

Observer Report

Council or Committee: Economic Development Committee

Date: 2/27/19

Observer: Julianne Dieterich

Meeting began: 7:35 pm

Meeting Ended: 8:20 pm

Committee Members Present: Rue Simmons (chair), Wilson, Rainey, Wynne, Jeannemarie Sierant (at large), Mary Beth Berns (Zoning Board of Appeals) **Absent:** Braithwaite (arrived at the very end of the meeting), Hecky Powell (at large), and Andrew Pigozzi (Plan Commission)

Staff Present: Paul Zalmezak, Paulina Martinez, Sarah Flax

Media Present: Evanston Now

Citizen comment: None. Grant applicants introduced themselves during discussion of each item.

1. CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM

2. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF October 24, 2018

3. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

A. Great Merchant Grant – Requests from various business districts totaling \$51,000. Approved unanimously with no discussion.

- a. Central Street
- b. CEBA
- c. Hill Arts
- d. West End
- e. West Village
- f. BBCENS
- g. Howard Street
- h. Maple/Foster (new association this year)

B. Entrepreneurship Support Program

a. Betty Nelson – Entrepreneur with a career coaching business focused on young people seeks \$2500 for career coaching certificate and financial services. The committee was interested in the business development program that she had attended, through the Rogers Park Business Alliance, which was not one that former grantees had used. Unanimously approved.

C. Evanston Development Cooperative Request for Funding

Paul Zalmezak and Sarah Flax presented request for \$60,000 in start-up capital from the economic development component of CDBG funding. The Evanston Development Cooperative is a new entity that constructs cost-effective, environmentally-sustainable housing by and for residents of Evanston; the Cooperative also provides ownership and equity-building opportunity to both worker-members who are employed by the Cooperative and Evanston community member investors. Dick Co, co-founder, presented background on the cooperative. The cooperative has been talking with property owners about building accessory dwelling units or other affordable housing units. Several questions from committee. Ald. Simmons recommended that the cooperative follow the work of the MWEBE committee around green jobs and construction. Unanimously approved. Rainey urged Flax to bring these kinds of requests to the CDBG committee as well as Econ Dev in the future, even if it is outside the committee's regular review cycle.

D. Approval 2019 Meeting Schedule

Approved. No meetings in March or August.

4. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A. Rainey – emailed committee; has been researching past theatre on Howard St. – John Lennon Auditorium. Various artists got started there. She found an old print and had it made for the economic development department to display. (Her point being that Howard has a vital history.)

5. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Monthly Economic Development Communication

Rainey – thought that the economic development tracker was somewhat out of date. Updated on some Howard projects.

B. Announcements/Updates from EDC Members

Zalmezak – announced new staffer starting March 5, whose responsibility will be to communicate more clearly (infographics, dashboards, etc.)

There was some discussion about overlap between parking committee and economic development issues. Rainey frustrated about difficulty getting a loading zone on Howard during meeting just prior to Econ Dev. Simmons asking also about lack of clarity for process for businesses in her Ward. Wynne will pass along to Revelle, who now chairs.

Braithwaite (who had just arrived) raised problem of transmission lines stretching between Wards 2 and 5 (which makes the adjacent properties very difficult to develop), and also issues with alley lighting. He informed staff he's trying to arrange a presentation (to staff and/or to committee) on what can be done to address these issues.

6. ADJOURNMENT