



**MINORITY, WOMEN & EVANSTON BUSINESS ENTERPRISE (M/W/EBE)  
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, March 17, 2021  
5:00 P.M.  
Meeting Minutes

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ald. Peter Braithwaite, Joshua Gutstein, Jessica Oldani, and Nasutsa Mabwa, Jesus Vega, Ald. Robyn Simmons

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Kemone Hendrick and Michael McLean

**STAFF PRESENT:** Interim Admin. Services Director/CIO Luke Stowe, Purchasing Manager Tammi Nunez, Interim Deputy City Manager Sharon Johnson, and Management Analyst Tasheik Kerr

**PRESIDING MEMBER:** Ald. Braithwaite

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**1. Declaration of a Quorum**

Ald. Braithwaite called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm. Ald. Simmons motioned to suspend the rules to permit members to convene via virtual meeting. Second by Ald. Braithwaite and approved 5-0 (roll call taken).

**2. Approval of Minutes**

Motion to approve the Minutes as presented from January 20, 2021 made by Nasutsa Mabwa and seconded by Jessica Oldani. Motion passed unanimously 5-0 (roll call taken).

**3. Guest Introduction:**

Dave Davis, Executive Director for Community Relations, at Northwestern University (NU) noted that as part of the funding allocation for the Racial Equity Fund, NU would be investing \$400,000 to strengthen minority business owners and entrepreneurs. This investment would aid in reducing the wealth gap and expanding financial security for black and brown businesses in Evanston. Dave shared some of the barriers faced by minority businesses. By creating this incubator in Evanston, NU hopes to strategically blend assets to address challenges faced by the minority business community. The goal is to establish a space for minority businesses near the university. The incubator would be led by an executive director with skills to support minority business owners.

Ald. Braithwaite recommended the Committee invite Dave back to do some brainstorming with representatives from the minority business community. Ald. Braithwaite inquired whether the staff position is included in the initial \$400,000 investment. Dave responded that NU is considering including the staff position as part of the initial investment. NU is also exploring other sources of funding to support that position.

Natusa inquired how the Evanston Chamber of Commerce could play a role in this initiative, how access to capital for minority businesses could be improved, and how this initiative would improve access to fair and open bidding options for minority businesses. Dave responded that NU is exploring procurement options. NU is also looking to engage other large institutions/stakeholders to coordinate procurement and spending. As to aiding minority businesses with access to capital, Dave shared he is meeting with local banks to talk about the program as it pertains to their involvement. Dave also shared that NU would ensure a representative from the Chamber is at the table as the program is developing.

Ald. Braithwaite inquired whether Business with a Heart, Kellogg School's student-run community service organization, would be involved in the incubator. Dave noted the Planning Committee plans to consult with the business school and others in the academic community.

Joshua inquired whether businesses would have to relocate to the incubator or would it be virtual. Dave responded that physical and virtual space is being considered.

Mike Vasilko, a resident, commented that some community members believe NU is not doing its fair share in the community. Mike suggested NU donate a more significant amount. Dave responded that NU is sincere in its commitment to strengthening the Evanston community and is focusing on the most venerable residents in the community.

Jesus Vega inquired about the membership of the Planning Committee and whether communication would be translated. Dave responded the Planning Committee is looking for members across all major sectors and industries. The Planning Committee would also explore how to get feedback from members of the community that are not native speakers.

#### **4. Old Business**

##### **A. Evanston Procurement Vendor Event (webinar or in-person lakefront)**

Ald. Braithwaite noted the group moved away from doing a virtual event. When it's safe to gather the Committee would consider an in-person event.

#### **5. STAFF REPORTS**

##### **A. Capital Improvement Projects Report**

Bureau Chief Capital Planning / City Engineer, Lara Biggs, provided a summary of the LEP Capital Improvement projects. Lara indicated that the projects presented are new contracts the City plans to enter into in 2021. The projects are divided into four categories: 1) projects that are eligible for the LEP program, 2) LEP ineligible projects due to funding restrictions 3) LEP ineligible projects due to the project type and 4) LEP ineligible projects that are less than \$250,000.

Lara noted there are fewer projects eligible for the LEP program as compared to 2020. Reductions in the number of projects in the Capital Improvement Plan and projects being funded by the State of Illinois resulted in fewer projects being eligible for the LEP.

Ald. Simmons inquired about the types of funding streams that exclude LEP compliance goals and whether the City has explored ways to bring those funds into the LEP. Lara noted that funding provided by the state and federal government is restricted in its use. Local governments cannot use this type of funding for their LEP.

Mike Vasilko inquired about the redesign of the Civic Center. Mike noted he does not recall this project being budgeted and approved by the City Council. Lara responded that this project has been carried over from previous years and funding has been put towards this project over the years.

#### **B. MW/EBE and LEP Tracking Report**

Sharon noted the Levy Senior Center – Linden and Locust Room Revocation project is at a 28% MWEBE compliance rate. There was one waiver request pertaining to the 54inch Intake Heater Cable project.

The LEP Penalty Fund activities include two invoices from Evanston Rebuilding Warehouse. The invoices were received on January 26 and February 23, 2021. The previous LEP balance was \$73,352.59. The current balance is \$62,881.09 as of February 28, 2021.

Ald. Braithwaite inquired about the status of Robert Crown. Sharon responded Robert Crown finished at around 24% out of a \$47.7 million contract. Minority businesses had 6% of the contract at \$2.7 Million. Women businesses had 11% of the contract at \$5 million. Evanston-based businesses had 7% of the contract at \$3.4 million. Sharon will provide an updated memo at the next Committee meeting.

Ald. Braithwaite reviewed the history of the MWEBE waiver process.

### **6. New Business**

#### **A. Minority Business Incubator Overview**

See Dave Davis's report above.

**B. Outreach for Local Businesses**

See Dave Davis's report above.

**C. 2021 Calendar Schedule Change**

Sharon proposed the revised 2021 calendar below. There will be six meetings instead of twelve. This schedule will coincide with the construction season (March through November) and significant movement on major Capital Improvement Projects.

2021 MWEBE Committee Meeting Schedule	
Committee Meeting Dates	No Committee Meeting Dates
Wednesday, January 20, 2021	Wednesday, February 17, 2021
Wednesday, March 17, 2021	Wednesday, April 21, 2021
Wednesday, May 19, 2021	Wednesday, June 16, 2021
Wednesday, July 21, 2021	Wednesday, August 18, 2021
Wednesday, September 15, 2021	Wednesday, October 20, 2021
Wednesday, November 17, 2021	Wednesday, December 15, 2021

Ald. Braithwaite moved to approve the revised 2021 MWEBE Meeting Calendar, Seconded by Ald. Simmons 6-0 (roll call taken).

**7. OTHER BUSINESS**

Jessica shared that at the December 18, 2019 meeting; staff requested the October 16, 2019 meeting minutes be amended to include a notation that the Committee had discussed potentially assessing a full penalty concerning the Robert Crown Project.

Ald. Braithwaite noted the City would be receiving funds from the federal government.

Luke suggested moving the September 15 meeting to September 29, 2021.

Sharon mentioned staff met with V-Link, a customized platform for multi-vending. Staff will be meeting again with V-link. Jessica requested staff inquired whether the software would be retail only as it pertains to goods and services.

Ald. Simmons announced this meeting would be her last meeting. Ald. Simmons shared she is grateful to have served on this Committee.

**Public Comment**

Mike Vasilko noted the MWEBE Committee voted unanimously last year to fine Bulleys and Andrews for failing to meet the LEP requirements. Mike recalled that staff had submitted a memo recommending Bulleys and Andrews not be fined. Mike