

Business Development Commission (BDC)
MEETING MINUTES
APPROVED

MEETING DATE: Thursday, February 23, 2023
LOCATION: City Hall
CALLED TO ORDER: 8:01 AM
MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:14 AM
NEXT REGULAR MEETING: Thursday, March 23, 2023

Name	Present	Absent
Mike Pincus, Chair (Citizen at Large)	X	
Tim Delanty, Vice Chair (Old Webster Rep)	X	
Stephanie Skees (Old Orchard Rep)		X
Julia Leenig (Crossroads Rep)	X	
Bud Bellomo (Chamber of Commerce)		X
Tammy Behm (Commercial Business Owner)	X	
Eric Browring (Citizen at Large)	X	
Ceci Bartels (Home-Based Business Owner)	X	
Stacie Swederska		
Pam Bliss, Council Liaison	X	
Eric Peterson, Staff Liaison	X	

Also in Attendance:
Officer Ahmar Rasool – Webster Groves Police Department
Fran Sudekum – Administrative Support

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the January minutes was made by Tammy Behm, seconded by Julia Leenig, and unanimously approved.

New Commission Member

Stacie Swederska, owner of Paisley Boutique in the Old Webster Business District, has been appointed to the BDC.

Chair and Vice Chair Elections

Mike Pincus was unanimously voted to continue at the Chair. Tim Delanty was unanimously voted to continue as the Vice Chair.

Work in Webster Job Board Update

The job board has 14 new job postings. The digital advertising package has launched and will continue. The traffic has increased 400%. An insert about the job board was included in the business license renewal letters. The job board can be found on the City’s website at the following URL; <https://www.webstergrovesmo.gov/673/Work-in-Webster-Groves>.

Commission Report to City Council

Mike Pincus is scheduled to present BDC’s report to City Council at the April 4th work session. Commission Members discussed which BDC strategic goals and priorities to present. Top goals are business engagement activities, making use of the ARP funding for branding advertising or for the QR Code project, as well as the continued support of the Job Board.

QR Code Window Cling Update

Google has been approached to provide the cost to do a dynamic map. A quote is expected in time for next month's meeting; it will be expensive. A discussion was held using the QR Code idea as a wayfinding list of businesses and a static map; a "mall-like" directory. Perhaps the application could start as a static map and then could possibly change to a dynamic map. Logistical challenges discussed included: how is the projected constructed and who is involved, maintaining an up-to-date list of businesses, is it retail only or will it include other types of businesses, is it businesses with "store fronts" only, there are approximately 18 different commercial areas across the City to consider, what are the resources needed to support the application, how to engage the businesses, a possible business opt-in option with or without a fee, what are the costs associated with the application, and should this be a BDC project or a business owner/association driven project. Stacie Swederska has approached a fellow business owner to possibly create the graphics for a static map and a few pages of links, she will pursue pricing information. Discussion will continue next month.

Business Development Fund/Budget Request

There is \$82,000 remaining in the ARP Business Development Fund for this fiscal year; BDC will ask it rolled over to next year. City Council is looking for recommendations from the BDC for the use of the funds. Could it be in support of another Commission's initiative, such as the Sustainability Commission's Green Dining initiative; they will be coming to possibly next month's BDC meeting to present their project. ARP Funds have to have a designated use by the end of 2024 and spent by the end of 2026. Ideas put forth by Commission Members included such items as charging stations in the various business districts and neighborhoods, advertising via multiple mediums promoting the Webster Groves business brand. Additional ideas and a potential budget request for FY2024 will be discussed at the next meeting.

Business Engagement

Commission Members discussed various ways to reach out and re-engage with the business community as a follow-up to the Business Roundtable and survey. It was decided to establish a sub-committee to suss out potential approaches. Tammy Behm, Julia Leenig, and Eric Browning volunteered to be on the sub-committee. They will meet and bring their recommendations to the next meeting.

Business Liaison Position

The proposed Business Liaison position is not currently in the budget. Some of the duties in the position are currently already performed by City staff. Pieces of the economic development aspect of the position are performed by both Eric Peterson and Mara Perry, but it is not their primary discipline and is on an incoming demand basis only. It was suggested Commission Members should honed down aspects of the proposed position after new needs, info, feedback is gathered from re-engaging with the business community; the project the sub-committee is delving into.

Parking

Commission Members discussed the various aspects of parking challenges throughout the commercial areas of the City. Commission Members would like to delve more into the parking minimum policy placed on businesses. Additional info will be provided at next month's meeting.

Business District/City Updates

- Old Orchard and Crossroads will be undergoing a “road diet” on Big Bend Boulevard involving reducing two lanes to one; accomplished via road striping.
- City Council is working on an ordinance to designate the Lustron homes in Webster Groves as Designated City Historical Landmarks; current property owners can opt-out.
- The City’s marijuana ordinance is being updated to come into compliance with the State Constitutional Amendment.
- A 3% added sales tax on any marijuana dispensaries that locate in the City is on the April ballot.

Next Meeting – April 27, 2023 at 8:00 AM

Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 9:14 AM.