

Business Development Commission (BDC)
MEETING MINUTES
APPROVED

MEETING DATE: Thursday, March 28, 2019
 LOCATION: City Hall
 CALLED TO ORDER: 8:07 AM
 MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:05 AM
 NEXT MEETING: Thursday, May 23, 2019, 2019

Name	Present	Absent
Jon Spiesman (Citizen at Large), Chair		X
Mike Pincus (Citizen at Large)	X	
Pam Neihaus, Vice Chair (Citizen at Large)	X	
Jennifer Starkey (Business Owner Rep.)	X	
Rebecca Now (Chamber of Commerce)	X	
Tim Delanty (Old Webster)	X	
Vacancy		
Vacancy		
Vacancy		
Frank Janoski, Council Liaison		X
Joan Jadali, City Manager Designee	X	
Mara Perry, Staff Liaison	X	

Also in Attendance
 Bud Bellomo – Council Member, City of Webster Groves
 Joe Fichter – Old Orchard Special Business District Commission Chair
 Fran Sudekum – Administrative Support

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A Motion to approve the January minutes was made by Tim Delanty, seconded by Jennifer Starkey and unanimously approved.

SUMMARY OF BUSINESS DISTRICTS

- All three business districts are finalizing their budgets for next year.
- Old Orchard’s streetscape project is moving forward getting everything prepped and ready for when the funding comes in. They are currently obtaining their necessary easements to move utilities
- Crossroads has resubmitted their streetscape project for federal funding.
- Many new businesses have opened up.
- New seasonal lamppost banners are in the works for both Old Webster and Old Orchard.
- Many events are planned, such as the Gazebo Series and numerous 5K runs.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Long-Term Street-Level Commercial Vacancies** – Commission members reviewed and discussed Jon Spiesman’s draft letter asking for input from the Business District Commissions on ideas to address long-term street-level commercial vacancies and determined that the audience should be to property owners instead. The list of long-term vacancies is down to a small number, but the locations are very visible. Numerous inquiries have been made by potential tenants but agreements with property owners have not occurred. Commission members would like to look at a potential draft letter to property owners about the issue at the next meeting.
- **BDC Engagement with Business Owners** – Commission members are looking to continue engagement with business owners and managers. Perhaps an Open House type meeting get participation and/or be helpful. Adding another meeting into very full schedules would have to be worthwhile and valuable to the attendee. Perhaps other methods should be pursued. Joe Fichter shared that the promotional cooperation among the District Commissions and sharing knowledge of what is going on in each District has been very helpful as most aren’t familiar with the various business organizations/districts/associations/commissions and how and what they do. Sharing safety and security issues among all was also discussed; perhaps using a quick text message application, such as GroupMe could be helpful.
- **BDC Commission Member Vacancies** – The BDC has three Commission Member open seats. Members were encouraged to seek out potential candidates.

NEW BUSINESS

- **BDC 2020 Budget** – Joan Jadali provided information on the proposed 2020 budget for the BDC (See Appendix A).
MOTION: Rebecca Now made a motion to approve the 2020 proposed BDC budget put forth by Joan Jadali. Pam Neihaus seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.
- **Business District Metrics** – Visible Store-Front Vacancies are down from 6.7% to 3.8%. For comparison, the regional vacancy rate is 5.2%.
- **Appointment and Oversight of Boards and Commissions Policy** – Joan Jadali wanted all to be aware of the changes to the re-appointment section of the Board and Commission Policy and the addition of a schedule for Commission Chair reports to City Council
- **Where Magazine** – Mara Perry was approached by Where Magazine for the City of Webster Groves to advertise in their publication. Where Magazine was unknown to all Commission Members. If the City were to do such advertising, Commission Members felt it would make more sense to do so in a well-known publication with a large circulation.

NEXT MEETING

May 23, 2019 at 8:00 AM at City Hall.

APPENDIX A