



City Council Economic Development Subcommittee

MINUTES

Conference Room A
City Hall, 501 Primrose Road – Burlingame, California
Friday, September 21, 2018 – 9:00 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Members Present: Council Member (CC) Beach and Vice Mayor (VM) Colson

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Economic Development Specialist (EDS) Cleese Relihan, Finance Director Carol Augustine, and Community Development Director (CDD) Kevin Gardiner

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Potential Tools and Incentives for Business Attraction:

EDS Relihan presented information on various programs other communities have implemented to attract businesses. He presented a memo that provides a list of things the City already does to help with business attraction.

Subcommittee members suggested that there are larger market forces at work with commercial and retail space, and that providing \$5,000-\$10,000 incentives to businesses may not make a significant difference, particularly for Burlingame Avenue. However there was interest in the San Leandro Awning, Sign and Paint Program example provided with the memo, with subcommittee members suggesting that such an approach could be useful for Broadway.

EDS Relihan mentioned that the Broadway BID provides grants of up to \$500 for awning repairs. Subcommittee members agreed new or repaired awnings and paint can be effective, particularly for Broadway. EDS Relihan suggested he could draft a façade improvement program.

Subcommittee members recalled that in a previous Economic Development Subcommittee meeting there had been discussion to have the City allocate \$50,000 for improvements. Given that a nice sign can cost \$10,000, the thinking is \$10,000 should be the grant target. The City could issue a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for grant applications for façade improvements, seating, or signage, up to \$10,000 per bid. The application would require a budget and schematics of the proposed improvements. Grants could also be considered for major maintenance items such as awning cleanings.

The intent would be for the grants to help the businesses, rather than the landlords, and that the availability of funding could help attract and retain businesses. It would be an open bid process with a rating system. Subcommittee members suggested a draft score sheet be developed and reviewed with the full City Council to get consensus and direction. The program should be coming from the whole City Council, rather than the Economic Development Subcommittee. The goal would be to get the program prepared by the end of the year, and implement the NOFA in January.

Subcommittee members also suggested the proposal be reviewed by the City Attorney, particularly to ensure fairness and avoid favoritism and conflicts of interest.

The direction from the Subcommittee was to summarize application criteria from other examples, and describe how they are scored. The proposal would be for grants to be provided in a reimbursement

arrangement to ensure the work gets done as promised. The program would be piloted on Broadway, and other areas could be considered in subsequent years if the program is successful.

Succession Planning for Businesses Being Sold:

EDS Relihan discussed how there have been a number of recent examples of business owners wanting to sell their businesses to others. He noted that his work is more involved with connecting brokers with tenants looking for spaces, rather than finding buyers for business opportunities.

In the staff report packet there was an example of a business succession checklist from a municipality in Alberta, Canada. It provides a to-do list for succession planning.

Subcommittee members said that they did not think the City should be in the business of succession planning. They provided direction that it would be sufficient if the City just provided a list of resources to businesses interested in succession planning.

CDD Gardiner asked if there is a website that allows businesses to list their business opportunities for sale. EDS Relihan noted that websites such as LoopNet typically list spaces for sale or lease, rather than business opportunities.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Bring the discussion of commercial recreation uses on Burlingame Avenue to the full City Council for direction.
- Interest in considering allowing condominium conversions of small apartment buildings as a means for providing homeownership opportunities to a wider range of incomes. Would like to see what conversion policies other municipalities have. *(Per City Manager: This issue would be outside the scope of the Economic Development Subcommittee but could be discussed at the full Council level.)*
- Consideration of having a discussion of a City-mandated minimum wage. Other communities such as San Mateo, Belmont, and Redwood City have adopted minimum wages. The County may propose a countywide minimum wage, and Burlingame would need to decide whether to opt in or opt out.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 10:21 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Gardiner
Community Development Director