



City Council Economic Development Subcommittee

MINUTES

Conference Room A
City Hall, 501 Primrose Road – Burlingame, California
Friday, November 16, 2018 – 9:00 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Members Present: Council Member (CC) Beach and Vice Mayor (VM) Colson

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Economic Development Specialist (EDS) Cleese Relihan and Community Development Director (CDD) Kevin Gardiner

Members of the Public Present: None

READ AND APPROVE MINUTES FROM OCTOBER MEETING

Meeting Minutes approved.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Updated Facade Improvement Program Draft:

EDS Relihan introduced the item. He noted that the grant application document has been updated to reflect input received from the subcommittee previously.

Subcommittee members inquired whether the program would be for loans or grants. EDS Relihan clarified that it would be for grants. Subcommittee members suggested that if the program was extremely successful and grant funding was exhausted in the future, a similar approach could be offered for loans.

Subcommittee members asked if the City Manager and City Attorney had reviewed the draft. EDS Relihan replied that they will review the draft once it has been approved by the subcommittee. Subcommittee members said they thought the draft was suitably developed and that it is ready for review by the City Manager and City Attorney.

Subcommittee members clarified that the work would be done by the grantee, and then the City would provide reimbursement for the work. The grantee would coordinate the work, and upon completion of the project, the grantee would present receipts for reimbursement.

Subcommittee members suggested that the application process section specify that City staff will inspect existing conditions as part of the application process, and that the work will be inspected upon completion to verify that it has been completed as initially proposed. Subcommittee members suggested the following language: "Once the repairs and improvements are complete, the applicant is responsible for submitting reimbursement documentation including all paid invoices." The intent is to have proof that the invoices have been paid to eliminate the possibility that someone who had worked on the project was not paid and subsequently pursues a claim with the City. The inspection would then verify that the work is indeed complete.

Subcommittee members asked whether the grant applications should be submitted by tenants or property owners. EDS Relihan noted that in prior discussions, subcommittee members were amenable to either the tenant or property owner applying for the grant. The ultimate goal is to create improvements that will benefit the surrounding area, so if a property owner would not otherwise make the improvements, it could still be worthwhile to provide the grant so that the other properties on the street can benefit.

Subcommittee members suggested that a loan program could be a consideration in instances where a property owner wants to make improvements to attract a tenant, and could repay the loan once a tenant is secured. The program can be crafted based on who responds to the initial offering.

EDS Relihan reviewed the scoring sheet included in the application. He noted that it has been kept general so it can apply to a range of businesses and situations. CDD Gardiner noted the scoring sheet can be useful in justifying to applicants why an application may or may not have been approved.

Subcommittee members suggested adding a category of how the project provides broad economic benefit to the business district – a “multiplier effect.” It could help differentiate between a project that would only provide limited benefit to a single property, compared to one that will have an impact beyond the property itself.

EDS Relihan asked if letters of support should be a consideration. Subcommittee members agreed with the need to document support, and suggested it be characterized as “demonstrated support from neighboring tenants, property owners and customers” rather than just a letter. The concern with relying on letters alone is that form letters might be submitted that might not be truly representative of local support.

Subcommittee members inquired whether there would be projects that could be considered detrimental or harmful to the surroundings. CDD Gardiner replied that the Planning Commission had recently reviewed an application to modify the façade of a downtown storefront, and the Commission was concerned that the project would be detrimental because it would strip architectural detail and character from the building.

Subcommittee members suggested that the criteria of whether the application is complete should not be a scale, but rather yes or no. However with further discussion, there were suggestions that there may be a difference between a “bare bones” application and one that is very thorough, with items such as renderings. CDD Gardiner noted this could allow constructive feedback in that an applicant could improve their score if they provide additional documentation to make their case.

Subcommittee members suggested that the grant program be prepared to be offered in early 2019. It can be introduced to the City Council as a work item upon review by the City Manager and City Attorney.

Latest Trends in Our Business Districts

EDS Relihan reviewed a presentation that had originally been provided to the Downtown Business Improvement District by a firm that paints murals on a commercial basis. He noted that the City cannot specify particular vendors, but that the vendor had approached the City and asked to have their marketing material forwarded to the BIDs.

Subcommittee members expressed concern that there be a perception that the murals offered by the vendors were being endorsed by the City, particularly given that the City has a subcommittee focused on public art.

Subcommittee members suggested there are some good locations where such murals could be effective, and noted that there is consideration of adding art to the Beautification Commission. Subcommittee members suggested involving the Parks and Recreation Director and the arts committee in the discussions.

Subcommittee members also noted that private property owners might be interested in undertaking mural projects on their own, and they may be interested in having a list of potential vendors to consider.

Subcommittee members suggested that to be proactive, there could be an effort to identify potential locations for murals, such as large blank walls in the business districts. The public art committee (or Beautification Commission as the case may be) could possibly identify a handful of locations that would be suitable for murals, and then contact the property owners with the suggestion.

EDS Relihan next mentioned that there continues to be fitness businesses expressing interest in locating on Burlingame Avenue. CDD Gardiner noted that there is an item on the upcoming City Council agenda authorizing staff to prepare a proposal for allowing Commercial Recreation within the Burlingame Avenue Commercial (BAC) district. It would be a relatively straightforward ordinance text amendment provided it is focused on just the Commercial Recreation use.

Subcommittee members also asked how daycare could be accommodated in other parts of town. CDD Gardiner suggested there be a review of where daycare is currently allowed, and why it is not allowed in some locations. Subcommittee members noted that Gymboree is entering the daycare market and is looking for locations, and that there is a real need in the community for such services. Potential locations were identified in the Inner Bayshore area, but the zoning does not allow daycare. Subcommittee members suggested that employment locations such as Inner Bayshore could be appropriate for daycare given the proximity of employment and the convenience to employees in the area. Daycare could be a suitable ground floor use on side streets, in the manner of Peninsula Family Services in Downtown San Mateo. Subcommittee members suggested that downtown would be a good location for daycare since it is where people are already living and working, and that the comings and goings of the parents could add vibrancy to an area. In locations where there is interest in having an active use on the ground floor, daycare could be appropriate as an alternate to retail.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Suggested future agenda items include brainstorming EDS goals and projects for 2019, reviewing 2018 EDS minutes, and reviewing past EDS projects still in progress.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 9:48 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Gardiner
Community Development Director