

AURORA BUSINESS ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of the Regular Meeting
Monday, August 15, 2022

Board Members Present:

Mr. Walls, Mr. Boyd, Ms. Fender, Mr. Fryberger, Ms. Horiuchi, Mr. Liles, Ms. Pace, Ms. Reding, Mr. Sarwal, and Ms. Woodson

Board Members Absent: Mr. Patel

Council Members Present: Mayor Mike Coffman

Staff Present: Elena Vasconez, Trevor Vaughn, Andrea Amonick, Cathy DeWolf, Nosh Tarachand, Commander Steve Wright, Michelle Teller, Jeff Edwards

Guest Presenters: Michelle Teller

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Walls called the meeting to order at 11:01 AM

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

July 25 Minutes - Mr. Walls moved without objection to approve, Ms. Reding Seconded

BAB BUDGET

Not reviewed or discussed at this meeting

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No comments

Mayor Mike Coffman

- Officers that recently graduated from the Academy conduct the FTO program wherein they accompany a senior officer. The attrition rate is high during this phase, but the department is ensuring that it is fully staffed.
- Direct Action and Response Team (DART) is a team initiated by Chief Oates, that focuses on patrol to look for people with outstanding significant warrants. The team does not engage in high-speed chases unless for more significant cases such as murder. The team locates individuals in stolen vehicles, tracks them down, and pins them in a location in order to arrest them. This program complements what the city is doing with mandatory minimum sentences for motor vehicle theft and mandatory sentences for failure to appear.
- The Public Safety Policy Committee will bring forward a proposal to aggregate the amounts for retail theft and raise the stakes from a misdemeanor to a felony. This effort emanated

from a meeting with the Havana Business District, APD, big-box retailers, and small retailers.

- The city ordered 30 pallet shelters for the unhoused population that will be displaced due to camping bans. There are only a few individuals taking advantage of these beds.

Mr. Walls mentioned that there is a tentative September Town Hall regarding retail theft. The previous meeting was well attended and got coverage. CBS 4 interviewed some Havana Businesses to talk about retail theft. They talked about steps taken by APD to streamline online reporting for business owners.

Mayor Coffman thanked Mr. Walls for initiating the meeting.

Ms. Pace expressed concern regarding the cost of increasing consequences for those doing nonviolent crimes. Longer incarceration periods and higher incarceration consequences will be a big cost for the city and its prisons. This will also be a societal cost given the difficulties of those previously incarcerated to integrate into society. She asked if Aurora is working on studies to understand the cost of increasing sentences for theft.

Mayor Coffman agreed that there is a cost. He mentioned that the state has been lowering penalties. He added that he agrees that first-time offenders and nonviolent crimes may use diversion programs to keep people out of incarceration. He stressed that there is a greater societal cost to letting habitual and violent offenders go. He said that if the city doesn't do anything about retail theft, then they will lose brick-and-mortar stores.

Ms. Pace asked if retail theft leads to violent theft.

Mayor Coffman stressed that there needs to be a rule of law to have a functioning economy. He said that for every day that habitual retail thieves are in prison, they are not stealing.

Ms. Pace said that it is a big expense to taxpayers to put people in prison.

Mayor Coffman said that he is willing to pay this price.

Mr. Walls commented that repeat offenders are targeted by this initiative, not first-time offenders. He said that they are at risk of losing several retailers in Aurora due to rampant retail theft. He said that this is a balance. He explained that they are doing the town halls to get input and have a conversation, rather than just laying down an ordinance.

Mr. Boyd mentioned that the ordinance may not apply to juveniles, since that is state controlled. He said that juveniles are the repeat offenders that they see at the Town Center.

Mayor Coffman agreed that the state code does not give authority to municipalities to deal with minors. He mentioned that they have not explored this with regard to retail theft.

Mr. Boyd highlighted the importance of the meetings to bridge the gap with city and state.

Mayor Coffman thanked Mr. Boyd for his work at the Town Center. He mentioned that he was impressed by how busy it was. He said that the voice of retail is vital to designing a solution. He mentioned that there is also an issue of organized retail theft which has to be dealt with by the judicial districts and state legislature.

Mr. Walls commented that this is only the first steps to address the issue. They will first make it more efficient for business owners to report the theft and have APD respond effectively.

Mayor Coffman said that there is a joint effort between the legislative effort led by CM Zvonek and APD in terms of better enforcing existing laws.

Mr. Walls mentioned that the September 8th Town Hall will feature District Attorney Kellner from the 18th Judicial.

Ms. Horiuchi mentioned that there will be an upcoming meeting for the business district on August 18th. They will have Victoria Klingensmith from the 18th Judicial District Attorney's Office to address other crimes dealt with by business stakeholders.

ACTION ITEM: no items this month.

Fire – Commander Steven Wright

- Interim Fire Chief Allen Robnett is standing in due to former Fire Chief Gray transferring to Las Vegas. The city is now looking for a permanent fire chief, and Chief Robnett will also apply for the position.
- Compliance Engine, the vendor that monitors fire alarm systems, went through the PSCCS Committee with no issues. AFR is hoping to go live in October. The IT Department is going through their governance to see how they can support the system.

ACTION ITEM: no items this month.

Licensing – Trevor Vaughn

- The ordinance that exempted government-imposed fees to be taxed directly to the purchaser received unanimous council approval. Denver is doing a similar measure, along with other cities, as recommended by the Colorado Municipal League.
- The fee on bags will start on January 1st, 2023. Retailers are required to remit the fee on April 1st, 2024. However, this seems to be a drafting error on the bill. Aurora is building systems to accommodate the fee.
- In 2021, an organized shoplifting ring was busted by Douglas County for \$5 million. They had a warehouse operation in Aurora and had several individuals stealing and selling products on e-Bay. Once they were caught, their business license was suspended, and their operations were closed. In 2022, Senate Bill 22-009 was passed and requires recordkeeping on catalytic converters by scrappers. Second-hand dealers and pawnshops are required to report these transactions to LeadsOnline, to which the police department has access. The report must include information on the seller, the item, and identifying marks such as serial number or VIN. Catalytic converters have been determined to be second-hand property since they are being purchased for precious metals inside. The city has one major scrap operation, Atlas Metals, and one auto shop buying catalytic converters.
- Atlas Metals voluntarily report their purchases to LeadsOnline. They have stopped buying catalytic converters from end sellers, and only purchase them from auto shops through cheques. The ordinance that will be put forward will clarify that catalytic converters are subject to the second-hand dealer code. Therefore, people that buy them need to get a second-hand dealer license. This will discourage theft and establish the pattern of sellers. This ordinance was requested by CM Gardner and Marcano.
- Historically, gift cards can be subject to second-hand dealer codes which require serial numbers to be reported. Gift cards can be tied to retail theft by a person stealing something from the store and returning it for a store credit card which they will convert to cash.
- The ordinance will require that individuals selling more than one catalytic converter present business information and demonstrate it to the buyer. The buyer will then keep records of the transaction and will only issue the cheque in the name of the business. This ordinance will be presented to the Management and Finance Committee on August 23rd.

ACTION ITEM: no items this month

PROS Master Plan – Michelle Teller

- Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) will be conducting a master plan called “Our Parks, Our Places” to look at the future of PROS in Aurora. It will look at the needs for parks, recreation, and open space in Aurora and determine an overall vision and goals. The project is community focused and will involve citizens, businesses, and potential partnerships. All materials will be available in Aurora’s top six languages.
- The plan includes five focus areas for strategies and recommendations. These include community connections, equitable access to spaces, programs, and information, health and safety of individuals and the environment, sustainable growth to meet the needs of new residents, and operational efficiencies.
- The project will run for 15 months through four phases. It started in May and was launched to the public on July 20th. Phase 1 involved public engagement and understanding how people use spaces and programs. Phase 2 will include a dive into the needs of the community, the gaps in offerings, and changes needed to meet needs. For Phase 3, recommendations will be developed based on input. The final plan will be done in Phase 4.
- So far, PROS Department had different tabling and engagement events throughout the city with the goal of going to every Ward. For the rest of the phase, there will be a focus on connecting with Boards and Commissions. Surveys will also happen at every phase. A dedicated project website is available. Information may be found through Engage Aurora. There has been positive feedback from the community.
- In Phase 2, there will be additional conversations about needs, gap analysis, surveys, and different engagement events. PROS is building relationships with businesses and other economic drivers such as nonprofits, schools, and healthcare in Aurora.
- JLP&D, a sub-consultant, was hired to relate PROS to real estate, economic development, and land use. The department plans to receive recommendations and strategies on public-private partnerships and what other Parks Departments are doing to connect with users. The department is hoping to set a foundation with local businesses.

Ms. Horiuchi asked if PROS will attend the other dates for the Havana Street Global Market.

Ms. Teller said yes. She mentioned that they are trying to engage with every ward. She said that they will go back since they had many surveys, conversations, and opportunities to connect with the community at that event.

Ms. Horiuchi mentioned that the Town Center has a lot of events such as back-to-school and fall fests which may be great opportunities for engagement.

Mr. Walls introduced Mr. Liles and mentioned that he represents the property management ownership group for Southlands in Ward IV, and they do summer markets on Wednesday evenings.

Mr. Liles clarified that they did their last event last Wednesday.

Ms. Teller said that they are connecting with some businesses there. They were recommended to tap into coasters to put at breweries and coffee shops. She added that they are connecting with Bent Barley and Legend’s Coffee Shop.

Mr. Walls introduced Ms. Reding who is with Dry Dock.

Ms. Teller said that they reached out to different breweries including Dry Dock. She mentioned that they are trying to connect and see if they can do promotions or tabling. She added that they will also promote their partner businesses through public engagement events.

Ms. Reding said that she would check with her team to see if they received correspondence.

ACTION ITEM: no items this month.

Update Arts and Entertainment Study – Andrea Amonick

- The BAB will be working with Chad Argentar to put together the RFP. The first subcommittee meeting will be held after Labor Day.
- The subcommittee will formulate a scope for a request for proposal and get a dollar amount. Then, they will ask City Council for approval to be included in the 2023 budget.

Ms. Fender said that she will be out of town in early September but would want to attend the first meeting. She requested to set the meeting for when she gets back.

Mr. Walls agreed.

ACTION ITEM: Subcommittee Mr. Liles, Ms. Pace, Ms. Woodson

2021 Business Awards Nominations – Elena Vasconez

- Thirty-eight nominations were received and reviewed by Mr. Vaughn for compliance. They are now down to 27 and will be sent to APD for review. Staff will produce a semifinalist list for interviews, with which the finalists will be chosen. Board Members are invited to help with the review process.
- Nominations are from nonprofits, education, restaurants, catering, wellness, etc. However, there have been no nominations yet for manufacturing.

Mr. Walls stated that Ms. Fender volunteered.

Ms. Horiuchi volunteered. She asked if Mr. Vaughn has recommendations for light manufacturing in Aurora.

Mr. Vaughn said that he will look into this. He added that there are some good ones for the category.

Mr. Walls said that they will reach out to Wards I, II, and III for any suggestions. He said that they will ensure that Council Members nominate from within their wards. He added that they usually have at least one nomination per year.

Mr. Vaughn mentioned that Steven Roberts is a good manufacturer.

Mr. Walls commented that it is difficult to get a response from them. He mentioned that there are challenges with interviewing manufacturing. He added that they are preparing to vote in September.

ACTION ITEM: no items this month.

New Energy Leaders Award - Garrett Walls

- The city is responsible for determining the award with Xcel Energy Partners in Energy. Xcel Energy will start co-marketing to business owners and collect self-nominations if their business licenses have done well in evolving to a more energy-efficient use of their business operations.

ACTION ITEM: no items this month.

COUNCIL CONTACTS

Council Member Jurinsky - Ms. Horiuchi

CM Jurinsky asked BAB and others to attend the upcoming At-Large

Council Member Murillo - Mr. Fryberger

Council Member Lawson – Mr. Sarwal

CM Lawson & Mr. Sarwal are discussing mobile options to help the homeless.

Council Member Medina – Ms. Woodson

CM Medina would like ward-by-ward information on recipients of the COVID grant funds.

Ms. Vasquez said that they could provide the information, but they are still going through all the paperwork for the grants. She added that they can provide information for the three rounds of Aurora Economic Resiliency (AER) grants.

Mr. Walls asked if the final report on all rounds of the AER given out during COVID was presented.

Ms. Amonick explained that they had \$11 million for all AER four grants. These grants were handled by different people. For AER 1, for rescue emergency, there was a \$5,000 grant total. The staff has information on the number of grants per ward, demographics, and geographic information. AER 2, for stabilizing businesses, staff has the total number of grants and how they were geographically distributed. However, they do not have data regarding diversity. AER 3 focused on reviving businesses and was handled by a third party. Thus, the staff does not have much data on this. AER 4 was a restaurant program. Information on the total numbers by grant and businesses assisted can be provided.

Ms. Woodson said that she will follow up and specify which grant CM Medina wants more information on.

Ms. Amonick mentioned that the ARPA grant program is still ongoing. They have \$2.5 million to give out and the money must be spent by the end of 2024. She said that Ms. Woodson can send a request through her email. She added that there has been no money given out and they have reviewed 30 grants. She said that they have to go through 300 applications and plan to make awards weekly.

Council Member Zvonek – Mr. Boyd

Council Member Coombs – Ms. Redding

No contact

Council Member Gardner – Ms. Fender

CM Gardner is looking at a formal Resolution. Andrea responded the committee will meet to go over the scope so, they can do an RFP in the fall.


Council Member Bergan – Mr. Liles

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Walls moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:11 PM

Ms. Horiuchi seconded

APPROVED:



Garrett Walls, Chairperson