

CITY OF PALOS HEIGHTS
Business/ Economic Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 21, 2018

Call to Order

Chairman Grossart called the meeting of the Business/Economic Advisory Committee to order at 12:00 Noon at the Palos Heights Recreation Center. Present were: Bob Grossart, Rick Powell, Chuck Polcaster, Paul Muehlnickel, Lori Mazeika, Alderman Jeff Key, and Ken Busse. Also present were Abby Wieggers (summer intern from Trinity College) and Veronica Avila with 1st Merchants Bank. Special Guest: Mr. Pete Iosue, Senior Associate with Teska Associates, Inc.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Grossart requested a motion to approve the minutes of the April 16, 2018 meeting. So moved by Alderman Jeff Key, seconded by Chuck Polcastor. On a unanimous voice vote, the motion carried.

Comprehensive Plan Update

Chairman Grossart introduced Pete Iosue, Senior Associate with Teska Associates, Inc., who was hired to update the City's Comprehensive Plan and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Mr. Iosue explained the Comprehensive Plan covered land use related issues, economic development, transportation, environmental issues, etc. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan covered parks, recreational activities and programs, etc. He stated prior to this meeting, there had been a Comp Plan Steering Committee meeting to review the progress and current status of both projects. Mr. Iosue gave the committee a brief overview of projects noting they were on schedule to have a draft plan by fall.

- He had been doing much community outreach noting there was a survey available on the project's website at www.Plan4PalosHeights.com. He had attended the Palos Heights Business Expo on May 5 and planned on attending some summer events to talk with the community to get their ideas and comments.
- They were looking at the existing land use to see what can be accomplished over the next 20 years.
- They were looking at community facilities and focusing on sub-areas in the city to look at economic development issues, gaps in the market, and opportunities for revitalization. The three areas were: Olde Palos Harlem Avenue/Downtown (parking, pedestrian access, visual appearance, connectivity to Palmer Park); Harlem Avenue and College Drive/Tiffany Square Shopping Center (visual appearance, vacancies, new senior housing, connection to the Cal Sag Trail, community event space); and Indian Trails Shopping Center (re-use of the vacant Dominick's).
- Transportation: traffic counts on major thoroughfares and public transportation to identify any issues.
- Vision, goals and objectives were: (goal categories from the existing Comp Plan)
 - 1.) The City's Image: Appearance of commercial areas, Gateway features, high quality construction and design, screen utilities, bury power lines, promote Lake Katherine, and community events.

- 2.) Community Facilities and Services: maintain adequate police and fire protection, municipal facilities, youth and senior services, and coordinate services with neighboring communities.
- 3.) Residential Neighborhoods: preserve the character and architectural variety of single-family districts, continue property maintenance/code enforcement, identify possible infill development sites, and examine potential need for added residential options for empty-nesters, retirees, seniors, and possibly young professionals.
- 4.) Commercial Areas: range of retail services, promote development along Harlem Avenue, rehab older buildings, signage ordinance/uniform signage, promote landscaping, transition residential along Harlem Avenue, improve pedestrian access and circulation within shopping areas, promote shared parking, encourage consolidation of smaller lots, ensure high quality, compatible, similar scale commercial, and screen from residential areas.
- 5.) Transportation and Circulation: ensure adequate street maintenance, continue capital improvement program, minimize curb cuts on major arterials and collectors, minimize cut-through traffic, improve/increase Pace and Metra service, construction of Cal Sag Trail (reroute through Lake Katherine), improve trail connections, install sidewalks to improve access to community facilities.
- 6.) Parks, Open Space and Environmental Areas: maximize recreational activities, ensure adequate resources, pursue alternate funding sources, monitor community needs (new park in southwest), continue to provide swimming facility, cooperation between city, schools and other providers, promote Lake Katherine.
- 7.) Intergovernmental and Organizational Cooperation: coordinate/communicate with surrounding communities, seek intergovernmental grants/loans/funding, develop marketing campaign, improve communications with residents, and improve relationships with media.
- 8.) Fiscal and Economic Development: maximize sales tax revenue, improve resources for maintenance of municipal facilities, coordinate economic development activities, ensure new development pays fair share, establish marketing strategies to attract/retain businesses, appropriate balance between retail/service/office/medical, investigate potential annexation of unincorporated property.
- 9.) Administration: develop action agenda to prioritize objectives and accomplishments, make resources available to implement comp plan, regular review and update zoning ordinance, and review comp plan every 2 – 3 years.

Mr. Iosue then briefly reviewed the Parks & Recreation Survey to date as follows:

- 82 responses thus far, post cards were being mailed to residents to solicit more responses.
- 85% of respondents were female.
- Over 80% were satisfied/somewhat satisfied with parks.
- 78% use the pool at least once per season.
- 67% visit Lake Katherine at least once per month.
- 60% use the Cal Sag Trail at least once a month.
- Over 75% use the Recreation Center at least once a month.

- Highest response reason for not using park facilities was lack of knowledge of what was available.
- High interest in providing a splash pad and dog park.
- Email notifications and Facebook are most desired form of communication.

In conclusion, Mr. Iosue urged the committee members to go online and take the surveys, and to encourage others, especially high school and college students, to do so as well. The Parks & Recreation survey was currently online. He also said economic development would be the main focus of the Comp Plan, looking at ways to maximize sales tax revenue, coordinate economic development to ensure the City maintains the appropriate mix of retail vs. medical.

Chairman Grossart suggested Mr. Iosue attend the Classic Car Show in July to distribute the postcards as a couple thousand people typically attend that. Mr. Iosue said he was planning on attending that and a couple other events during the summer. Chairman Grossart thanked Mr. Iosue for his update report to the committee.

Holidays in the Heights

Chairman Grossart reported the following:

- The BEAC was providing a leadership position for this event.
- The committee had developed plans to expand the event in 2018.
- The committee consisted of 23 members and has been meeting to plan the event. Stacy Schuble and Abby Wiegiers would be soliciting for market vendors.
- A preliminary budget of \$20,000 was developed, which he referred to and reviewed. The biggest expenses were advertising and the rental of heated indoor tents. They were seeking a donation from the Beautification Committee in the amount of \$5,000, and funding from the City in the amount of \$7,000. Another 44% of the revenue was anticipated to come from vendors/businesses.
- The committee plans to combine the Small Business Saturday event with the Merchant Program.
- The relationship between the Chamber and retail businesses was growing and improving.

Welcome Back 2018

Chairman Grossart gave a brief overview of the event and noted Rick Powell has been the representative for Trinity Christian College. The past two (2) years, 60 to 70 businesses in Palos Heights had offered discounts to students and faculty throughout the school year and approximately 12 restaurants had supplied food for the day of the event. The date of this year's event was August 17. Abby Wiegiers was already securing discounts from businesses.

Old Business

Chairman Grossart referred the committee to the spreadsheet he had distributed which was an updated parking study/audit for the downtown area and reviewed the summary. It indicated there was an improvement (about 50%) to the number of cars utilizing the additional/remote parking at Advocate and the municipal lot.

Old business from last month was five (5) Resolutions that were introduced by Chairman Grossart, which were recommendations from this committee to the City Council for their consideration.

Resolution No. 1: Parking. In regards to the parking issues along Harlem Avenue near 123rd Street, the committee recommended additional offsite parking and to have the No Parking signs removed. Ken Busse said Alderman Key had taken the aerial photo, which indicated possible on-street parking, to the Roads and Construction Committee on May 8. Alderman Key reported the R&C Committee had approved getting a parking study done by the same firm that had done the recent traffic control study in the Olde Palos neighborhood east and west of Harlem. Due to a letter of intent for a possible lawsuit from a local business, the City will not be pursuing the parking study. He also noted this committee should not be discussing the parking issues for the time being. Ken Busse stated the best thing they could do right now is to continue to urge business owners to spread the word about the additional and/or remote parking areas and to address the challenges and/or issues through the Comprehensive Plan.

Resolution No. 2: Holidays in the Heights. Chairman Grossart asked Ken for an update on the request of \$7,000 from the City. Ken said he had talked with the City Administrator who felt the amount was equal to last year's funding and was doable. Chairman Grossart thought that was great. There was some discussion about Barcelona Creative Group doing the advertising/marketing of the event again this year.

Resolution No. 3: City (Municipal) Parking Lot. Chairman Grossart stated there were some concerns about the layout/re-design of the lot and how it would affect the plans for Holidays in the Heights, especially the placement of the tents. He said the Beautification Committee was donating \$20,000 towards the new water feature and were going to ask to see the drawings/plans. He also hoped the City was going to install additional adequate lighting. Another issue that should be addressed was the lack of a sidewalk from the parking lot to 123rd and Harlem. He said future plans for the parking lot included concerts, art fairs, holiday events, etc. Discussion ensued on the subject.

Summer Intern: Ken Busse reported that Abby Wiegers, the summer intern, was doing a great job getting started on the Welcome Back 2018 event and Holidays in the Heights. Abby distributed a packet which included the documents she had been updating and/or working on as follows:

- 1.) The registration form for Holidays in the Heights' Merchant Program and Kris Kringle Market. The form detailed the promotion and event information and what was included with registration.
- 2.) A spreadsheet she created merging all the businesses that participated or had been contacted to participate in the Welcome Back event and Holiday in the Heights in 2017. The spreadsheet would help her and others preparing for this year's events.
- 3.) The Welcome Back Trinity 2018 participation form for businesses agreeing to offer discounts/special offers to students and faculty for the 2018-19 school year.
- 4.) A draft of the sign that would be displayed in the stores/businesses offering discounts to Trinity students and faculty.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia M. Sheppard
Recording Secretary