

**Business Development Commission (BDC)  
MEETING MINUTES  
APPROVED**

MEETING DATE: Thursday, January 27, 2022  
 LOCATION: City Hall/Teleconference  
 CALLED TO ORDER: 8:01 AM  
 MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:03 AM  
 NEXT MEETING: Thursday, February 24, 2022

Name	Present	Absent
Mike Pincus, Chair (Citizen at Large)	X	
Pam Neihaus, Vice Chair (Citizen at Large)	X	
Kara Bowlin (Citizen at Large)	X	
Andrew Scavotto (Citizen at Large)	X	
Ceci Bartels (Home-Based Business Owner)	X	
Bud Bellomo (Chamber of Commerce)	X	
Tim Delanty (Old Webster Rep)	X	
Tammy Behm, (Commercial Business Owner)	X	
Erbab Majeede (Commercial Business Owner)	X	
Laura Arnold, Council Liaison	X	
Eric Peterson, Staff Liaison	X	

Also in Attendance

Pam Bliss – Council Member, City of Webster Groves  
 Officer Ahmar Rasool – Webster Groves Police Department; Traffic Unit  
 Fran Sudekum – Administrative Support

**Approval of Minutes** – A motion to approve the October minutes was made by Pam Neihaus, seconded by Erbab Majeede, and unanimously approved.

**Business Survey** – The business survey that will be sent to businesses in Webster Groves is a combination of items received at the Business Roundtable in November and items found in “Main Street America” programs/best practices currently active in numerous states. The survey is to cast a wide net to acquire data in an effort to drill down on some of the issues and needs business owners are facing. It is an extensive thorough survey, but not all questions have to be answered in order to submit a response. Commission Members reviewed the survey and gave input, some of which included:

- a cover letter framing the intent of the survey and explaining the option to skip questions
- adding resource links or comments within the survey so a business could pursue help or information about particular items could be a why to provide value to the business owner as they answer the survey
- data compiled from the survey could help the BDC align their work with the needs of businesses
- add social media and targeted ads to the list of publications in the advertising budget question
- keep the survey taker in mind, why should a business take the time to respond; a consumer centric approach
- add the ability to add comments as you are answering questions

- Items to include in the community assets question (#34); a shuttle service,
  - possibly add an infrastructure question in regard to accessibility for disabled and elderly
- Eric Peterson will incorporate suggestions and send out a link to the survey for Commission Members to review and reply within the next two weeks.

**Webster University Business Videos** – The latest installment of videos produced by the Video Production class with a “Sweets” theme are two stand-alone videos, one for Amy’s Cake Pops and Boozy Bites in Old Orchard and the other for Le Macaron French Pastries of Saint Louis in Old Webster. These videos will be premiered on the Explore Webster Groves Facebook page around Valentine’s Day. Next semester the theme will be coffee.

**Webster Groves Website Update** – Work has started on revamping the City’s website. Revamping the Explore Webster Groves landing page will be part of that project and “skin” will look and interact differently than it currently does; it will be more consumer focused. Jenny Starkey will be working with the BDC sub-committee for input on the Explore side of the project.

**Prop U** – Prop U for an online use tax, will be on the April 5th ballot. A use tax is a tax on the purchase of goods by Webster Groves residents from out-of-state vendors that do not collect the local sales tax. The use tax is applied to the same products that would be subject to the sales tax if the products were sold locally. An educational campaign will kick off next month.

**American Rescue Plan (ARP) Funding** - Balance Act Software with has been launched and is available to use with approximately 30 ARP project funded ideas received from the business roundtable and other sources pre-loaded; it can be found on the City’s website. Ideas and comments can be added. There is a section focused on businesses. Commission Members are encouraged to take advantage of the tool and make a submission.

### **City Update**

- A coffee shop will be in the new building under construction next to Regions Bank.
- A proposition will be on the April ballot whether to establish a Charter Advisory Review commission which is a commission put together to make recommendations to City Council about potential changes in the City’s charter. Information will be available as April gets closer.
- The City Council will hear the Diversity Equity and Inclusion report at the upcoming City Council meeting.
- The City compensation and classification study recommendations will be before Council at its upcoming meeting as well.
- With grocery stores limiting their hours in mind, City Council approved a request from convenience store businesses to allow them to sell liquor in addition to beer and wine.

### **NEXT MEETING**

- Agenda – Budgeting
- Meeting Date – February 24, 8:00 AM