

Southern Dallas Task Force
Topic Team: Small Business
Meeting Minutes: 5-14-09

Meeting Attendants:

Attendant's Email Addresses:

Jim Reid
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Meeting Agenda:

- I. Business Retention & Expansion Guest Speaker
- II. Review of 4-13-09 Small Business Team Meeting
- III. Review of 4-30-09 Focus Group Meeting
- IV. Review of Information to be Presented to the City
- V. Conclusion of Meeting

I. Business Retention & Expansion Guest Speaker: The Small Business Team began its meeting with a guest speaker presentation. Christopher O'Brian, the head of the City of Dallas' business retention and expansion (BEAR) program, provided information about the City's BEAR program. Below is a summary of the information Christopher provided to the group:

- Christopher worked in Kentucky and Tennessee before he came to Dallas to run the BEAR program 3 years ago
- Christopher stated that the BEAR program's current primary focus is on identifying downtown businesses who's leases are up and attempting to assure that they re-up within the City of Dallas
- Christopher stated that he spends a great deal of his time expediting business request for permits and resolving code compliance problems
- Christopher stated that he uses software to identify leasing data
- Christopher stated that his main focus is on large leases and tenants
- Christopher stated that he has done some work in Southern Dallas
- Christopher stated that he is willing to (and does) provide 5 to 10 minutes of assistance on the phone to respond to small business inquiries

- Christopher indicated that retention expansion of small business is the job of the small business group within the City of Dallas

II. Review of the 4-13-09 Small Business Team Meeting: Jim Reid provided the Small Business Team with a brief overview of the 4-13-09 team meeting. Following the overview Jim asked the team if there were any comments, concerns, or questions related to the meeting. No one in attendance had any remarks or inquiries regarding the meeting.

III. Review of the 4-30-09 Focus Group Meeting: Jim Reid provided the Small Business Team with a brief overview of the 4-30-09 focus group meeting. Following the overview Jim asked the team if there were any comments, concerns, or questions related to the meeting. No one in attendance had any remarks or inquiries regarding the focus group meeting

IV. Review of Information to be Present to the City: Jim provided the Small Business Team with an overview of the information that is to be present to the City on June 9th from the Small Business Team. Following this overview, Jim asked the team if there were any comments, concerning, or questions related to the information. Below is the feedback the Small Business Team provided:

- The team stated that it should be noted that the information provided by the Small Business Team could be used city wide
- The team suggested increasing the cost of the primary Small Business Team recommendations to \$15,000 – \$20,000
- The team suggested that the activities in the information to be presented to the City should be listed in their order of importance
- The team expressed concern about the lack of business trade skills, and suggested the Small Business Team should take the issue under further consideration
- The team suggested that the Small Business Team should understand the ITT and the Urban League Skill Training initiatives
- The team suggested that the City of Dallas small business web site needed to be improved upon
- The team suggested that the City should bring Hopeton Hay to Dallas to assist with contractor finance
- The team stated that there are a number of small contractors within Southern Dallas but the banks are reluctant to undertake contractor

finance; the team suggested the Small Business Team should examine ways to alleviate this situation

- The team suggested that the Small Business Team should take into consideration the micro loan initiative, due to the fact that banks do not lend to start-ups
- The team discussed the possibility of college business students helping small businesses, for a small stipend

V. Conclusion of Meeting: Following the discussion of the information to be presented to the City from the Small Business Team, the meeting concluded.