

The Community and Economic Development (C&ED) Committee met virtually on May 7th 2020 to 1) review the business proposals submitted to the Board by Donald Billings; 2) determine a process to streamline proposals; and 3) discuss and plan street/sidewalk expansion as it relates to the proposals.

Committee members present were myself (Alderman Lisa Ryan- Chair), Aldermen Sharon Davis-VC, Chris Etori, Sam Gorruso, and Michael Talbott.

Aldermen present were President Matt Whitcomb, Aldermen Paul Clifford, Melinda Humphrey, and Rebecca Mattis.

Others present were Treasurer Mary Markowski, Executive Director (RRA) Brennan Duffy, City Attorney Matt Bloomer, Mayor Dave Allaire, RCPD Chief Brian Kilcullen, RCFD Chief Bill Lovett, Rec. Superintendent Kim Peters, Executive Director (DRP) Steve Peters, and Donald Billings (Owner- Roots Restaurant).

The meeting began at 5:30pm.

Steve Peters started off the meeting talking about some of the business owners' ideas and concerns regarding the functionality of opening back up safely, while adhering to social distancing precautions. Some ideas shared were having designated parking spaces for to go/take-out options, having a reduced/discount rate for the parking garage, and having free street parking. As it pertained to utilizing designated parking spaces for seating, business owners were concerned with how the layout would be properly constructed, the level of noise that could cause disruption while dining, cleanliness, and overall not being a reliable option for seating. There was also some discussion about closing Center Street either on occasion or on the weekends. Steve stated that everyone will be doing things differently and ideas will need to be tested out. He asked that the City be flexible with businesses and consider a process that is clear and easy for businesses to navigate through as decisions are being made.

Alderman Davis asked if businesses will have a plan, for permitting etc.

There was a lot of discussion around parking. Alderman Gorruso proposed that all parking fees be expelle and Steve said that businesses would appreciate that, although there was some concern about some businesses parking in spots all day. Regarding designated parking spots for patrons, Chief Kilcullen said that we practically have that now and asked if merchants were looking for something more long term, in which Steve responded yes. Alderman Clifford asked

Treasurer Markowski about parking revenues. Treasurer Markowski stated that the last parking tickets issued were on March 11th and that the Kiosks were averaging about \$4 per week.

Mayor Allaire said his office was supportive in finding a way that is possible for restaurants to operate, even if it was pilot based at first and then go from there in order to determine a happy medium.

Alderman Davis encouraged Steve that whatever the proposals were, the Board would support. Further, she stated that every restaurant/business needs to look at their property and decide what they want; neighbors need to work together, rooms and meals tax was a necessary advantage.

Alderman Etori said what works for one business will not work for another and that the Board needs to get out of the way, but offer support and resources. He asked if there were ways to support businesses and maximize programs. He said that the board needs to help lead and market. Alderman Etori stated that Tara Kelly needed to be included in this process.

Donald stated that in his proposal he was not trying to dictate what people do, but offer some options and guidance, such as having "park-lets" or "dining pods." He said that Roots thought things through—how to utilize more space, maximize seating, and thought long term when they moved in a new space. Donald said he was going to push hard and that capitalizing over the next three months was important. Alderman Gorruso commended Donald. Chief Lovett and Chief Kilcullen both appreciated Donald's proposal for Roots and had no issues with it.

Alderman Davis advocated for the green space in Center Street Park to be shared by abutting properties.

The committee agreed that business owners and the DRP need to put in the work and establish their plans. Businesses wanting help should submit specific proposals so the City could best determine what is needed to make it happen and how to help. The Board will support, approve, and help market them.

This report is for information only.

The meeting adjourned at 6:27pm.