



## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, January 31, 2018 – 7:00pm

Lorraine Morton Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, Council Chambers

**Members present** Ald. Braithwaite, Ald. Wynne, Ald. Wilson, H. Powell, Ald. Simmons, Ald. Rainey, T. Dubin, M. Berns,

**Members absent**

**Staff present** P. Zalmezak, W. Bobkiewicz, C. Plante

### **1. CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

Ald. Rainey called the meeting to order and moved approval of the minutes from October 25, 2017

Ald. Wynne seconded.

Approved 8-0.

### **3. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

#### **A. Entrepreneurship Support Grant for Alicia Skipworth - Lashing Out**

Alicia Skipworth introduced herself – she is seeking funding through the entrepreneurship grant program to help open her business, Lashing Out salon. She completed Sunshine Community Business Academy and operated a similar business when she lived in Alabama. Would be renting space adjacent to Spex carwash on Dodge Ave. Priorities for funding are securing the space, completing certification classes, and buying equipment.

R. Simmons expressed support for the request.

H. Powell asked if she had any additional investors for the business.

Ms. Skipworth said that Lend was it as of now

Ald. Braithwaite moved approval

Ald. Simmons seconded

Approved 8-0

#### **B. Storefront Modernization Program Application for Linmay Studio at 525 Kedzie**

C Plante introduced the request, which is for \$693 for a lettered sign to be installed at 525 Kedzie for Linmay Studio. The applicant wanted to be present but said she might be late if a client appointment runs over. The program guidelines don't require that she be present based on the small amount of the proposal.

Ald. Wynne moved approval

Ald. Rainey seconded.  
Approved 8-0

### **C. Code Evanston / Blue 1647**

P. Zalmezak introduced Emille Cambry and the Blue 1647 proposal, which was a discussion item at Economic Development Committee last year. The proposal is for \$75,000 in funding for a coding and web development education program. If funded, the program would be expected to serve up to 100 students per year in Evanston.

Emile Cambry talked about his connection to the Evanston community and provided a summary of the program's corporate support and partnership with other workforce development organizations to help place participants in tech jobs.

Ald Rainey asked how this program would differ from Dev Bootcamp, which closed recently.

Mr. Cambry responded that dev bootcamp was a for-profit organization that typically located in areas with higher rent and overhead costs.

H. Powell asked if Mr. Cambry planned to focus the program on Evanston young people specifically.

Mr. Cambry said yes and said that there were other programs and locations elsewhere to serve non-residents.

P. Braithwaite moved approval.

Ald. Rainey asked if funding was going to be broken up into installments for each cohort.

H. Powell asked if the installments would be contingent on inclusion of only Evanston residents.

P. Zalmezak said that it would be, as was done with Sunshine Community Business Academy. Under that agreement, Sunshine provided lists of program participants and their residency in order to ensure compliance prior to receiving payment.

H. Powell requested that staff come up with a plan for evaluating the success of this and other programs.

P. Zalmezak agreed.

Ald. Rainey seconded.  
Approved 8-0

### **D. Downtown Performing Arts Center**

Ald. Rainey said that there were a lot of people signed up for citizen comment, so it would need to be limited as it is for City Council. There will be 45 minutes of comment, starting at 7:40pm.

Mike Vasilko said that he supports professional performing arts but opposes public funding and razing the existing buildings on Sherman Avenue for this development.

Rea Keenan is Northlight subscriber and would like the theater to come here but also opposes the development.

Peter Nemeth is president of Southeast Evanston Association and a business owner and opposes demolishing the existing buildings for new development.

Carol Kurtz spoke in opposition of the proposed building.

Darren Oberto is one of the owners of Alley Gallery, opposes demolition of existing buildings on Sherman.

Ross Martin is the co-owner of alley gallery, delivered a petition with 2500 signatures and comments opposing the 37 story building and demolition of existing businesses.

Elena Gonzalez resident for over 30 years, opposes shutting down existing independent businesses for development.

Jeanne Lindwall opposes creation of a new taxing authority for the development.

Joan Stafford objected to the proposal and encouraged consideration of an alternative site.

Clara Kelly wants to protect local stores and opposes creating a single-purpose unit of government.

Kira Kelly opposes the creation of a new government unit and the development project.

Trisha Connely says there are already too many new developments and opposes another one.

Toby Sachs, resident of over 30 years, spoke in favor of the proposal.

John Engman was on the Mayor's Downtown Performing Arts task Force and defended the proposal. Spoke of the need for additional anchor tenants besides just Northlight Theater.

Jean Combs spoke against the proposal.

Ald. Rainey said that the agenda item at hand isn't actually to create a government entity or grant permits for the development – it's all very far off.

Steven Rogen called on the City to be more transparent about the proposal and its possible impact on area property owners.

Ald. Rainey said that providing additional detail is part of the purpose of tonight's agenda item and will be addressed once citizen comment concludes.

Mary McWilliams spoke against the project.

Cal Fromm spoke against the project.

Joan Rothenberg spoke against tearing down Bookends & Beginnings.

Betty Ester spoke against creation of a new unit of government.

Paul Janicki spoke against the project.

Bruce Ehrenbach spoke against the project.

Joyce Elias spoke against the project.

Paul Barker spoke against the project.

Ned Shaw spoke against the project.

Ald. Fiske spoke against the project and urged the committee not to advance the proposal to City Council.

Ald. Rainey introduced City Manager W. Bobkiewicz to provide an overview of the proposal.

Mr. Bobkiewicz provided a summary of the proposal on tonight's agenda, which is to ask for support to investigate creation of an authority similar to Skokie's as a possible funding mechanism. Parking is important and if there is to be a new development, more parking would be needed. The development team has not yet submitted a planned development application. There are many issues that haven't been resolved, but questions need to be answered before a PD application can be submitted. This is a request for authority to investigate what options might be available to fund the return of Northlight and create additional parking capacity. Tonight's request is for authorization to begin investigating potential funding tools, not a funding request or planned development application.

Ald. Rainey asked Mr. Bobkiewicz to address the concerns raised by many speakers about the creation of a new government authority.

Mr. Bobkiewicz said that the request is to study the funding mechanism; we haven't done this research yet and we're asking for authority to do so. Understanding is that in Skokie, the authority used revenue bonds. The understanding is that there are options for creating this entity and that there wouldn't be a new line on a tax bill.

Ald Wilson wants to support Northlight returning to Evanston but isn't comfortable with creation of an additional unit of government.

Ald. Wynne wants more information about what a single-purpose unit of government is, how it works, where it has been successful or not, and whether the Center East authority has been able to pay off its revenue bonds. Will not vote for this without knowing what it is.

Ald. Simmons also opposes this proposal.

Ald. Wilson said that the discussion was useful

Ald. Braithwaite shares the concern about the site but said that this isn't an approval of the project, but a request to do additional research and have a conversation.

Ald. Rainey said that this was the tool that Skokie used, but would like more information about it. We should direct the city manager to do more research about this funding mechanism that we've never used before and learn how it works.

M. Berns asked if this investigation of creation of an authority tied to this specific site or could it be used for another location?

Mr. Bobkiewicz pointed to language in the resolution that doesn't tie it to a particular site.

Ald. Wynne points to the citation of the location in the whereas clauses.

Mr. Bobkiewicz said that the resolve clauses are the actual direction that's being voted on, not the whereas clauses.

H. Powell asked if the reference to a specific location could be taken out.

Ald. Wilson asked to strike section four regarding transmittal of the resolution to the Governor and state legislature.

Ald. Wilson moved to strike that section and the location reference.

Ald. Braithwaite seconded.

Amendment approved 8-0.

Motion to approve the amended proposal directing additional research  
Simmons, Wynne, and Wilson voted no,  
Braithwaite, Powell, Berns, Dubbin, Rainey voted yes

**Ald. Rainey moved approval of the 2018 meeting schedule.**

M. Berns seconded.

Approved 8-0.

P. Zalmezak proposed holding the remaining items until the next meeting.

H. Powell moved to adjourn.  
Meeting adjourned at 9:47pm.