

Observer Report

Council or Committee: Economic Development Committee

Date: 7/25/18

Observer: Julianne Dieterich (watching livestream)

Meeting began: 7:30 pm (approx., I tuned in a few minutes late)

Meeting Ended: 8:35 pm

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

Staff Present: Paul Zalmezak, Cindy Plante, Paulina Martinez

Media Present: Couldn't tell online

Citizen comment:

AGENDA 1. CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM

2. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF June 27, 2018

3. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

A. Storefront Modernization Projects

a. Church & Dodge – \$77,676

b. 1623 Simpson - \$25,546

This is an unusual use of the Storefront Modernization program that depletes the remaining program funds for 2018. The landlords for two long-neglected buildings that together house 6 businesses are requesting 100% funding (rather than the usual 50% matching) for awnings, windows and doors, lighting, general façade improvements. These buildings qualify for 100% funding under a provision in the program that targets projects in the Neighborhood Stabilization Program 2 area.

Staff worked with the building owner for a year (including providing some technical assistance in obtaining bids under the City's purchasing guidelines), and Simmons appears to have been heavily involved. She was very supportive, as were the rest of the committee members. The original scale of the project was over \$230,000 but the landlord scaled back the project scope to stay within the \$100,000 funding limit for the program.

After a few questions particularly around ensuring that the current tenants are protected from rent increases (they have 5-year leases/options as required by the program to address this concern), approved unanimously.

B. NSCVB Annual Funding – Gina Speckman, Executive Director of the North Shore Convention and Visitors Bureau reported on the bureau's activities on Evanston's behalf as part of the annual request for funding. The request for \$81,174 (same as last year) was approved.

4. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A. Central Street SSA – Staff requested committee guidance on a request for a feasibility study to establish a Special Service Area (SSA), similar to Downtown Evanston and the Main-Dempster Mile, from the business owners in the Central Street business district (the area just east and west of Green Bay, and north and south

along Greenbay, roughly from Isabella to Lincoln, as well as a stretch further west on Central). The merchants association wants to organize an SSA to generate funds to bolster their marketing and district beautification efforts beyond what they can do with the funding they receive from the Great Merchants Program and their association dues. One issue they'd need to explore is the boundaries of the district, because there is a stretch of residential properties between the two commercial stretches.

Braithwaite, Wynne, and Simmons all spoke in favor of the idea. Rainey asked about funding. Wilson asked about the building owners' support. The biggest landlord in the district is apparently in support, but that outreach is ongoing. With Main-Dempster Mile, the cost of the feasibility was \$36,000 and then the implementation process was \$50,000 to \$75,000. The city fronted the implementation cost and then was reimbursed as the SSA flourished. Zalmezak noted that the implementation cost could similarly be paid back over time by a Central St SSA depending on what the feasibility says it might generate. Central St. might also have a lower implementation cost because it is smaller. Feasibility study cost could be covered by residual funding in the economic development fund, perhaps \$25,000-31,000. Committee directed staff to proceed with next steps toward funding a feasibility study.

5. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Monthly Economic Development Communication

B. Announcements/Updates from EDC Members

6. ADJOURNMENT