

CITY OF PALOS HEIGHTS
Business/ Economic Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
July 15, 2019

Call to Order

Chairman Grossart called the meeting of the Business/Economic Advisory Committee to order at 12:00 Noon at City Hall in Palos Heights. Present were: Bob Grossart, Ken Busse, Alderman Jeff Key, Barb Bergamo, Mike Coogan, Rick Powell, Lori Mazeika, Judi Weber, Dr. Chuck Polcaster, Abby Wieggers, Nolani Schnabel and Recording Secretary Charlotte Moore.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Grossart requested a motion to approve the minutes of the June 17, 2019 meeting. So moved by Rick Powell, seconded by Barb Bergamo. On a unanimous voice vote, the motion carried.

Comprehensive Plan:

Bob Grossart began by stating that the City Comprehensive Plan and draft comments had been issued to the BEAC members. He emphasized that the committee strongly encourages the City to purchase the property currently for sale at College Drive and Harlem Avenue. This purchase would allow the City ample time to determine what the highest and best use of this land could be. Mr. Grossart asked for any further comments on the draft. He mentioned that there would be a Planning and Zoning Commission meeting later in the evening on July 15th, 2019, and encouraged BEAC members to attend the meeting.

Mr. Grossart inquired what the next steps would be, following the Planning and Zoning meeting. Ken Busse stated that the Commission would hear and consider all public comments, and could make recommendations for changes that go into the Comprehensive Plan prior to being considered by the City Council. If they feel that the comments are such that they need a redraft, then they would continue the hearing. The City Council would then review those comments and vote to accept or reject them. Ken also encouraged the BEAC members to attend the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting.

Barb Bergamo questioned the time frame of a redraft. She expressed concern over how long the project has taken thus far. Ken mentioned that a redraft would need to be completed by the time they continued the hearing. Discussion ensued. Mike Coogan and Dr. Chuck Polcaster agreed that there should be an inclusion of the BEAC's recommendations in the final report.

Rick Powell mentioned the importance of the gateway property residing at College Drive and Harlem Avenue. He questioned how the City could purchase the property. Discussion ensued. Mike Coogan suggested the B/EA Committee strongly encourage the Planning and Zoning Commission aim for a higher and better use than a gas station. Alderman Jeff Key agreed, stating that members of the BEAC should also encourage the City Council to think likewise. Further discussion ensued regarding the property.

Mr. Busse mentioned that the price of the property is undisclosed, but the acquisition of the property by the City could be negotiated with Spectrum. Discussion ensued. Alderman Jeff Key mentioned that it has been difficult to discuss the property with Spectrum, and that the City would be reluctant to control the corner without a plan. Ken Busse stated that Spectrum's marketing of the property has been discrete. Rick Powell expressed concerns over Spectrum going to contract with a potential buyer. Mr. Powell believes that the City should act quickly.

Ken Busse mentioned some of the guidelines written in the 2005 Gateway TIF document. Further discussion ensued regarding a gas station on the corner of College Drive and Harlem Avenue, along with expansion of the TIF district.

Alderman Jeff Key mentioned the importance of adding suggestions to the Comprehensive Plan, and encouraged the continuation of the hearing. Mike Coogan stated that it is important to remind committees to be forward-thinking in order to protect and preserve the beauty of Palos Heights. Discussion continued. Mike Coogan suggested creating a temporary small park in the area. Alderman Key stated that the Comprehensive Plan and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan demonstrated that Palos Heights has more property per capital dedicated to public parks.

Alderman Key reminded the committee members that speaking at the City Council should be done in respect and out of care for the City, rather than out of a place of anger and harshness.

Dr. Chuck Polcaster reiterated the ideas that need to be presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, held later in the evening on July 15th, 2019. Discussion ensued regarding the inclusion of an amphitheater structure in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Discussion continued regarding the strategic gateway areas of the City.

Welcome Back Trinity Update:

Bob Grossart reported that the Welcome Back Trinity 2019 planning was well under way. Intern Nolani Schnabel mentioned that there were currently 69 local businesses offering discounts to Trinity Christian College students and staff. Mr. Grossart stated that he has high hopes for this year.

Regional Start-Up Hub:

Bob Grossart mentioned that they are running into a few hold-ups in the coordination Fusion59 and local businesses. Barb Bergamo explained that she has been reaching out to local businesses to offer them the opportunity to work with Trinity Christian College/Fusion59 students to enhance their business. They are looking for roughly 5 businesses. So far, they have received no responses. Bob Grossart stated that there have been delays with Simple Taste – the pilot program. John Wightkin, head of the program at Trinity Christian College, has been putting together a team and organizing the current plans.

Barb mentioned that the Chamber of Commerce has also been working to offer two \$500 grants to the Fusion59 program to assist Fusion59 in moving forward, which would allow local businesses to become more involved in the program.

Mike Coogan questioned if Fusion59 could do something to help market events within the City. Discussion ensued.

Business Directory:

Intern Abby Wieggers demonstrated the Business Directory on the City's website. She stated that they had worked to verify addresses, websites, and phone numbers of over 500 local businesses. On the site, there are approximately 35 sortable categories with which to search.

Lori Mazeika questioned how to keep the Business Directory current. Ms. Wieggers suggested that on a yearly basis, following the issuance of the Occupancy report, the Business Directory could be altered as needed.

Rick Powell questioned how to get the current data from service companies that do not require business licensure. Bob suggested having the Directory marketed to the public. Alderman Jeff Key asked Abby to give a demonstration of the website at the City Council meeting, set for July 16th, 2019. Discussion ensued.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Charlotte Moore
Recording Secretary