present: Johanna Nyden, Paul Zalmezak, Meagan Jones

Members Absent: Alderman Braithwaite

Presiding Member: Mayor Elizabeth Tisdahl

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. INTRODUCTION OF WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

3. DISCUSSION OF WORKING GROUP GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Members began a brief discussion regarding the goals of the Grocery Store Working Group. One of the main goals was to have community engagement as tenants were sought for the former Dominick's sites within Evanston.

4. DISCUSSION OF CURRENT STATUS OF FORMER DOMINICK'S SPACES

A. 1968 Dempster Street

Scott Inbinder of Bonnie Management presented a report on the 1968 Dempster Street location. He mentioned that Safeway is keeping details of any negotiations quiet and that any deals that are done with the former Evanston Plaza location are done through Safeway. All utilities and assets of the former Dominick's site will be preserved through the process of finding a replacement tenant.

As an example of the timing required to find a replacement grocer, Mr. Inbinder stated that Joe Caputo started negotiations for purchasing a location in October of 2013 and that 90 days for negotiations is not unusual.

B. 2748 Green Bay Road

In the absence of Mike George, owner of the 2748 Green Bay Road location, due to continued negotiations with a potential grocer, Paul Zalmezak presented a report on the current status of the former Dominick's site. There has been significant interest in the site from other grocers.

5. NEXT STEPS

Susan Rex asked if any market studies had been done. Mr. Inbinder responded that while a full market study has not been done, there are demographics that possible tenants look at when making their location decisions. A demographic report of the Chicagoland Dominick's locations was disbursed to the group members.

Kelley Elwood asked what the larger community could do to assist in attracting a new grocer for the Evanston locations. Johanna Nyden stated that Economic Development could set up a web page for residents to give their testimonials of shopping at the local grocery store when it was open. A social media push requesting comments from residents about what they would like to see at the site and encouraging continued shopping and dining at Evanston Plaza could also be included. This and visiting other interested grocers could provide the intangibles that a demographic report cannot.

Mr. Inbinder stated that the space could be tailored to fit the needs of a tenant. The current space is 58,000 square feet but with adjacent spaces being available, up to 35,000 additional square feet could be added. He also stated that the existing lease restrictions would be stand at the Dempster location.

A discussion on the benefits of an independent neighborhood grocer followed. Mr. Inbinder stated that encouraging residents to keep shopping at Evanston Plaza would be helpful for the existing businesses during the grocery store transition.

6. ADJOURNMENT

It was agreed that the group would meet in approximately 6 weeks if no announcement of grocery store replacements have been announced. The meeting was adjourned at 4:45p.