

Business Development Commission

MEETING MINUTES

APPROVED

MEETING DATE: Thursday, February 25, 2016
LOCATION: City Hall
CALLED TO ORDER: 8:07 AM
MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:09 AM
NEXT MEETING: Thursday, March 24, 2016

Name	Present	Absent
Pat Richards, Chair	X	
William Alverson	X	
Tim Eichholz		X
Pam Neihaus	X	
Rebecca Now	X	
Chalegne O'Brien		X
Mike Pincus	X	
Nicole Roach		X
Vacancy		
Mayor Gerry Welch, Council Liaison	X	
Mara Perry, Staff Liaison	X	
Joan Jadali, Staff Liaison	X	

Also in attendance:
Fran Sudekum – Administrative Support

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve the January minutes was made by Mike Pincus, seconded by William Alverson, unanimously approved.

Opening a WG Business Sub-Committee

A draft of the new brochure on opening a business in Webster Groves was handed out along with examples of what the City of Kirkwood and Maplewood use. The Sub-Committee felt the new brochure should be kept simple and easy to use with more detail available online. A timeline of the steps involved would be very helpful; a sequence to follow. It was felt a reference should also be included on how opening a business in a Historic District may affect the process. Commission members were asked to read over the draft and give input to Mike Pincus and Gerry Welch prior to the next meeting. Once completed, the brochure will be available at the City's Customer Service Desk as well as on the City website.

Pat Richards and Gerry Welch were invited to attend the January Old Webster Trade Association meeting as representatives of the BDC. Pat and Gerry shared with Commission members the views expressed by business owners at that meeting on the pitfalls of opening a business in Webster Groves. Some of the common views expressed revolved around issues with signage, the long timeframe it took to move along the process, and fines. Since Old Webster is a Historic District, signage has additional parameters placed upon it and was one of the contributors to the negativity and length of the process. A suggestion was made to review the signage ordinance to see if streamlining the historic piece was a possibility. Another suggestion was for business owners to engage the City in the process at the front end which doesn't always happen. The use of a liaison at the City for the business owner was another possible suggestion to help with the process; it would be

especially helpful to business owners whose landlords are not engaged in the process. Changing the perspective of the business owner to view dealings with the process as “kinder, gentler” would be a positive.

PR Sub-Committee Update

The goal of the PR Sub-Committee is promote events and happenings, not create them. The mailer is one of the vehicles to do that. One of the messages in the spring mailer is the Shop Local theme and keeping it going all year long not just a focus on Small Business Saturday in November. The Sub-Committee is looking for ways to address the perennial problem of getting content input for the mailers. They are looking to Commission members for help in solving this problem. Mara Perry inquired what the content deadline is for the fall mailer so she can request input from the various business districts. The content deadline for the fall mailer is July.

Shop Local – Shop Small – Shop Webster

Various aspects of the “Shop Local” window clings and signage were discussed so the project can move forward.

- The Farmers’ Market is also considering producing “Farmers’ Market” window clings. The Shop Local window clings could potentially include other line items under its main heading for various “community” items such as the Farmers’ Market, Art & Air, etc.
- Large window clings could be used in empty store fronts to attract businesses to the space.
- How does the signage code affect the use of window clings? Mara will check to see if sections of the code could be used to cover the types of Shop Local window clings discussed. A 3’ X 5’ sign may be ok for the empty store fronts, but Mara will verify; it can only take up 20% of the window. Temporary signage is only for 30 days
- The PR Sub-Committee will price out a 3’ X 5’ window cling using the Shop Local logo that was used on the over-the-street banners.

One of the over-the-street Shop Local banners was destroyed by the wind in a recent storm and will have to be replaced.

Store-Front Historical Plaques

Several questions need to be answered to move forward with the historical plaque idea.

- Pat Richards spoke with M. Loesch Engraving in Old Webster and they can create the plaques, but need parameters first in order to work up a cost.
- Would the plaques need to be reviewed by the ARB? Mara will check.
- Who would pay for the plaques, the business or the landlord?
- Are there any streetscape type grants available to pay for the plaques? Mara stated that Paul Verheyen, Directory of Public Works, pursues streetscape-type grants, but none of them are for “beautification” so that avenue would not be available.
- Should this project be handled by the BDC? It really falls under the Historic Preservation Commission’s (HPC) purview. The project will be handed off to the HPC.

New Business Openings

- A new business is opening in Old Webster in the former Red Lead location – DelveMIY.
- A new business is opening in Old Orchard in the former The Clover location – The Design House.

ADJOURNED

Meeting adjourned at 9:09 AM.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, March 24, 2016 at 8:00 AM – City Hall.