City of San Antonio

Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	19-7285
Type:	Staff Briefing - Without Ordinance
	In control: Economic and Workforce Development Committee
On agenda:	10/1/2019
Title:	A briefing on the proposed Geekdom Incubator, Civic Tech Division Project. [Carlos J. Contreras III, Assistant City Manager; Alejandra Lopez, Interim Director, Economic Development]
Sponsors:	
Indexes:	
Code sections:	
Attachments:	

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result

DEPARTMENT: Economic Development

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Alejandra Lopez

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City-wide

SUBJECT: Briefing on the proposed Geekdom Incubator, Civic Tech Division Project.

SUMMARY:

The purpose of this item is to provide the Economic and Workforce Development Committee with an overview of the development of the Geekdom Incubator and its Civic Tech Division project with the City of San Antonio.

BACKGROUND:

Geekdom is the largest coworking space in Texas and has been in San Antonio for nearly 8 years. Since its creation, Geekdom has helped support and fuel the downtown technology and entrepreneur communities. Each year, Geekdom provides programs and support services to independent entrepreneurs, students, veterans, and startup companies to foster entrepreneurship, tech talent, and economic development. This includes programs like the CivTechSA program launched in partnership with the City of San Antonio's Office of Innovation.

In response to the growing number of entrepreneurs and startups with innovative ideas in need of support, Geekdom has decided to create the Geekdom Incubator Program. The Incubator will help ideation- and early-stage teams and/or companies gain market and product validation through mentorship, education, and business

support services.

In October of 2018, the City approached Geekdom about the need to support teams or ideas that were generated from the CivTechSA program outside of its 16-week Residency program and others, including independent entrepreneur- and/or student-generated ideas or solutions.

Since then, Geekdom has identified and maintained communication with three teams and developed programming to support a 12-month Civic Tech innovation division of its Incubator and made steps to receive an economic development grant from the City of San Antonio. The grant funds would support up to 6 teams over a two-year period for business development and support, product development and support, as well as access to entrepreneurial resources and mentorship in San Antonio. Part of the Civic Tech Division's mission is to work with relevant City departments and potentially create products or solutions for the City to partner with and/or procure if applicable.

ISSUE:

Collectively, the City and Geekdom have recognized the need to additionally support Civic Tech ideas and solutions that are developed in response to or outside of the CivTechSA program and its Residency.

The Economic Development Department recommends funding an amount not to exceed $250,000 from the Economic Development Incentive Fund (EDIF) to support this program, as it directly promotes entrepreneurial development, spurs innovation, facilitates the commercialization of local technology and intellectual property, and has the potential to grow startup companies in the information technology industry. The Geekdom Incubator will provide those necessary support services, education, workspace, and mentorship for 12-months to qualifying Civic Tech teams and or companies.

Relevant City departments and mentors will work with the teams in a partnership capacity as they develop proof of concepts or products/services that have the potential to pilot or be procured by the City at the end of the 12-month period.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

This item is for briefing purposes only. The Innovation and Technology Committee reviewed the item on September 24, 2019, and recommended approval.