

**JOINT MEETING OF THE
BELTON CITY COUNCIL
BELTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS
BELTON AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
APRIL 5, 2011 – 5:00 p.m.**

The Belton City Council met in special session in the CTCOG Building, Room AD-8, 2180 N. Main Street, with the following members present: Mayor Jim Covington, Mayor Pro Tem Marion Grayson, Councilmembers Clifton Peters, Wayne Carpenter, and Craig Pearson. Councilmembers David K. Leigh and John Agan were absent. Staff present were Sam Listi, Connie Torres, Cristy Daniell, Les Hallbauer, and Sandy Slade.

The Mayor called the City Council meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. BEDC Board President Chris Moore called the BEDC Board to order also.

Conduct a joint meeting of the Belton City Council, the Belton Economic Development Corporation, and the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, to review progress of implementation of Belton's Economic Development Strategic Plan, Belton Tomorrow.

Chamber of Commerce President/CEO Stephanie O'Banion welcomed everyone. City Manager Sam Listi gave an overview of the goals identified in the Belton Tomorrow, Economic Development Strategic Plan, which included photos of infrastructure improvement projects and private investment/public enhancement projects recently completed or underway.

Receive presentation from Catalyst Commercial regarding retail opportunities and strategies to capitalize on Belton's tourism assets.

BEDC Executive Director Tommy Baker explained the BEDC's role in attracting retail, and the importance for Belton to have a retail champion to help bring businesses to town. He introduced Brandon Wilhite of Catalyst Commercial, Dallas, who gave an overview of the company and its process in helping communities develop strategies to develop a Retail Merchandising Plan™.

BEDC Board President Chris Moore asked about the relationship between Catalyst Commercial and the 8,000+ companies in their data base. Mr. Wilhite explained they have three people whose primary job is to make phone calls on behalf of clients, create a campaign list and work through the list, and every Monday morning an email update will go to City staff to show progress made thus far.

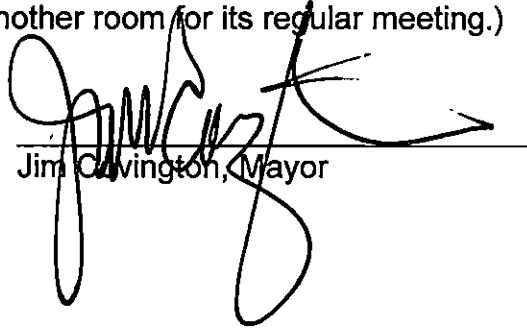
BEDC Board Member Robert Dominguez asked if most of the company's work is for municipalities or retailers, and how long they continue their effort after the initial analysis is done. Mr. Wilhite indicated they don't do any work with retailers, with 90% of their work for municipalities and the remaining for private developers. He added the proposed contract would be for 90-120 days. Mr. Dominguez asked how the information is disseminated, and Mr. Wilhite stated they communicate it to identified retailers or however the City chooses. They stimulate the lead and if it becomes a conversation, then it is turned over to the appropriate City resource. Mr. Listi stated he was compelled by the company's commitment to the implementation process and the fact that Catalyst remains a partner for an extended period after data is compiled.

The Mayor asked how long it will take to put the package together before moving into the implementation phase. Mr. Wilhite stated they typically allow 90-120 days for creation of a merchandising plan, then another 120 days for the implementation phase. Councilmember Peters asked how the IH-35 expansion project interfaces with this project, and Mr. Wilhite stated it won't change the company's approach with retailers, but it may change the conversations with companies. Mayor Pro Tem Grayson asked about the company's success with similar sized communities, and Mr. Wilhite indicated the City of Red Oak, south of Dallas, is a good example of a city Catalyst has recently assisted.

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In closing, Ms. O'Banion praised the City's successes and diligence in putting the Strategic Plan into action, and stated she is excited about looking at the opportunity for solutions to some of the challenges Belton faces. Mr. Baker stated he believes this is a reasonable and aggressive step to take and will be up to the City Council and BEDC/ Chamber Boards to consider moving forward. Ms. Grayson commented as the Belton Tomorrow Plan indicates, the City/BEDC/Chamber do not have an identified retail advocate, so this approach may represent a way to get started and see what happens thereafter. The City Manager agreed it is a missing component and remains a challenge, and hiring Catalyst may be an interim step to achieve what was recommended in the Plan.

There being no further business, the Mayor adjourned the City Council meeting at 6:15 p.m. (The BEDC Board relocated to another room for its regular meeting.)



Jim Covington, Mayor

ATTEST:



Connie Torres, City Clerk