

Small Business Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 12, 2014

Meeting called to order at 4:10 pm

Members Present:

Dave Browning
Tom Etter
Tuck Bowie
Greg Stone
Petula Moy
Elizabeth Dietzmann
Bob Scott
Chance Wilson
Damen Watson
Robert Dyer
Dane Blythe
Osmay Torres
Jeff smith
Tao Tang
Cathryn Whitsell

Guests attending:

Butch Maier
Vivian Blaize
Lavern Tolentino

Members not present:

Doris Gomez
Patie Philip
Tony D Silvestro
Brad Martin
Olga Torres
Tanya Arney
Preston Midgett
Jim Carroll
Karen Eagle
Lisa Fournier
Ken Brown
Patti Phillips
Shannon Kane

Old Business:

Motion: to approve minutes from the October meeting
Resolved: Motion passed.

New Business:

-Councilmen Robert Dyer presented the cities 5 year forecast; data from this forecast indicates there will be an even greater need for the committee's work than had been anticipated. The steps that will be necessary include:

- Develop a survey for our small businesses with the subcommittee approving the questions in the survey
- Karen Eagle's conducts interviews with small business owners
- The survey and interview results are used to objectively identify barriers to new business development and growth
- The committee formally reports identified barriers to Process Improvement committee with recommendations for removing/mitigating the identified barriers
- The Process Improvement Committee makes recommendations to City Council
- Institutions such as ODU and Regent are used to incubate and facilitate business start-ups

-Survey questions are expected to become available from Karen Eagle by the Jan 2015 meeting. Surveys to be "B" tested and should be sent out early Feb. By the end of May, tangible data for analysis is expected to become available.

-Vivian Blaze brought up the need to educate small business owners. Virginia has changed over the years recognizing the need for minority business to have access to help.

- Dave Browning requested total number of small business in Virginia Beach. (Cathryn Whitesell estimated 35,000) A minimum of 400 responses from those small businesses are needed to have a statistically valid survey. The survey will adopt a random sampling method.

-Vivian Blaze suggested further specifying the term of small business.

-David Browning suspected that 90% of Virginia Beach small business falls under the category of micro business. Demographic categories such as years since entrance and number of employees can be used to create groups for study.

-Robert Dyer suggested that subcommittee could define the terms (small business etc.) to suit the purpose of the survey. Jeff Smith was asked to work with the committee to draft a definition of a small business for the purpose of our survey.

-David Browning pointed out that many other cities share common barriers for small business.

-Cathryn Whitsell briefed the committee on common barriers of small business start-ups: access to capital, government regulations, and access to skill labor. The subcommittee needs to find out what's good about coming to Virginia Beach for business start-ups in addition to barriers.

- Chance Wilson asked if there is a flow chart of the process for business start-ups. Jeff Smith confirmed that there is no flow chart. Tom Etter took the lead to create a flow chart for small business startup.

Meeting adjourned at 5:40 pm. Next Meeting will be Wednesday 14 January at 4:00 pm, in room 350 (3rd Floor Conference Room), City Hall (Building 1, Municipal Center).