



City Council Economic Development Subcommittee

MINUTES (DRAFT)

Conference Room A

City Hall, 501 Primrose Road – Burlingame, California
Wednesday, May 13, 2020 – 8:15 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Members Present: Vice Mayor Ann O'Brien Keighran, Councilmember Ricardo Ortiz

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: City Manager (CM) Lisa Goldman, Community Development Director (CDD) Kevin Gardiner, Economic Development Specialist (EDS) Joseph Sanfilippo, Senior Civil Engineer (SCE) Andrew Wong, Sustainability Coordinator (SC) Sigalle Michael

Members of the Public Present: Terry Horn, Angela Pace (Blue Line Pizza), Jenny Kelleher (President of DBID), Tina Pierinelli (My Little Nail Shop), Ryan Guibara, Travel Wizards, Riyad Salma

READ AND APPROVE MINUTES FROM APRIL MEETING

Approved.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Discussion of COVID-19 Impacts on Small Business

EDS Sanfilippo introduced the topic.

CM Goldman noted the City Council budget study session for May 13 and notes City revenues have declined, primarily from hotel and business closures. Private business closures are also resulting in layoffs and declines in sales tax revenue.

CM Goldman explained that San Mateo County's Health Orders are more restrictive than the State of California's, and Burlingame businesses must follow the County orders. She noted that curbside pickup may be allowed soon, but dine-in restaurants are not likely to be allowed until a later phase.

San Mateo County is not reaching thresholds set by Governor Newsom to reopen as the situation currently stands. Nursing homes are especially struggling, but all ages are susceptible to COVID-19.

Burlingame Ave Closure

Angela Pace of Blue Line Pizza commented that she believes consumer confidence will not support an Avenue closure and would be detrimental to business. She noted curbside pickup will be more popular than dining in due to fears of infection. She alternatively proposed that parking spaces should instead be changed to curbside pickup entirely.

Commercial broker Terry Horn of Horn and Sons inquired how much of the Avenue would be closed, and for how long, etc. CM Goldman noted that this is still being discussed, but mentioned that there are several logistical issues to consider, including: ensuring cars do not get blocked in the shutdown area; fire lane access becomes difficult; how restaurants adapt to allow for sanitation (determining if customers can use indoor restrooms, etc.); cleaning streets of excess waste, etc. She noted that a party atmosphere/gathering spots must not occur, so delineators and limitations to household groups may help.

Jenny Kelleher, President of the Downtown Business Improvement District (DBID), noted that there is a goal to future-proof businesses due to ever-evolving ideas. She believes the idea of safe streets is to promote social distancing and simultaneously allow for survivability. She noted worldwide success in implementation of pedestrian streets, noting a 12-25% average increase in sales.

Ms. Kelleher did, however, acknowledge that many people are not all following the protocols. The DBID's tentative proposal is to shut all of Burlingame Ave for the entire summer to prevent crowds and make it seem like "normal life on the Ave", in an effort to discourage a festive atmosphere that would generate crowds.

Ms. Kelleher mentioned that a possible police presence may help with enforcement of face coverings or to restrict entry by those not following protocols. She agreed that delineated seating would likely be necessary.

She proposed that the initiative should be ambitious and noted a desire to make the area very pedestrian friendly. For example, no bikes or scooters on the Avenue, but rather install bike racks at the ends of the street.

Ms. Pace questioned the goal of closing to serve as an attraction to the street. Ms. Kelleher reiterated that it is simply to allow for safe shopping and dining to satisfy social distancing requirements.

Ms. Pace said she envisions tables outside of business frontages, with walkways designated for pedestrians on the street. She noted that very few tables will actually fit in a business's available sidewalk space, so for many it will likely not be worth opening. This could also reinforce negative customer confidence.

Ms. Pace also mentioned there may be logistical problems for businesses hiring additional staff (specifically, food runners for curbside pickup outside the closure's boundaries). Ms. Kelleher noted that businesses in other areas are experimenting with pre-ordering food and "food runners."

Ms. Pace also acknowledged a concern about lost street parking. She mentioned that curbside pickup customers may be negatively impacted by being forced to park further away from a business.

CM Goldman suggested Ms. Kelleher survey the entire DBID membership to gather opinions about a Burlingame Ave closure. Ms. Kelleher promoted the DBID's Facebook group for business owners and

mentioned that is a good way to stay in touch with the Board. The survey will include questions about curbside pickup, transportation, etc.

Vice Mayor O'Brien asked if the closure has support from the DBID Board, and Ms. Kelleher noted unanimous approval for supporting the measure from those who attended the last meeting. CDD Gardiner suggested that certain blocks may benefit from closure more than others, depending on survey results.

Councilmember Ortiz noted that there will always be pros and cons to a closure, but he supports a survey to push the initiative forward. He mentioned additional support from people that he has spoken to, but potentially closing specific blocks as CDD Gardiner mentioned.

SC Michael suggested a proposal to have a specific drive-through area for designated runners for businesses.

Riyad Salma noted his tenants' support for the closure.

Councilmember Ortiz noted many businesses have access through their back entrances for curbside pickup, which may help even if streets are closed.

Future Agenda Topics

The Subcommittee hopes to discuss the results of the survey at the next meeting, but noted that a special meeting would be preferable so that a closure could be examined by the full City Council at the earliest opportunity.

Miscellaneous Discussion

CM Goldman inquired about any businesses that received Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) funds. Councilmember Ortiz noted that many smaller businesses actually got funded in the second round, which was reiterated by Mr. Horn and Mr. Salma.

Vice Mayor O'Brien questioned if businesses will be able to extend hours of service because they must allow fewer customers to comply with social distancing. CDD Gardiner mentioned that Conditional Use Permits (CUP) used to specify hours of operation, but more recently, CUPs have not included hours of operation to allow greater flexibility in business operations.

Action Items

- Ms. Kelleher will survey the DBID members to gather their opinions on a Burlingame Ave closure.

FUTURE AGENDA TOPICS

- June 10, 2020 - Discuss Burlingame Ave closure survey results

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 9:19 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Sanfilippo
Economic Development Specialist