

CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
SMALL BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMISSION (SBAC)
Tuesday, January 11, 2022
10:30 a.m.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 10:41 a.m. by Chair Jeremy Roberts. A quorum was not established due to lack of quorum physically present. Economic Development staff present included, Ms. Brenda Hicks-Sorensen, EDD Director, Ms. Ana Bradshaw, EDD Assistant Director, Ms. Samantha Diaz, Economic Development Coordinator, Ms. Monica Flores, Small Business Liaison. Additional City Staff present include, Ms. Christina Ramirez, Assistant City Attorney.

Roll Call:

DISTRICT 1 APPOINTEE VACANT		DISTRICT 6 APPOINTEE Rick Tamfu	Present
DISTRICT 2 APPOINTEE VACANT		DISTRICT 7 APPOINTEE Katie Sirakos	Present
DISTRICT 3 APPOINTEE Judy Canales	Present	DISTRICT 8 APPOINTEE Sarah Shakil	Present
DISTRICT 4 APPOINTEE Juanita Sepulveda	Present	DISTRICT 9 APPOINTEE Jeremy Roberts	Present
DISTRICT 5 APPOINTEE Vickie Willoughby	Absent	DISTRICT 10 APPOINTEE Jim Hollerbach	Present
Mayoral Appointee Julissa Carielo	Present		

Briefing and Possible Action on the following items:

1. Approval of the minutes from the Small Business Advisory Committee meeting on November 17, 2021, November 29, 2021, and December 4, 2021.

Edits were suggested, but approval was not possible due to lack of quorum. Item was tabled for future meeting.

Public Comment:

There was no one from the public signed up to speak.

2. Discussion on Small Business Definition.

Ms. Ana Bradshaw briefed the commission on several small business definitions. Ms. Carielo stated that knowing that the size standard varies by every industry, it's hard to put a number on a small business. She would like to identify a starting point by first getting data on how many small businesses exist in San Antonio. Ms. Hicks-Sorensen stated that there is data out there to gather but most is not real time data as it can lag up to 2 years prior. Staff will continue identify other data sources which will be included in the strategic plan initiative data analysis. Ms. Carielo asked if the data from that was pulled to show the 38% business loss can be shared with the commission. Mr. Robert's asked to have that information available at a future meeting. Ms. Hicks-Sorensen

reiterated that with so many different definitions and the commission can determine different audiences depending on programs and needs. Ms. Sepulveda asked for further discussion on the 38% of small businesses affected and what definition was used to identify that 38% and what were the structures of the percentage being reflected. Ms. Hicks-Sorensen stated that data was provided by a City Councilmember and EDD has reached out requesting the background.

Ms. Sirakos added that she believes part of the data gathering study should include data from the Next Street study [San Antonio Ecosystem Assessment] as it includes valuable key fields. She requested an update on the proposed timeline of the strategic planning process, and any deadlines associated with requests for soliciting feedback from stakeholders in the commission's respective districts. Ms. Canales requested the number of small businesses per district, with a focus on microbusinesses. Mr. Tamfu stated he believes it will be difficult to have a precise definition, but the commission can have a set of descriptions with different parameters. Ms. Sirakos reiterated her request to have more data from Next Street, specifically data from 3–5-year range. Ms. Shakil agreed numbers need to be drilled down on more to be consistent. Mr. Hollerbach questioned how grant amounts were determined, using what data, and how many grants were awarded. Ms. Bradshaw answered that amounts were determined by staff in coordination with LiftFund, she agrees that moving forward grants need to be more targeted. Ms. Carielo also wants to see data by district, industry, and number of employees to determine microbusinesses. She agrees with continuing to use SBA standards moving forward. Mr. Robert's suggested the formation of a subcommittee to potentially work on analyzing this type of data and presenting it back to the commission.

3. Briefing on Loan Interest Buydown Program.

Ms. Bradshaw briefed the commission on the Loan Interest Buydown program, operated in partnership with LiftFund. The program provides 0% interest on loans between \$500 and \$50,000 for S/M/WBEs. Ms. Bradshaw reviewed the breakdown of loans as well as the distribution of funds from FY 2016- FY 2021. FY 2021 outcomes include, 35 loans administered total \$815K. Outreach of the program includes digital marketing, business, and community organizations, working with elected official and financial institutions. A few success stories were shared with the commission. Ms. Sirakos asked if LiftFund tracks referrals by partner agencies. Ms. Bradshaw replied that historically referrals have not been tracked but will now be tracked. Ms. Carielo asked if there is a possibility to lower the percentage associated with paying it back so that more loans can be given out. Ms. Bradshaw replied that due to the risk factor, that contributes to the high rates. Ms. Carielo asked if offering line of credits would be an option instead of loans. Ms. Bradshaw replied to it can be looking into further.

4. Small Business Advisory Commission Chair and EDD Staff Updates.

Ms. Hicks-Sorensen gave an update on ARPA, stating staff will present at the January 26 B Session. It is anticipated staff will present draft recommendations for allocation of funds based on community engagements results and continued input. City Council will consider all recommendations on February 3, 2022. An update was provided on the SA Ready to Work Advisory Board, there is an employer engagement subcommittee taking applications for the subcommittee, SBAC members are encouraged to apply if interested. Ms. Hicks-Sorensen discussed SBAC meeting schedule, recommending the committee meeting the 2nd Tuesday of every month beginning at 10:30 a.m. with the next meeting taking place February 8, 2022.

Future proposed agenda items include:

- ARPA funding
- Workforce Development
- Small Business Ecosystem to include Next Street briefing

- 2022 Bond
- Discussion on construction around small businesses

Mr. Roberts requested the draft proposed agenda be distributed to members at least 7-10 days out before publishing it. Ms. Carielo expressed concern with the request to have two meetings in January. Open discussion was had about room availability concerns, as well as the ability for staff to prepare with the requested frequency of meetings. Staff will continue to work with the Chair to address commission concerns about meeting timeline and proposed agenda items. A second January meeting was requested by the chair, and a Doodle poll will be sent out for member availability. Proposed agenda item is the proposed recommendation of allocation of ARPA funds. Ms. Hicks-Sorensen reminded the commission that the last time the item was brought to the table to attach a dollar amount to the five recommendations it was defeated and voted upon to not include a dollar amount. Staff will work with legal about specifics after an item has previously failed on a vote.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:32 p.m.