

Economic Restructuring Committee minutes approved



Economic Restructuring Committee

Feb. 16, 2010

Mission: Recruits new businesses and strengthens current ones

Item	Information	Action
Attendance	Present were (7) : Chairman Don Blair, Vincent Mastromauro, Joe Angelastri, Richard Lang, Marc Sussman, Bob Brobson and Ed Bannon	NA
Approval of minutes	Marc S. made a motion to approve the minutes of the Economic Restructuring Committee for the meeting of Jan. 19, 2010, and Rich L. seconded it.	The minutes were approved.
Master Plan update	Have calls, have a meeting on Friday with Department of Community Development, so will get an update. We were expecting an RFP to be issued by now. Don B. said we should ask for a copy of the revised RFP	Ed B. to request a copy.
Small Business Toolkit	<p>Don hopes to have it put together. The idea of the kit is to facilitate for small businesses, to help them understand what they can get access to. It would also be good to get some businesses some help with marketing, operations guidance. Not getting into their business model SBIF app. Stay away from SBA and loan programs. A lot don't have the capital to take on the liability.</p> <p>Small business: funds access on one side; have design info on another side. Still think should give more thought to doing more facilitating on behalf of businesses. Bob B. says the process is easier these days because the city has project manager. Marc S. says the permit process is so difficult for an outsider that it's inaccessible. The amount of time it takes to master the process is impossible for a business. You wouldn't have time to run your business. Don B. suggested using Dennis as a test case from Smolka True Value. He has permit and zoning issues. Can we find an expeditor to work at a discount? Marc S. said any progress would be make a difference. It's worth it to focus like a laser, so we can make a difference somewhere.</p>	Don B. said he would try to get something drafted within the next month. He asked Ed B. assist.
SBIF	Want to get help to businesses owners have a better image on the front of their buildings, but maybe we can do individual SBIF apps for an awning that fits with the character of the building. Joe A. asked if it's possible to do a whole block long rendering. Bob B. said the Design Committee is working on that project. Don B. said we can work with businesses to help them develop a logo.	Bob B. and Don B. to work on a project plan.

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	He has worked with LogoWorks. It would take \$2,500 to get it done to put an awning and logo on each building. Marc S. said an awning might not be necessary. Signs might be a better way to go. Don B. agreed that awning weren't necessary as long as we can accomplish better exposure. The objective is to help the businesses with their image and in that way we help the district. If we use Smolka as a poster child, we could use another business as a poster child for sign improvements.	
Sign removal	The abandoned signs and awnings have come down. We saved some of the awnings in case they want to be reused in some way. Now that all that signage is down, it's time to initiate a sign improvement project. This project will be a joint venture between the ER Committee and Design Committee. Step 1 is to identify 1 or 2 businesses; get a SBIF app put together, help them with branding and storefront design. The goal would be to get these projects done by Memorial Day. Marc S. suggested everyone come back next month with two pre-screened candidates.	Everyone is to look into two candidates for facade improvement.
SBIF Funding	Don B. reported that the Portage Park SBIF is out of funds, which means no businesses can take advantage of the program right now or submit applications. The committee authorized Ed b. to write a letter requesting that the SBIF be funded again and send it to Ald. Levar and Allen. Don B. asked about combining a series of projects under on SBIF application. Ed B. said applications are accepted by individual property only.	Ed B. to draft the letter
Rent subsidy	Marc S. doesn't think we've done the outreach that we could on the rent subsidy program. He recommended an e-mail blast, a flyer, and letters. He said it's not doing any good if the brokers and landlord's don't know about it.	Ed B. to report back with increased marketing efforts.
Metra station	Ed B. reported that representatives met with a staff member from U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley's office to discuss funding for public improvement. They said the staffer seemed interested in the idea to add a train stop at Irving Park Road. Joe A. said we should push the idea of an Amtrak only station so we're not eliminating any Metra stations, which some residents will object to.	Don B. to call Quigley's office.
Adjournment	The meeting was adjourned at 2:18 p.m. The next meeting of the Economic Restructuring Committee was called for 1 p.m., March 16, at Parkway Bank, 4106 N. Milwaukee Ave.	NA