

From Mary Gavin

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

A. Creation of New Legacy Business Program Staff recommends creation a Legacy Business Program to help retain long-standing Evanston businesses. Staff recommends utilizing the Business District Improvement Account. The approved 2022 Fiscal Year Budget allocated \$250,000.00 to this account. To date, the balance is \$160,540.69.

There was a lot of support for this ordinance, but during discussion several vague terms and concepts – such as “architectural contributions,” “cultural contributions,” and reason for giving the stipend (incentive to remain in Evanston or honor for being here for so many years?) that needed to be clarified and agreed upon. The measure was held in committee with the expectation that the EDC will approve the measure and then create a subcommittee to work out the details.

B. Financial Assistance for Replacing Gasoline- and Propane-powered Leaf Blowers with Electric Leaf Blowers. Economic Development staff is seeking a recommendation to the City Council to authorize a financial assistance program to support Evanstonbased landscape companies transition to electric powered leaf blowers.

Staff recommends utilizing the Entrepreneurship Support Program, which has a balance of \$46,595.00. Staff estimates the cost of this program will be \$30,000 (depending on the number of applicants), but not to exceed \$45,000.

Because of the harmful effects of gas-powered leaf-blowers, Council has passed an ordinance to phase out their use. The cost of a three-battery pack, which lasts for an 8-hour day, is approximately \$1,000 (per CM Wynne). She was concerned about whether there would be sufficient funding to make a difference, Economic Development Manager Paul Zalmezak said he had selected the Entrepreneurship Fund because there was money in it and added that there are likely additional Economic Development resources/funds available.

EDC staff will do additional research to see how other communities have handled or incentivized the switch to electric leaf-blowers. Staff will also meet with landscapers, being certain to contact them in Spanish as well as in English.

By unanimous vote, it will be forwarded to City Council, modified with additional information.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A. Creation of Mulford Street Viaduct Art Park Staff seeks direction from the Committee regarding creating a community engagement process and collaboration with the Evanston Arts Council to fund the planning and implementation of the Mulford Street Viaduct "Art Park."

With a fairly small investment – artistic creations, better lighting, and community input – this passageway can be made beautified and safer. There could be a space for a food truck. The Arts Council is supportive of it. EDC members seemed supportive, feeling that the City should fund a project like this. The Howard Street Business Association would like the art park to have some reference to Howard Street. Arts funds, TIF funds and Main-Dempster Mile funds are possible resources. EDC members encouraged CM Reid to engage the community.

B. Fair Work Week Ordinance - City Council Referral August 9, 2021 from Councilmember Reid City Council Referral August 9, 2021 from Councilmember Reid -

This ordinance is intended to protect employees from capricious, sudden and arbitrary changes to work schedules. Employees should have the right to predictable work schedules. Unanimous vote to move to City Council.

C. Recommendation to Update Shopping Bag Ordinance 66-O-14 39 - 42 Page 2 of 54 Draft Staff seeks feedback from the Economic Development Committee on updating Shopping Bag Ordinance 66-O-14.

This ordinance was the first item for consideration, and there are several moving parts. The purposes are to wean people from single-use bags, paper or plastic, and incentivize them to use canvas or other cloth bags.

The vote was to send to Council a recommendation to replace the ban with a tax, probably 10 cents per bag.

The discussion ranged from what people knew to what they thought and what they would like. Here is a summary:

a. Most single-use bags are in fact re-used – to pick up dog waste, to line trash cans, etc.

- b. Plastic bags are terrible. Paper bags are better, but they are expensive (in money and resources) to make. Compostable bags are appealing but there is a somewhat tricky or detailed process that has to be followed to compost them correctly. Cloth bags are probably the best.*
- c. The point of the ordinance is to divert plastic from landfills.*
- d. Is a ban preferable to a tax? If there are exemptions from a ban, that could weaken the ban. If there is a tax on bags, then that surprises people who come from out of town or are otherwise unaware of the tax – and they are essentially forced to purchase something (the bag for their groceries, e.g.). People can be exempt from a tax – e.g., low-income families and individuals.*
- e. The “average” tax or charge for a plastic bag is between 7 and 10 cents. One suggestion was 20 cents, but another was 11 cents – slightly higher than typical and annoying enough to incentivize people to bring their own bags.*

COMMUNICATION

AMC may open its theaters as early as July 1, but the renovations may not be completed by then.

Demolition of the building that will be the new site of Northlight Theatre is scheduled to begin in June.