

CITY OF PALOS HEIGHTS
Business/ Economic Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 26, 2018

Call to Order

Chairman Grossart called the meeting of the Business/Economic Advisory Committee to order at 12:00 Noon. Present were: Bob Grossart, Rick Powell, Chuck Polcaster, Barb Bergamo, Lori Mazeika, Stacy Schuble, Alderman Jeff Key, Diane Goerg, and Ken Busse. Also present was Recording Secretary Pat Sheppard. Absent was Paul Muchnickel,

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Grossart requested a motion to approve the minutes of the January 22, 2018 meeting. So moved by Lori Mazeika, seconded by Barb Bergamo. On a unanimous voice vote, the motion carried.

Parking Concerns Update

Chairman Grossart noted at the last meeting the committee discussed short-range and long-range ideas to address the parking problems. Since that time, with the assistance of Alderman Key, the Police Department's portable sign was being placed by the municipal parking lot on the weekend to make people aware of the additional parking. Ken Busse had talked with the owners of Capri, Highlander House and Franklins Public House about requesting their employees to park in the parking spaces that Advocate had authorized use of in their parking lot. All three owners agreed to urge their employees to use those spaces to free up parking for customers close to their restaurants. Ken also looked into on-street parking that was available on 123rd and 124th Streets, but the only problem was the areas were not striped. He mentioned that a lack of wider sidewalks in the area hindered walkability from parking areas. Chairman Grossart thought it would be a good idea to follow-up/inspect to see if employees were using either Advocate's parking spaces or the municipal parking lot. Ken reported that the Rini's property had recently been listed on MLS for \$1.2 million. He did not feel the property would sell at that price, but if and when it did, the loss of parking in that area would create more problems.

Alderman Key had looked at the parking possibilities on 123rd Street and spoke with the Police Department. The problems in that area was that there was a median in the street and the Fire Department would most likely not allow parking there. He also thought it was very common in other communities that employers expect their employees to park off-site. Ken Busse agreed and shared his finding with the Village of LaGrange Park.

Chuck Polcastor inquired what was required to get the on-street parking areas striped. Ken said he would check with the City Administrator, but it would most likely have to be presented to the Roads & Construction Committee and/or the Public Safety Committee. Diane Goerg asked if the parking areas near the entrances of businesses could be painted yellow to alert customers. Barb Bergamo wondered if signage was needed. Chairman Grossart hoped there would be an answer about the striping by the end of March. He asked Ken to let him know the date(s) of the meeting(s). Ken confirmed he would work with the City Administrator and the Director of Public Works on this.

Alderman Key thought once additional parking places were identified, it might be worth having a small flyer done to distribute to the businesses/restaurants to promote available parking areas to their customers. It was also suggested business owners could post parking information on their websites.

Comprehensive Plan Update

Ken Busse reported the consultant, Teska Associates, had started conducting key person interviews with 28 selected individuals. A steering committee of nine people had also been formed and a meeting would be scheduled soon. The consultant will also conduct field surveys and hold open public meetings as part of the process. Chairman Grossart inquired if it would be possible for the consultant to attend a BEAC meeting in near future. Ken said he would try to arrange that for March or April.

Occupancy Study

Chairman Grossart said he had updated the Occupancy Study and as of December 31, 3,000 sq. ft. of business were added, noting there was a lot of movement both ways – about 3,700 in and out. He said the committee had set a goal of 1% which would be about 7,000 sq. ft. and indicated the goal was not met. Chairman Grossart said he sent the report to Ken Busse with a request to complete it for the March 19 meeting. Chairman Grossart questioned if there should be a goal set and who should set it. Barb Bergamo said she recalled this being discussed before and it is hard to set a goal. She felt the committee all wanted as much occupancy as possible but everyone had different ideas on what type of businesses they wanted to see.

Chairman Grossart agreed and felt the City needed to decide on what type of businesses they wanted to attract and to set some reasonable targets. He noted that he and Rick Powell had recently attended a luncheon for the Business Network at Trinity Christian College and were encouraged by some to try and get influential people to raise enough capital to purchase property.

Chuck Polcastor felt that setting a goal but not having the authority to do anything made for frustration. He suggested using thematic goals using action steps. In other words increase occupancy by action(s). Chairman Key agreed and used making it easier for new businesses to get approved as an example. Ken Busse said improving the parking would also be an action step. Chairman Grossart thought Chuck Polcastor's idea was good and something they could work on.

F/Y 2018 Budget

Ken Busse reported the following in regards to the City's budget:

- The City had approved a contract with CivicPlus to redevelop the City's website at cost of \$24,710. CivicPlus specializes in municipal websites.
- Stacy Schuble was contracted to work on the City's Social Media which included Facebook, E-Newsletters and Blasts.
- The City subscribes to CoStar which provides real estate information in the area, identifies properties, and help with vacancies. In conjunction with that, Todd Schuble will work with Ken to provide a real estate portal for the City's new website.

Chairman Grossart inquired about an intern. Ken stated he had talked with the City Administrator who was in agreement to get an intern for the summer. The intern would work with Bob on the Welcome Back program as well as work with Ken on projects.

The Holidays on Heights event was allocated \$5,000.00, but the committee would need to submit their proposed budget for approval.

Re-Branding of Palos Heights

Chairman Grossart said last year, in November, during the course of the Comprehensive Plan Update meetings, the Mayor had said to him that this committee should handle and/or work on the re-branding of Palos Heights. He and Rick Powell had some ideas they wanted to share.

Rick Powell referred to a study (a marketing plan) that had been done in 2014 by Trinity Christian College (TCC) students. The marketing plan had five (5) main objectives which included a tag line and a new logo. He felt the marketing plan should be revisited with TCC to update/revise the plan. He said he would coordinate the meeting between the City and TCC to assure getting it on the schedule for next fall. Alderman Key recalled reading the marketing plan and thought it was very good. He especially like the focus on healthy lifestyles. Chairman Grossart stated it was a shame the study had fallen on deaf ears and nothing was done with it. If the study was updated he wanted reassurance that action would be taken.

Ken Busse noted that the City was working with Barcelona Creative Group on a rebranding and marketing initiative. An initial meeting was held recently to share ideas and Barcelona is currently working on a proposal based on that meeting. Ken also noted he was a little confused on the comment that the TCC study fell on deaf ears. He stated if the City had approved and paid for study to be done, they would follow through with it, but if the City did not direct/authorize the study to be done, then how can they be expected to take action on it. There was some discussion on the subject. Rick Powell asked if it would be best to approach the Mayor and see what he would like the committee to do in regards to having TCC update the study.

Alderman Key recalled TCC doing another study on how to implement the marketing plan. He felt the initial study/marketing plan was very good, the second study not as good. It was his opinion that the City would not act on a study done by college students, but it had some good points and could be used as a tool. He felt the plan detailed all the unique elements of Palos Heights and would be useful for rebranding. He suggested forwarding the marketing plan to the Mayor and Barcelona. Rick Powell concurred. It was noted the rebranding/marketing plan needed to coincide with the development of the new website. Chairman Grossart said it sounded like the Mayor had changed his mind about this committee working on the rebranding.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:09 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia M. Sheppard
Recording Secretary