

AURORA BUSINESS ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of the Regular Meeting
Monday, October 24, 2022

Board Members Present:

Mr. Fryberger, Ms. Horiuchi, Mr. Liles, Ms. Pace, Mr. Sarwal, Mr. Walls, Ms. Woodson,

Board Members Absent:

Excused Absence: Mr. Boyd, Mr. Hitesh, Ms. Fender, Ms. Reding

Council Members Present:

Staff Present: Andrea Amonick, Jeff Edwards, Elena Vasconez, Trevor Vaughn, Fire Commander Steven Wright

Guest Presenters: Andrea Amonick

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Walls called the meeting to order at 11:03 AM

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The September 19, 2022 Meeting Minutes were approved. Mr. Walls moved, without objection, to approve the minutes, Ms. Pace Seconded.

Mayor Mike Coffman

Not in attendance

Catalytic Converters Draft Ordinance – Trevor Vaughn

The ordinance passed City Council unanimously and is going into effect.

ACTION ITEM: None

Update Performing Arts Feasibility Study – Andrea Amonick

- There is an ongoing initiative in the Department of Library and Cultural Services to redo their Cultural Facilities Master Plan. This would include the performing arts venues that BAB is interested in as they relate to economic development.
- To avoid duplicative, staff put the request for funding for the Performing Arts Feasibility Study on hold. Staff met with the Library and Cultural Services, and BAB was invited to provide input as a stakeholder in the community and participate in the initiative.
- In a meeting with CM Gardner, it was decided that there was still a desire to move forward with the feasibility study apart from the master planning efforts of Library and Cultural Services.

Mr. Walls stated that he is waiting on CM Gardner's official response to see what direction he wants BAB to take. He added that Ms. Pace, Ms. Woodson, and Ms. Horiuchi also expressed a desire to participate.

Ms. Pace mentioned that she wants to participate as an active dancer in the Denver scene and to introduce more of the cultural part to Aurora. She added that several dancers live in Aurora but are dancing in Denver.

Ms. Amonick encouraged Ms. Pace to participate in and promote dance of all types, not necessarily as a BAB member. She added that there would be public meetings that would get the community involved. She stated that the group gathering places, such as performing arts venues, require subsidies to run and operate. They are also opportunities to bring in out-of-town dollars. Ms. Amonick suggested waiting for the master planning to be underway to get a sense of what the community is thinking since if a bond or debt financing is required for the facility, the people would have to vote for it. She added that the 2023 budget is already being passed, and it may be advisable to wait until after it passes to get support from Council to allocate money for the study. She stressed that the final analysis would rest on what the community and Council think. She reiterated the suggestion to lag the original proposed schedule to let the master plan move forward and build a constituency for their ask.

Mr. Walls mentioned that CM Gardner might not want to wait and stressed that he wants to move forward quickly with an ask on an economic impact study, which is outside the bounds of what the citizenry thinks. He added that CM Gardner wants to understand the opportunity available regardless of any community feedback or direction from the city. He said that the scope is different from what the city is doing, and CM Gardner views this as a foundational step for a consultant to do a basic market study and understand the different areas of Aurora. CM Gardner may also be willing to go forward with a resolution.

Ms. Amonick said that they would meet with Library and Cultural Services to regroup and work on the scope of the study to understand the separation between the two processes. She mentioned that waiting until January for a presentation will allow a couple of months to create a solid scope.

Mr. Walls said that it would depend on the direction that CM Gardner decides to take, whether it is a resolution directly to Council, a direction to staff, or a direction through BAB.

Ms. Amonick said that she would be in contact with Ms. Clark and Ms. Perry. She added that the process would identify the gaps in the provision of cultural services and the types of focus that there should be. She mentioned that some centers, such as the Arvada Center, are heavily publicly subsidized and are bringing in regional and statewide acts but not local. This is also currently done in the arts district, with the largest venue having 250 seats.

Mr. Walls said that he would clarify the direction from CM Gardner on what he envisions BAB's role would be in the cultural arts master plan and the feasibility study.

Ms. Horiuchi asked for the schedule of the meetings.

Ms. Amonick said that the ask for the Venue Management Expert panel is November 8th or 9th, where experts on facility designing and operations will be brought in. The Ambassador group will do a follow-up session to answer questions and provide feedback. All stakeholders will be invited to participate in a one-day planning workshop on November 14th, 15th, 17th, or 18th.

Ms. Horiuchi mentioned that the Stampede also brings global entertainers and packs the whole house. She added that she wants to include the Stampede and is working to include other business stakeholders, such as the El Salvadoran Consulate and the future satellite venue for the Colorado Golf Association. She addressed Ms. Pace and mentioned they are looking for community members to teach some classes.

Mr. Walls mentioned that he has a list of questions he will send to Ms. Perry regarding the key stakeholders in the community and venue owners' roles in the process and who will be participating in the workshops.

Ms. Amonick asked if Mr. Walls sent out the invite to let others know the dates.

Mr. Walls explained that he has yet to send the letters since CM Gardner asked him to hold off.

ACTION ITEM: None.

Small Business Grant Program Update – Elena Vasconez

- On January 2022, City Council approved \$2.5 million in ARPA funds to support 250 small businesses recovering from the pandemic. The funding provides \$5,000 for post-pandemic startups and \$10,000 for existing businesses. The program was promoted citywide through various platforms and media outlets. Businesses had to show a net revenue of less than \$350,000 and gross sales of less than \$5 million. Business owners had to demonstrate that the pandemic impacted them and that they are recovering.
- Three hundred twenty applications from different industries, such as goods, retail, childcare, manufacturing, and service industries, were received and screened. Since only 250 applicants were covered, staff requested Council to approve extra funds to cover all applications. A request for \$700,000 in additional ARPA funds was approved by City Council. Currently, 77 applications for payment have been reviewed, and staff disbursed approximately \$500,000.
- 39% of applications were female-owned businesses, and 62% were minority-owned. Staff members approve and fund applications weekly and are working to have all applications approved by the end of 2022. They will follow up with a final report.
- A safety and security grant update may be scheduled for the next meeting.

Ms. Horiuchi thanked staff for their work on behalf of businesses and asked if the list of businesses awarded would be disclosed.

Ms. Amonick said it takes two to three weeks to get the check, which includes time for approval, the loan, and the signing of the audit agreement. They are expecting to be done at the end of the year. A list will be released as public information. This timeline includes the approval, the loan and audit agreement signing, and cutting checks.

Mr. Walls said stakeholders who have yet to receive updates should stay tuned.

Ms. Amonick added that they review applications on a first-come, first-serve basis. They may have enough money to provide to all applicants if they are eligible. Those rejected are small in percentage and include businesses that did not meet deadlines, closed, and pulled out.

Mr. Walls mentioned that he has three clients who went through the safety and security grant process and have not received a response since the police visited.

Ms. Amonick said that there is an assessment, and the businesses should get a list of items the money can be spent on as part of the award.

Ms. Vasquez added that there is a backlog with having businesses sign with contractors. She mentioned that they are also trying to get new contractors.

Mr. Walls asked for the link to the program.

Ms. Vasquez stated that individuals could send requests for help through the ARPA email.

Ms. Amonick mentioned that they are thrilled to provide assistance to businesses.

ACTION ITEM: None

COUNCIL CONTACTS

Council Member Marcano - Ms. Pace

CM Marcano's organized trip to Austin, Texas, to study homelessness was referenced by Heidi Ganahl in her interview with Colorado Matters as something Colorado is doing to address homelessness. Ms. Pace mentioned that this is a good opportunity to create bipartisan support.

The Free Leaf Drop-Off will be held on November 12 at the Centretech Parkway. Residents can drop off their leaves and pumpkins for composting.

Council Member Jurinsky - Ms. Horiuchi

Council Member Murillo - Mr. Fryberger

Council Member Lawson - Mr. Sarwal

CM Lawson and Mr. Sarwal are in regular contact through email regarding updates on discussions within the BAB.

Aurora Community Connects, Tri-County Health, and CU Anschutz Medical Campus are conducting a health fair with on-site health risk assessments and insurance program enrollment assistance through Colorado Connect. The state provides coverage to undocumented individuals or those who have immigration challenges. They are also working with Walgreens for free flu shots for the events. Flyers will be sent out to the members for the October 29 event.

Afghani refugees approached Mr. Sarwal's team regarding organizing a cricket tournament. His team will be sponsoring the event.

Council Member Medina - Ms. Woodson

CM Medina is interested in setting up a community watch program for businesses regarding retail theft updates, doing a diversity, equity, and inclusion study for businesses, and getting more information on retail theft numbers.

Mr. Walls mentioned that the consultant performing a disparity study would present to the BAB in November or December for their stakeholder process and survey. The presentation will include the scope of the study. BAB members can bring up items that were not addressed by the study. A Retail Theft and Crime Forum will be held on December 8th, open for all business stakeholders in Aurora. Previously, detectives involved in retail crime cases were in attendance and were able to connect directly with the affected businesses. Havana BID received an update from DA Kellner regarding the dropping numbers in the short term after the passage of ordinances addressing retail theft. Chief Carlson has been prepared to discuss the crime statistics and the effect of COVID.

Council Member Zvonek - Mr. Boyd

Council Member Coombs - Ms. Redding

Council Member Gardner - Ms. Fender

Council Member Bergan - Mr. Liles

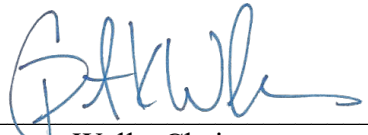
Mayor Pro Tem Bergan and Mr. Liles attended the wine walk at Southlands. In November, there will also be an upcoming parade. MPT Bergan also participated as a judge for a social media costume contest.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Horiuchi welcomes the BAB to join them at the business networking event on Wednesday at Piramides. There will be other trick-or-treat events at Sam's No. 3 this week.

Mr. Walls moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:56 am, seconded by Mr. Sarwal

APPROVED:



Garrett Walls, Chairperson