

Observer Report

Economic Development Committee

Date: May 23, 2018

Observer: Julianne Dieterich

Meeting began: 7:37 pm

Meeting Ended: 9:20 pm

Aldermen Present: Wilson (chair), Wynne, Rainey, Rue Simmons, Braithwaite, Andrew Pigozzi (Plan Commission), (Absent: Hecky Powell (at large), Jeannemarie Sierant (at large), Mary Beth Berns (Zoning Board of Appeals))

Staff Present: Johanna Leonard, Paul Zalmezak, Cindy Plante, Paulina Martinez

Media Present: Daily, Evanston Now

Citizen comment: One re West Evanston TIF, calling for more neighborhood/community meetings to better understand the area covered and understand the proposed plans for the area, and see how it relates to neighborhood plan (as distinct from master plan) and resident preferences.

CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF April 25, 2018

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

A. Entrepreneurship Grants – These are \$2,500 maximum grants to support expansion of businesses, particularly MWEBE firms that have completed an entrepreneurship training program.

- a. iKandi Hair Studio - \$2,500 to pay for state certification as a hair braiding instructor, so that the owner can expand the instruction portion of her business. Approved.
- b. Total Transformation Solutions - \$2,500 for social media/marketing and certification as corporate wellness specialist. It is not clear what, if any, entrepreneurship training program she completed. Braithwaite was supportive but pushed her some on sales projections. Approved.

B. Storefront Modernization Projects

- a. Booked at 506 Main St.– \$4,700 to support a specialized door (with a child-size door inset) and signage for a new children’s bookstore in location of former shoe repair shop. Wynne very supportive. Approved.
- b. Prairie Moon at 1635 Chicago Ave. - \$10,000 for signage, doors, and glass to support Prairie Moon’s new location in the former Dave’s Italian Kitchen space. Approved.
- c. ORT Resale at 915 Chicago Ave. - \$1,425 for new awning for existing retail thrift shop. This has been a priority for staff for two years, as the awning is in poor repair. The company was not present, and there were questions about the design and providing additional bids. Held for a future meeting when company

can be present. (Braithwaite urged staff not to put grants on the agenda unless business can be present to respond to committee questions.)

C. Evanston Great Merchant Grant– West Village– \$2,178 toward garden in public parkway to enhance business district.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A. Downtown Evanston Summer Update– midyear update

B. West Evanston TIF Discussion– Zalmezak framed a discussion by raising concern about the failure of the West Evanston TIF to generate the economic activity and increment funding that had been hoped for when the TIF was established in 2005. The timing was unfortunate, because property values were high at that time and then declined with the recession. The lack of increment funding within the TIF to finance infrastructure has hindered some development. Staff suggest that the TIF boundaries may have contributed to the problem (the district did not include the Hill Arts district and some parcels along Green Bay that in retrospect perhaps should have been included). There were also some complications related to code and zoning. Ultimately, staff thinks that City should hire a TIF consultant to assess and make recommendations (e.g., terminate and re-establish the TIF, add parcels to the TIF, extend the TIF period beyond 2028).

- Braithwaite calls for more information, including budget of TIF, anticipated increment on TIF over next 3 years.
- Rainey encourages staff and aldermen to look at the area with focus on where the actual market opportunities are and whether there can be any investment.
- Wilson calls for focus on addressing code/zoning issues that Council started to discuss on 5/21.

COMMUNICATIONS

A. Monthly Economic Development Communication

B. Announcements/Updates from EDC Members

ADJOURNMENT