

**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
SMALL BUSINESS ADVOCACY COMMITTEE (SBAC)**

October 16, 2020

10:00 am

**Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance:**

The meeting was called to order at 10:08 a.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, roll call was taken, and a quorum was established. Economic Development staff present included, Ms. Alejandra Lopez, Director; Ms. Samantha Diaz, Interim EDD Coordinator; Ms. Shuchi Nagpal, Interim EDD Administrator; Ms. Amy Contreras, EDD Manager; and Ms. Monica Flores, Sr. Administrative Assistant. Additional City staff present included, Ms. Christina Ramirez, City Attorney’s Office; and Mr. Norbert Dziuk, Finance.

**Roll Call:**

Siew Pang, District 1	Present	District 6	Vacant
Jade McCullough, District 2	Present	Irene Chavez, District 7	Absent
District 3	Vacant	Donovon Rodriguez, District 8	Present
Juanita Sepulveda, District 4, Chair	Present	Steven Gonzales, District 9	Present
Veronica Morales, District 5	Present	Roy Schaufele, District 10	Present
Melanie Tawil	Absent		

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** There were no citizens signed up to speak.

**1. Approval of Minutes**

Discussion and action to approve the minutes from the September 25, 2020 SBAC meeting. Mr. Schaufele called for a motion to approve and Mr. Rodriguez seconded the motion. The committee voted to approve the minutes as presented.

**2. Individual Items**

**Briefing and possible action on Small Business Commission Survey- Presentation made by Ms. Shuchi Nagpal, Economic Development, Interim EDD Administrator**

Ms. Nagpal reviewed the results and outcomes of the Small Business Commission SASpeakUp Campaign held in January 2019. City Council submitted a Council Consideration Request (CCR) proposing creation of a new Small Business Advisory Commission. The request suggested the commission be comprised of eleven (11) members appointed by the Mayor and City Council to advise on policy issues that may affect small businesses unrelated to the SBEDA Ordinance. Economic Development Department (EDD) launched the SASpeakUp Campaign with assistance from the Government and Public Affairs (GPA) Department and feedback from the SBAC committee, to ask small businesses how they interact with other city departments, if they were in favor of creating a new Small Business Commission, and further, to specify in what capacity they would like to participate on that commission. Ms. Nagpal reviewed the

survey design and engagement process that EDD staff created per the suggestions and feedback collected from SBAC members which focused on engaging with businesses and organizations that typically do not interact with EDD such as neighborhood organizations, retail microbusinesses and churches. EDD also worked with several other city departments to distribute the survey and utilize their communications to directly reach out to residents. EDD worked diligently with all council district offices and partner organizations to identify any business related/membership events in January and February 2020 and were able to engage with 751 Trade Organizations, Chambers, and resource partners. EDD staff also attended 34 events in-person, including the Bexar County SMWVBE event that had 5,000 businesses in attendance. The small business resource fair hosted by EDD on February 11th was attended by 220 attendees and 17 resource partners with panelists from the local business community answering questions on topics such as legal services, human resources, and how to do business with the city.

Ms. Nagpal reviewed the survey results, which included a total of 1,348 survey responses, to include demographics, race, ethnicity, and number of employees. A heat map also displayed the outreach efforts and survey responses across all council districts. The survey results show that 95% of businesses believe what the City does affects small businesses and 80% of survey participants were interested in the creation of a new small business commission.

The Small Business Office also researched other cities to review the practices from Austin, Dallas, Houston, Phoenix, San Diego, San Francisco and San Jose, and summarized the activities of their committees/boards to include: number of members, composition, term limits and the department managing the committee/board. Based on the research and survey results, the Small Business Office is recommending creation of a new Small Business Commission to the City Council and to rename the existing Small Business Advocacy Committee (SBAC) to SBEDA Advisory Board to continue the current responsibilities under the SBEDA Ordinance.

The new commission would be an Advisory Board to review upcoming city policies, regulations and issues affecting small businesses and provide recommendations to City Council and Mayor. EDD is also recommending that the Small Business Commission be composed of 15 at-large voting members selected through an application process with confirmation by EWDC and the City Council. The Commission representation to include:

- 2 Business Professional/Trade organizations
- 2 Non-profit Small Service-Provider organizations
- 4 Small Business Owners with less than 10 employees
- 4 Small Business Owners with 10-50 employees
- 3 Small Businesses representing target industries

Mr. Schaufele asked how the 15 new members will be selected to ensure the entire City and the districts are represented. Ms. Nagpal stated that EDD is in process of collecting feedback from SBAC and the Economic & Workforce Development Committee and will be providing recommendations on the process at a later stage. Ms. Lopez clarified that there are a variety of businesses interested in providing feedback, and based on the request from City Council, a model would be considered to address the feedback received and the size of businesses that will be included as representation. It will be challenging to be district specific, but in order to provide City Council the flexibility to choose from a larger applicant pool, an at-large recommendation is being presented. Mr. Schaufele stated that due to the uniqueness

of San Antonio every district should have representation and urged caution to have proper distribution throughout all the areas. Ms. Sepulveda asked if the City will be looking from the perspective of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and will selection process meet the needs of the committee. Ms. Nagpal stated that the Boards and Commission process has been revamped by the City's Equity department and representation from every demographic is very important to the city. Ms. Ramirez clarified that there is a policy initiative to encourage participation from all classifications but there are no requirements placed on the Boards and Commissions applications.

Mr. Rodriguez inquired about which city department will oversee the new commission and whether there will be a request for additional staff resources to manage the duties. Ms. Lopez stated that the CCR mentioned the commission to be managed by the City Auditors Office, but this ultimately was not recommended as the City Auditor's role is to facilitate government accountability through fact-based, independent, objective assessments of city programs, activities, and functions, and staffing a board and providing input in city's policies and operational procedures may compromise the City Auditors Office's ability to later independently review and audit those same programs and may create conflict of interest. Based on the research, EDD is assuming that City Council will charge the Economic Development Department to manage the Small Business Commission activities and continue with the staff on hand. As part of the intent of creating this commission is to hear the concerns from small business owners when different departments are considering new policies, they will be managing the content along with EDD. Mr. Rodriguez reiterated that he hopes there will be additional staff as he doesn't see the commission being successful without additional staff. Mr. Rodriguez also had some questions regarding the workforce initiative and chose to submit those questions via an email to receive responses by city staff. No other feedback or input was provided by the SBAC members to be conveyed at the EWDC meeting.

**Briefing and discussion on the Central Vendor Registry Reverification Process- Presentation made by Ms. Samantha Diaz, Interim Small Business Coordinator, EDD**

Ms. Diaz presented an update on the city's annual Central Vendor Registry (CVR) reverification process. She provided background information on the Central Vendor Registry along with benefits to Small, Minority, and Women-Owned Businesses (SMWBEs) as well as to the City of San Antonio. She reviewed the SBEDA ordinance requirement which states that all registered vendors are required to update their online profiles within 72 hours of any change and also confirm their interest in performing work for the City of San Antonio on an annual basis. Typically, EDD staff works with the Finance department from August to - October to send email notices, letters and conduct phone calls to validate the information provided by vendors on the San Antonio Electronic Procurement System (SAePS). This year, due to the pandemic, there has been a strain our local SMWBE community as well as the EDD staff. For this reason, EDD recommends not to conduct the annual CVR reverification in 2020 and resume the process in 2021. Furthermore, as part of the disparity study process next year, EDD is asking the SBAC and the community to consider a future amendment to the SBEDA Ordinance that requires CVR reverification to be updated every two (2) years instead of annually. Ms. Diaz reviewed the advantages for the community and the City of San Antonio considering the impacts of COVID-19 and presented the data analysis which showed that while the CVR reverification process is important, the impact on the data and availability of SMWBEs is minor and should occur every two (2) years.

Ms. Sepulveda agreed with moving the process to every two (2) years and was sympathetic to the effects of the pandemic on the business community and EDD staff. She also inquired how the new guidelines

would affect procurement of the Job Order Contract. Ms. Nagpal stated that it would not affect the Job Order Contract solicitation and/or availability and it will be released on schedule. Mr. Schaufele agreed to the change as well. Ms. Morales stated that updating vendor information every two years is reasonable and would be consistent with normal functions of a small business. Mr. Gonzales and Ms. McCullough also agreed with the new guidelines. Ms. Sepulveda advised the committee to review the information provided by EDD staff further and ask questions in written format.

### **3. Staff Updates and Board Member Comments**

1. Hosted by Maestro Entrepreneur Center: Business Certifications to Help you Succeed. Webinar Wednesday! October 21, 2020 @ 11:00 a.m. Representative from the South-Central Texas Regional Certification Agency (SCTRCA). Learn directly from business experts on relevant topics. [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/6115955244791/WN\\_2jlp3l4lR-2di7FWNYYkQ](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/6115955244791/WN_2jlp3l4lR-2di7FWNYYkQ)
2. Hosted by LiftFund: Business Resource “Coffee Hour”. Thursday, October 22, 2020 @ 3:00 p.m. Join Dr. Shantana Robinson (Dr. Bridge Builder) and Myrna Galan on Thursday as they answer business related COVID questions. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/business-resource-coffee-hour-tickets-124122091517>
3. Hosted by CPS Energy: Virtual People First Community Fair. Tuesday, October 27, 2020. District 9 Representation, topics include: FlexPOWER Bundle, Rate Advisory Committee, Utility Assistance & Customer Programs. Learn more: <https://www.cpsenergy.com/en/about-us/community/upcoming-events.html>.
4. Hosted by LaunchSA: Helping Your Site Become Visible in Search (Launch Online Series) November 3, 2020 @ 1:30-3:30 p.m. Twelfth session of the Launch Online series for small businesses looking to move or grow operations in the digital space. In this session you will learn the basics of Search Engine Optimization to help customers find you through various search engines. <https://launchsa.org/event/helping-your-site-become-visible-in-search-launch-online-series/>
5. Maestro Entrepreneur Center is coordinating a PPE Supply Pick-Up for Small Businesses & Nonprofits. October 29, 2020 @ 4:00-6:00 p.m. at the Maestro Center located at 1811 S. Laredo St., SA, TX 78207, for more information visit <https://maestrocenter.org/buy-local-grow-sa-overview/>

### **PENDING AGENDA ITEMS & COMMITTEE DISCUSSION**

Ms. Nagpal shared that EDD received feedback for the Significant Business Presence criteria during the Economic & Workforce Development Committee meeting. Two organizations submitted letters expressing their input. Letters from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) were shared at the meeting. The letters have been submitted to the City Clerk’s office for public comment. Ms. Lopez shared that the information on these letters is being provided as an update to keep the SBAC members apprised, but this topic is not open for discussion. Ms. Sepulveda asked if the letters were allowed to be distributed. Ms. Ramirez replied that it was acceptable to share the letters with committee members.

**Pending Agenda items:**

- Review of Liftfund Low Interest Buy Down Program
- Mentor Protégé Program update
- Upcoming Disparity Study
- Upcoming November SBAC election process

**Adjournment**

The SBAC Chair entertained a motion to adjourn. Mr. Schauffele moved, seconded by Ms. Morales. The meeting was adjourned at 11:19 a.m.