

Economic Opportunity Committee Meeting

January 11, 2022, 5:00 pm

(Meeting is being held online due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic)

Meeting Minutes

DRAFT*

*Minutes subject to change, and not official until approved by the Committee

Present:

Naomi Maisel
Gary Besser
Rene Colorado, Jr.
Majeid Crawford
Iris Lee
Susie McKinnon
Del Seymour
Pratibha Tekkey

Helen Bean, TLCBD Staff
Lorraine Lewis, TLCBD Staff
Alicia Seleska, TLCBD Staff

Absent:

Aashish Karkhanis
Wendie Yeung

1. Call to Order. Welcome and Introductions - Icebreaker

N. Maisel called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm; introductions and an icebreaker followed.

2. Subcommittee Share Out

Tenderloin Merchants Association

[Action: R. Colorado will send out a calendar invite to those who indicated they'd like to join the subcommittee.]

Workforce Development

G. Besser shared a couple ideas for future subcommittee focus areas: job boards and workforce development outreach to local city and county entities.

[Action: G. Besser will send out a calendar invite to the whole committee.]

Small Business

H. Bean reported the survey is finished at 51 respondents. They completed the business survey and an inventory of storefronts. Some surveys were conducted in person, but most were by phone. The people who responded were mostly those already familiar with TLCBD. They had a good geographic distribution among the Tenderloin. About 2/3 were restaurants, which means they were possibly over surveyed.

The top reason most respondents gave for opening in the Tenderloin was opportunity, with family connections second. They survived the pandemic mostly through grants and loans, and reduced costs through take-out and delivery. Most are family-owned and very small. A majority weren't looking to leave the Tenderloin. They would like more grants—not loans—and help with marketing or getting more catering gigs.

Most rely on walk-in business and some social media visibility. They mostly serve people in the Tenderloin or people who live/work nearby. They've dabbled in lots of kinds of social media, but don't have time or capacity to dedicate to using it and are more dependent on word of mouth, etc.. That makes them more vulnerable to the street conditions. Many were interested in getting together with each other to talk about businesses in the neighborhood. Most owners were women. They come from backgrounds all over the world. TLCBD should help them rely less on word of mouth, and help to build up their social media.

[Action: H.Bean and L. Lewis will send out the survey narrative and deck in the next week and present the deck at the next meeting.]

The program handed out holiday lights to about 50 businesses on Larkin and the surrounding area.

L. Lewis added that a huge future focus will be how to bring more traffic into the Tenderloin. Also, the organization put program goals together about 3 months ago. They'll be presenting the survey results to the Board, etc. and would like recommendations for other organizations to share with if anyone knows someone who would appreciate it.

H. Bean added that training will also be a focus with the next CDBG grant opportunity. They'll bring training to the businesses to accommodate schedules, etc.

[Action: L. Lewis will share the Economic Opportunity program's goals with the committee.]

3. Discussion Share Out

4. Discussion: Current Tenderloin Issue or Update

N. Maisel asked the committee members to share their feelings about the current Emergency Plan.

D. Seymour responded that many businesses ask him for help with tents outside. He suggests they create a partnership/relationship with the individuals—a hard-lined approach is not always needed.

L. Lewis shared that many survey respondents replied that they prefer not to (or don't have the skills to) engage in that kind of relationship building, and so offering something that would help achieve that work would be beneficial.

R. Colorado added that many small businesses have a hard enough time just paying their taxes and do not sign up to house/feed those on the street. He advocated for ambassadors to help maintain order and facilitate support. Many business owners and families don't want the drug use and selling right outside—they want more police to enforce.

H. Bean shared that based on her discussions during the survey process she feels that businesses don't have the time and energy to engage with those on the street.

G. Besser advised that there are 3 different, overlapping issues all across the country: crime, drug use, and mental health issues. There's not a single answer to all of them.

[Action: He recommended a set of talking points for ambassadors to use to encourage more community amongst the housed and unhoused.]

N. Maisel summed up that approaching everyone with compassion—business owners and those on the street—is a priority. She suggested creating something like a magnet with talking points to hand out to business owners.

L. Lewis shared that the Economic Opportunity program is planning an outreach to the businesses and could provide some of this information, but it really needs to be solidified. Most businesses that have left the neighborhood needed concrete change, and new businesses moving in need concrete help now.

5. Action: Approve November Minutes

MOTION: Review and approve the draft minutes of the November Meeting.

Moved by: G. Besser

Seconded by: R. Colorado

Abstained: none

Passed: yes

6. Close Meeting/Information Sharing: Announcements & Future Agenda Items

The meeting was adjourned at 6:14 pm.

Next Economic Opportunity Committee Meeting
Tuesday, March 8, 2022, 5:00 pm | Online - Zoom