

Meeting began: 6:04 p.m.

Meeting ended: just after 9:30 p.m.

In attendance in person: CM Nieuwsma, chair; CM Kelly; CM Wynne; CM Reid (arriving late); Member Lisa Dzeikan; Member Angela Pennisi. Staff: Paul Zalmezak, Katie Boden, Neal Reeves

In attendance via Google Meet: CM Burns; CM Harris; Member Eli Klein

City staff in the audience (to speak about the bag tax): Cara Pratt, Brian Zimmerman

Observer: Mary Gavin

For Action [Recommendation to City Council to purchase Meridian Barricades for Special Event Support - Attachment - Pdf 42 - 45 F.](#) **Bookends & Beginnings Request for Financial Assistance** Bookends & Beginnings is seeking a recommendation from the Economic Development Committee to City Council to approve a \$475,605 grant to pay for relocation and leasehold improvements at its newly leased location at 1620 Orrington Avenue. **For Action** [Bookends & Beginnings Request for Financial Assistance - Attachment - Pdf 46 - 68 6.](#)

The minutes of Oct. 26 meeting approved unanimously.

Public Comment: Most were in support of funding for Bookends & Beginnings. Jeff Smith and Trisha Connelly spoke in person; staff and committee members read or summarized others and it was difficult to hear these. Via Google Meet Dan Kelch said he thought restaurants should be exempted from the proposed bag tax, as is done in Chicago. Tina Paden via Google Meet said she did not think the city's affordable housing policies are fair. Carlis Sutton, also via Google Meet, said he and others wanted the Gibbs-Morrison Community Center to be a job-training center, as the city has enough restaurants.

I. Item for discussion:

CM Reid brought the proposed 15-cent tax on most single-use bags, the revenue to be shared among the retailer (5 cents); the Solid Waste Fund (7 cents) and the Health Department (3 cents). Exceptions would be newspaper bags, produce bags, newspaper bags and the like. The ordinance also proposed an all-out ban on "plastic single-use point-of-sale bags and produce bags beginning April 1, 2024.

Staff recommended exempting SNAP recipients from this tax, as SNAP benefits cannot be used to pay fees or taxes, so SNAP recipients would have to pay the tax themselves.

The Environment Board voted to approve it and send it to the Human Services Committee.

Eli Cohen and Angela Pannisi said they felt the timing for this tax is poor, as it places an additional burden on retail stores and restaurants that are still struggling to recover from the effects of Covid and suggested an immediate ban. Brian Zimmerman said research

shows that a tax is a better incentive than a ban to change behavior. Cohen suggested that, while the tax might result in fewer bags in Evanston, that may be because shoppers will go to Skokie or Wilmette. It was pointed out that the store owners will recoup 5 cents of each 15-cent tax. Nieuwsma said he would support exempting restaurants.

More discussion expected in January.

II. Items for Consideration

A. Meeting dates for next year approved with one clarification.

B. Staff sought input from EDC members to amend the guidelines for the city's Entrepreneurship Support Program. The guidelines were expanded during the pandemic to cover certain expenses, but, as recovery continues, staff would like to remove the "emergency assistance" criteria and revert to guidelines that support the "solopreneurs" and small startups with funding.

No one had a recommendation, so it was unanimously agreed that staff will return in January with revised guidelines.

C. The request to purchase Meridian Barricades for special event support – that is, using these barricades instead of, say garbage trucks, to create a barrier around an event held on public property – will be considered in January.

D. C & W Market and Ice Cream Parlor, LLC, owned by Clarence and Wendy Weaver, asked EDC approve and forward to Council their request for \$634,250 in TIF funds to help offset the cost of purchasing the building at 1901 Church St., renovating it and adding three apartments on the second floor. There is about \$4 million in the West Evanston TIF fund, with another \$1.8 million expected to accrue by January 2023.

Because the request totals about 41% of the project's cost, and the general guidelines for TIF funding suggest funding only 25% of a project's cost, EDC members were reluctant to fund the entire amount. Committee members recommended a total of \$560,000, with \$159,250 to go toward acquisition of the building and the remainder to be used for rehab/infrastructure.

E. Whole & Free Foods, a woman-owned limited liability company that started in Evanston in 2020 then moved to Chicago, asked for the EDC to recommend to Council for approval \$550,000 to assist with the cost of completing leasehold improvements for the Every Body Eats commercial/manufacturing kitchen at 2021 Autobarn Place in Evanston. The "free" foods are allergen-free not cost-free.

The request qualifies for ARPA funding.

The outcome was a bit confusing, as the EDC members agreed to recommend the full amount of funding but several wanted to know how much ARPA funding is left. None, Zalmezak said. It appears they are leaving this to Council to work out.

- F. Bookends & Beginnings asked for \$475,605 grant to pay for relocation and leasehold improvements at its newly leased location at 1620 Orrington Avenue.

Nina Barrett, owner of Bookends & Beginnings, said she had received an eviction notice two days before Thanksgiving and does not have the funds to pay for the move. She had not yet approached banks or other possible sources of funding.

CM Kelly spoke passionately about the need to fund Bookends & Beginnings fully. She and CM Reid asked that staff reassess the eligibility for ARPA funding. Zalmezak pushed back, saying that that question implied that staff come unprepared to meetings when in fact they do a lot of preparation. He did agree to have that done. CM Nieuwsma suggested recommending \$83,000, which is available at present in EDC funds and then working on ways to get additional funds; that was approved. Zalmezak stressed the urgency of this. Reid suggested that the committee start looking at low-interest or no-interest loans instead of outright funding.

- G. H. Economic Development Reports RETT Report - October 2022 Economic Development Activity Report 11.30.22 and First Northern Credit Union and Wintrust Financial Literacy Programs Update Financial literacy programs update.

CM Nieuwsma said that, given the lateness of the meeting, EDC members could read these on their own.