

**Small Business Advisory Council Meeting
December 10, 2008**

I. WELCOME

Call to order: 7:33 a.m.

Approval of November 12, 2008 Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Motion to approve November 12, 2008 meeting minutes.

ACTION: Motion seconded and carried.

Announcements

- Suzanne Vara is retiring January 30th and will be passing on some of her duties (including her liaison duties to the SBAC) to Alisa Cour, Tiffani Penson, and Mikal Shabaaz.
- Mary Leverette notified the SBAC of the Office of Sustainable Development's upcoming Green Building Policy that is available for public comment.

II. NEW BUSINESS

Amanda Fritz

Jackie Babicky-Peterson and EC

- Amanda specifically asked which would be the most appropriate association to work with to discuss issues regarding small business.
 - The SBAC made sure she understood that when you're talking to SBAC you're talking with small business owners.
 - Amanda will send a representative from her office once it is up and running.
- Amanda was confused about the role of SBAC compared with the other groups.
 - SBAC needs to make sure that we are clear about the image that we emit into the community.

Survey Results

Josiah Whitman and Andrew Frazier

- We received 13 out of 20 survey responses.
 - Andrew brought 10 more surveys to close the gap.
- Membership will keep an eye on the number of members who have been in business between 4-10 years because of the lower numbers in that category.
 - Running a business is very different depending on the amount of years you've been in business.
- 10 of the 13 people who responded said that they share the same Mission Integrity of the SBAC.
 - This could be due to members not being familiar with the mission of the SBAC or the wording of the question.
 - **ACTION:** Eliminate discrepancies in branding outlets (make sure all wording is the same).
 - **ACTION:** Include the SBAC's mission in each agenda.
- We have some notable gaps in professional expertise as well as some areas that are heavy.
 - Membership should be wary of bringing any more management consultants into the group.
 - Membership should look at recruiting in the clusters that are focal points for the City (Mayor-Elect Adams as well as PDC and the other members of City Council).

- Membership should attempt to attract individuals with personal/professional expertise of tax structure, especially in the City of Portland.
- Chuck would like to see a listing of the expertise that is available in the SBAC.
 - The list of expertise came off of the subject matter expert list.
- Alma Flores: did you include a question about minority owned business or who are members of the NWSB.
 - Andrew: we did not but would like to very much.

Sarah Shaoul: Prospective Member

Josiah Whitman

- Passed unanimously through membership committee.
- She runs a retail online and brick and mortar baby store.
 - She is a leader on Mississippi Business Association and has experience testifying before city council.
- There are national entities that make maps of business areas and Sarah led an effort to create business district maps on the much more local level.
- Has been a retailer in Portland for about 15 years.
 - Feels like she represents businesses who have a storefront.
 - Getting together with your business owners is very important.
 - Organizing businesses is incredibly difficult in every part of the city (she owns stores downtown, in southeast, and on Mississippi).
 - She spearheaded getting the Mississippi maps together and hired a marketing person for the district.
 - She also has a goal of getting property owners to be a part of the business districts.
- Jackie feels like one of the possible missions of the SBAC could be to encourage small businesses to collaborate on various levels. Sarah seems like she has lots of experience in this field – showing and teaching people how to do that – and is happy to have that kind of expertise here at the table.
- Sarah feels like a part of it is education as well. It is important to people in Portland to make our
 - However, small businesses become more insular the more stressed out they get.
 - Nobody ever wants to say how difficult things are doing.
 - Jackie is not sure how we will attack this issue: which committee will tackle this issue.
- Motion to approve Sarah as a member of SBAC.
 - **MOTION:** Motion to approve Sarah Shaoul as a member of the Small Business Advisory Council.
 - **ACTION:** Motion seconded and carried.
 - Welcome aboard, Sarah!

PortlandOnline

Laurel Butman

- Continuing to work with the communications committee to make sure that the SBAC presence on PortlandOnline is what it should be.
- As part of the coming stimulus package, Commissioner Adams and the rest of Council are sponsoring a new website that will offer a funnel toward resources for businesses (and people).
- PortlandOnline is also about to refurbish the website and will look to all of the stakeholder groups for input.
 - The mayor-elect will have his fingerprints on this and so Laurel does not want to step on those toes, but everyone is concerned with capturing the interests of those who are using this resource.
 - **ACTION:** The SBAC would like to be involved with this development.

- Eva: the website needs to be friendly enough for techies as well as those who barely know how to use a mouse.
 - Also, there is very little awareness of the existence of the website in general.
 - **ACTION:** Eva offers certain expertise from the techie community.
- Alma: Not many people know about the distinction between business and economic development.
 - PDC is the economic development arm of the City of Portland so there should be a dropdown tab for that organization.
- Steve: are there comments about the bill of rights or are people signing up to receive news about business information?
 - Laurel: not yet.
- Sarah: could there be an insert with the business license fee that markets PortlandOnline? Because it's a resource that every small business could find useful.
 - Jeff Sandberg: include this in the water bill?
- Suzanne: when a new business forms in the city, they get a new business packet that directs people to the website.
- Jon Turino: include the brand of PortlandOnline on the *outside* of envelopes coming from the city.
 - This is widely applauded by the group.

Plastic Bag Fee/Economic Stimulus Package

Commissioner Sam Adams

- Over the next 130 days, the Adams team will be moving very quickly on a few things, so they may not be thoroughly vetted with the SBAC but they will be *very public* so you will have an opportunity to get involved.
- The city is preparing and responding to the national economic trends (let's be frank, national recession).
 - Portland has done better than other regions, but as someone who has worked passionately on economic development, business success, and individual and family prosperity, Sam recognizes that now is not the time for beating up on the city.
 - There will be lots of reforms coming over the next two years. The budget process will be amended, which will help us better prioritize and make our budgets more effective.
 - We are cutting budgets and started cutting before the forecasts were in. We have experience in these recessions, which helps us know how to respond.
 - The most volatile funds coming to the city are the business license fees.
- Sam will be working on three priorities as mayor.
 - Reduce the 47% dropout rate (8th graders who do not finish high school in 4 years) by half.
 - Improve conditions for the working poor.
 - Make Portland the most sustainable city even during the coming growth.
 - Putting together cabinets for each of these areas.
 - These are big groups full of every stakeholder group within the local economy.
- Part of making Portland the most sustainable city is to not rest on our laurels.
 - We are not moving forward with the plastic bag fee at this time, but Sam has every intention of doing so at some point.
 - We ARE moving forward with a 6-8 month highly intensive education campaign.
 - Require signage and marketing for businesses.
 - Take account of pilot programs that have been spearheaded with some businesses in the community.

- New Seasons improved to about 25% reusable bag usage.
 - If we can improve usage to around 60-70% through education, then great!
- Mark Hope: do you believe that the safe, sound, and green initiative will resurface? How will funding for infrastructure develop?
 - We're making federal asks as well as figuring out how to restructure transportation funding at the state level.
- Eva Schweber: the Opensource and general technology sector are finding trouble sustaining themselves through the recession.
 - They are coming together to work together and support each other in this economic downturn.
 - The Software Association of Oregon (SAO) is a big player in making this happen.
 - **ACTION:** Eva will provide more information regarding
- How is recruitment going for business in the city of Portland.
 - Sam: I have about 5 multi-million dollar projects coming down the pike.
 - Vestas: providing new jobs and a huge LEED-certified space.
 - Headquarter Hotel: make it the greenest hotel in the world.
 - This will not propel Portland into the top-tier of convention cities, but it adds value to our city. Since he has been a commissioner, 600 rooms have been added within the city.
 - Chuck: if this is a good deal, why isn't the private industry willing to do it?
 - Sam: it's the same reason that we're giving 12.5 million dollars to Vestas to come here. Sam will not spend a penny more than the city has to – most all of the money the city will commit (4 millions dollars and the land) will come back from the hotel industry itself.
 - Sam's rule of thumb will be to see a 3-5 year return on the investment.
 - Major League Soccer
 - 85-90 million dollars (building a stadium).
 - International sport.
 - Good team working on the project.
 - Will not rob from city services to pay for it. Must be a good business plan.
 - Put together a task force that has until the end of February to notify MLS about the Portland choice.
 - Steve: how have the Blazers helped our sports image?
 - It's been helpful that they are successful.
 - We have a competitive advantage in the sustainability industry.
 - If private industry can do it, why should the City do it? Re: the public toilets.
 - Actually, it was a partnership between the city and a small business that is doing the manufacturing. The city provided a subsidy but we will be paid back through taxes.
- Andrew Frazier: what are the biggest challenges to recruiting businesses to Portland?
 - Sam: it's the image that is proliferated about Portland being a bad place to do business. Portland is NOT a bad business community. There are obviously challenges that the business community faces, which exist everywhere, but Sam is committed to working on that front.
 - One hurdle is the taxes – we have a small group of people who are paying 80% of the business license fees. This needs to change.

- BLF/BIT reform will continue.
- Stimulus Package
 - First ever and all encompassing.
 - Jon Turino: we need to develop a strong PR campaign that Portland IS business friendly and counter some of the gloom and doom that is in the newspapers.
 - The city is undergoing a campaign starting in January: Portland is Better Together.
 - Sam is gathering all service providers to businesses to make sure that we are achieving maximum collaboration.
 - We are working with Greenlight Greater Portland to make sure that we have a Why Portland? Report, which will outline the benefits of doing business in Portland.

III. OLD BUSINESS

Presentation to Council: Annual Report

November 25th Bureau-Liaison Meeting

IV. COMMITTEE/WORKGROUP REPORTS

Membership

- The membership committee would like to start performing exit surveys.
 - Eva: has an existing exit survey from another organization.
 - Possible questions?
 - Suzanne: how relationships with the city liaisons could be improved.
 - Steve: whether they continue to be interested in the information that we circulate through SBAC and whether or not they would like to be an SME.

Communications

- Laurel will come today to speak about PortlandOnline.
 - We are transitioning from PDC website to PortlandOnline.
 - We will be able to list agendas for the committees and there are new tools that we will be able to access to continually update information about the SBAC.
- Steve sent Kent (of Anville Media) a one-sheet about the SBAC (including information about target market, mission statement, etc.)
 - Kent will come to the next committee meeting to discuss ways to improve our presence on the web.
- Communication plan will be presented next month.
- Continuing our relationships with all of the chambers and APNBA in regards to sending out our monthly news.
 - Right now the news is an attachment in the email but we would like it to become embedded in an email.
 - Jeff Baer: we should include OAME in our correspondence.
 - **ACTION:** include OAME and all relative organizations and bureaus in our correspondence.

Cost of Doing Business

- No meeting.
- Suggestion from the committee:
 - **ACTION:** include the areas of concern in the agenda every month as well as a list of all the members of the committee, their business, etc. as well as a list of the city members.

Small Business Development Workgroup

- No meeting.

Process Evaluation

- How does an ordinance come from being an idea to becoming an ordinance if there isn't a standard process?
 - Todd from the Parks department has joined our committee and is trying to help us be informed about how that comes to pass.
 - What we are most interested in is having an economic impact statement attached to policy going through city council.
 - The economic impact statement that is currently required only has the impacts related to city governance.
 - Hannah Kuhn: certain bureaus (Planning, maybe BDS) also performs regulatory impact statement, which try to, with citizen input, ask the 'impact' questions that matter to the community.
 - This might be a place to start with raising the profile of this process.
 - Jackie: any particularly people we should talk to?
 - **ACTION:** Hannah and Alma will work together to get this document to the SBAC.
- Attempting to make sure that the bill of rights does not fade into obscurity.
 - Front page of PortlandOnline business portal.
 - Develop some talking points regarding the bill of rights.
 - Chuck: hopefully a bill will be put through the state legislature.
 - A lot of momentum is coming from the fact that the city already adopted the bill of rights.
 - There are about ten legislators backing the bill from both sides of the aisle.
 - Eva: are these representatives coming from rural and urban parts of the state or are they largely representing metropolitan Portland?
 - Broad-based support would be very helpful in getting this kind of legislation passed.
 - **ACTION:** Chuck to report back on the diversity of supporters for this bill.
 - Kimberly: government relations in the city of Portland is putting together a package for the state that would directly impact the ability to do business in Portland.
 - **ACTION:** invite a representative from government relations to talk about this package.

V. NEXT MEETING

- January 14, 2008

Adjournment: 9:20 a.m.
