



## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, January 22, 2020 – 7:30 p.m.

Lorraine Morton Civic Center

2100 Ridge Avenue, City Council Chambers

**Members Present:** Lisa Dziekan, Ald. Braithwaite, Ald. Wynne, Hecky Powell, Ald. Rainey (Chair)

**Members Absent:** Ald. Wilson, Ald. Rue Simmons, A. Pigozzi

**Staff Present:** P. Zalmezak, P. Martínez, K. Boden

### 1. CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 p.m.

### 2. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF December 5, 2019

Approved 5-0

### 3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Dickelle Fonda said she was representing the West Village Business Association and the local neighborhood association to speak in support of the TIF request.

### 4. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

A. Zentli Request for TIF Assistance for Property at 1813 Dempster.

Ald. Rainey introduced the item. The applicants asked for \$24,200 in financial assistance from the west Evanston Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district, for the unforeseen repairs of the floor at 1813 Dempster Street.

Mr. Marcos Rivera and Mr. Alfonso Nieves introduced themselves. Mr. Rivera explained the original intended opening date of the proposed restaurant was November 1, 2019, but the contractors found previous plumbing issues, which damaged the floor. The landlord was unable to provide financial assistance to cover the damage caused by previous uses.

The restaurant concept is traditional street Mexican food. Mr. Rivera has already obtained a liquor license. Mr. Rivera also explained Mr. Nieves is a community artist, and they plan to build a community art space into their concept.

Ald. Rainey asked about the timeline of the project. Mr. Rivera said that if they can secure the funds to fix the floors, he expects to be open within a month and a half.

Ald. Braithwaite highlighted that 75% of the project will be self-funded.

Mr. Powell asked how long the lease was. Mr. Rivera indicated it is a 5-year lease with an option to renew for another 5. Mr. Powell also asked if they are committed to hiring locals. Mr. Nieves said “yes”.

Ald. Braithwaite moved to recommend City Council approval

Ald. Wynne second

Passed 5-0

## 5. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

### A. Northwest Evanston TIF Study Area RFP

Mr. Zalmezak introduced the project and mentioned economic development staff have met with Ald. Suffredin to discuss development opportunities. He explained that staff believes implementing a TIF district would encourage development of the Central Street/Crawford Avenue corner. Mr. Zalmezak added that the TIF could also help address some of the repair issues in Lovelace Park and Bent Park. He also highlighted that the study area shown in the memo are not the proposed TIF boundaries, and it is only intended to establish a study area.

Ald. Rainey said she was in doubt that the area meets the criteria to be designated as a TIF.

Mr. Zalmezak said staff needs direction before releasing a RFP for a feasibility study.

Ald. Braithwaite asked what would be the price range. Mr. Zalmezak estimated about \$5,000 for a feasibility study.

Ald Braithwaite and Ald. Wynne asked if Ald. Suffredin has discussed the topic with the neighbors and businesses. Mr. Zalemzak said not to his knowledge.

Ald. Braithwaite said he would want to have the neighbors and businesses to be engaged first.

The Economic Development Committee directed staff to pursue the RFP.

### B. Retail Co-Working / Incubator

Per the referral of Ald. Fleming, Staff looked into options to help retailers build their capacity and provide incubator space. In partnership with Downtown Evanston, staff has been in conversations with 37 Oaks, a consulting firm that provides capacity building courses for retailers.

Ald. Wynne asked what it would cost to implement this project in terms of staff time and the implementation itself. Mr. Zalmezak said Staff does not have the expertise or the bandwidth to manage an incubator.

Mr. Zalmezak explained he would like to spend a little more time in exploring the partnership with 37 Oaks to have a better picture of what the initiative would look like.

Ald. Wynne asked Staff to do further due diligence and come back to the committee with more information. Ms. Dziekan agreed and asked Staff to consult with more than one consultant. Ald. Rainey added she wants to see examples of retail incubators and examples of comparable communities with the same issue.

Staff was instructed to vet 37 Oaks and proceed accordingly.

## 6. COMMUNICATIONS

### A. Monthly Economic Development Communication

Ms. Martínez discussed the results of a survey that was administered at the request of Ald. Simmons to understand the progress of the Entrepreneurship Support Program. A total of 18 grants have been given and 12 responses were received, with mostly positive feedback. A total of \$36,000 has been given to date. Only one applicant has not launched her business. Staff will follow up with the applicant.

Upon inquiry from Mr. Powell, Ms. Martínez explained that Staff does not have resources or bandwidth for additional support but that they are looking for community partners that can provide additional resources and technical support for applicants.

Ald. Rainey asked to update the project report.

Mr. Powell asked if the City holds businesses accountable for hiring locals when given monetary incentives from the City. Mr. Zalmezak said “we recommend it, but don’t require it.” as it is hard to enforce because we don’t have a formal policy or resources to do it.

B. Announcements/Updates from EDC Members

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.