

# CITY OF PALOS HEIGHTS



## Business/ Economic Development Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes June 15, 2020

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Grossart called the electronic GoTo Meeting of the Business/Economic Development Advisory Committee to order at 12:00 Noon via Go to Meeting. Present were: Bob Grossart, Alderman Jeff Key, Lori Mazeika, Rick Powell, Dr. Chuck Polcaster, Stacy Schuble, Judi Weber, Ken Busse (liaison to the City), and Recording Secretary Charlotte Moore.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

There were no meeting minutes to approve.

### **Business Occupancy Report**

Ken Busse gave a brief update. He stated sales tax grew year over year. While we lost some businesses, we gained some others, including: Prime Choice Market, Natural Healing, AT&T, TreadFit, Revival Yoga, Air Barre, Chulo Fitness, and Palos Eye Professional expansion.

Coming in 2020 will be a chiropractor office at the northwest corner of 127<sup>th</sup> & Harlem, and Manhattan Fire House Grill in place of the former Nick's Barbeque.

Alderman Jeff Key asked about the out lot at Jewel. Ken stated Andy's is making final design changes to building as required by City. Construction permitting is expected in the fall.

There is a home on Ridgeland behind the Power Mart, that would like to change the zoning for a law office. On June 29<sup>th</sup>, the Planning & Zoning Commission will meet to vote on the zoning change.

### **Provide support for "Gateway"**

Bob Grossart mentioned that there are two public hearings on June 29<sup>th</sup> that he encourages committee members and residents to attend to voice displeasure with a gas station at Route 83 & Harlem.

Rick would like to know if the gas station goes ahead, can we encourage some nice signage at the Gateway. Mr. Busse stated the City has design guidelines that the gas station must follow, and further stated the City has expressed the need for a nicer façade after reviewing the designs submitted.

### **Open Air Pavilion/Splash Pad**

Rick mentioned that we are in a holding pattern but enthusiastic about a splash pad in the future. Jeff Key will re-visit the splash pad with Matt Fairbanks.

### **Intern 2020**

Bob Grossart asked Ken Busse if he needs an intern and went over the options for hiring. Ken Busse stated an intern would be needed if Holiday in the Heights and the Kris Kringle Market moves forward. Mr. Busse interviewed someone in the spring who is interested, but does not know whether Trinity will be opened in the fall (due to Covid19), or the number of hours she can work in the fall. Discussion ensued.

Judi Weber wonders if we should hire someone that is not a Trinity student. There might be less chance of losing them so soon and then we have to train someone new.

Bob Grossart asked Ken to put together a job description and a cost proposal for the next meeting. Ken Busse will draft a job description for Dan Nisavic to review and consider.

### **Welcome Back -2020**

Bob Grossart mentioned that the Welcome Back Trinity program has run for 7 years. The program offers new and returning students discounts throughout the year. The day students return businesses offer free food on the campus quad to make the students and families feel welcome. With Covid19 restrictions Bob isn't sure about the program for fall 2020.

Rick Powell will ask Trinity in the next few weeks about their fall 2020 plans for opening. Bob Grossart's believes it will be hard to ask businesses that are hurting right now to donate to the Welcome back event. It might be a good idea to not do the program this year.

### **Holiday in the Heights 2020**

Bob Grossart offered three choices for the event this year:

#### **Choice A: NOT RECOMMENDED**

Form committee to make plans for a 2020 event similar to last year:

- It would be unrealistic to expect the business community to have funds available to support the event
- We would have to commit to upfront payments with the possibility that the virus restrictions could be in place during the event

#### **Choice B: NOT RECOMMENDED**

Cancel all plans for 2020, and hope to restart the program in 2021:

- Would lose all momentum built up from two years of effort and hard work

#### **Choice C: RECOMMENDED FOR CONSIDERATION**

Form a committee and consider a modified 2020 approach:

- Request no sponsor fees from the Business Community
- Set a goal to make a profit of \$30,000 which will be distribute a portion to the business community based on prior support
- Consider a way to allocate a portion of proceeds to the Chamber of Commerce to support and increase membership. Maybe if a business was in the Chamber, they could qualify for funds equal to 3 times the membership fee.

- Set fund raising goal of \$25,000
  - Possible donation from Beautification committee \$5,000
  - Funds from Trinity College service projects 3,000
  - Funds from Shepard High School service projects 3,000
  - Split the pot from Kris Kringle 2,500
  - Split the pot from Car Show 2,500
  - Donations / Entrance fee to Kris Kringle 5,000
  - Craft vendor donations from profit 1,000
  - Summer concert donations 2,000
  - Misc donations 1,000
  
- Alternative location:
  - In lieu of having the tents with a cost of approximately \$12,000, we would consider having the event inside:
    - Recreation center
    - Dominick's
  
- Other ideas:
  - Combine the Chamber event and Kris Kringle event
  - Make it a three-day event
  
- Parking:
  - Recreation Center parking
  - Independence School Parking
  - Parking at Indian trails
  - Parking at Anchor Church
  
- Potential cost savings:
  - Close parking could eliminate need for trolley \$2,000
  - Tent cost 12,000
  - Cost for port o'pories 400
  - Donation of services for Santa Claus 750
  - Reuse decorations, signs from last year 1,000
  - Lower costs for public works / police 2,000

Dr. Polcaster asked what the purpose of a 2020 Holiday in the Heights event would be. Bob Grossart believes the purpose is to bring consumer traffic to Harlem Avenue. Dr. Polcaster feels doing the event off-site (e.g., vacant Dominick's), or a down-scaled event might not be consistent with the purpose of the program. Stacy Schuble has already received inquiries from vendors for the event this year. Discussion ensued.

Ken Busse reported that he spoke with Dan Nisavic and they both concluded that support from the city must consider and be consistent with state Covid-19 guidelines. Mr. Busse cautioned that investing money in tent rental may be too big of a financial risk if Covid-19 restrictions return. Discussion ensued.

### **Help for Local Businesses**

Bob Grossart is looking for ideas on what we can do to help local businesses survive. Some ideas include: marketing help, charge for movies, encourage sale of gift cards.

Jeff Key mentioned that the Rec. Center is working on an event in the fall with concerts, movies and food vendors. All this depends on the Governor and the loosening of restrictions. It is hard to make a decision on any of this stuff.

Dr. Polcaster suggested getting behind the restaurants and help them promote a Grand Re-Opening. Perhaps a weekly, biweekly or monthly restaurant feature. Generate a program that will bring business to them. Dr. Polcaster also wondered if we could get help from local law or accounting firms to assist businesses on getting the PPP money. Another option would be to have Trinity Fusion 59 assist businesses by promoting their online presence. Discussion ensued.

Stacy Schuble is working on a few things for businesses, such as marketing and social media. The Chamber has not been getting a lot of response. Discussion ensued.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

Respectfully Submitted,

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Charlotte Moore  
Recording Secretary