



CITY OF COLUMBIA  
WORK SESSION MINUTES  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2015  
CITY HALL – 1737 MAIN STREET  
2<sup>nd</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

The Columbia City Council conducted a Work Session on Tuesday, January 6, 2015 at City Hall, 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin called the meeting to order at 2:07 p.m. and the following members of Council were present: The Honorable Sam Davis, The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine, The Honorable Brian DeQuincey Newman, The Honorable Cameron A. Runyan and The Honorable Moe Baddourah. The Honorable Leona K. Plough was absent. Also present were Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager and Ms. Erika D. Moore, City Clerk. This meeting was advertised in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

### **FISCAL YEAR 2015/2016 PRIORITY PLANNING & GOALS**

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager reported that she started the budgetary process with Department Heads before the holiday and the process is actively continuing. She distributed a budget schedule in keeping with the fiscal year 2015/2016 priority planning and goals section of the agenda. She outlined additional topics that will be presented to City Council on January 27, 2015.

1. [Disparity Study Update](#): Goals for the Mentor Protégé Program / Subcontracting Outreach Program / Local Business Enterprise Program –Ms. Tina Herbert, Executive Director of the Office of Business Opportunities

Ms. Tina Herbert, Executive Director of the Office of Business Opportunities agreed to discuss the local business enterprises at another time. She explained the commonly used terms for City programs that support local small businesses. She noted that a lot of our goals are for disadvantaged businesses, because that is a race and gender neutral goal. She explained that the Disparity Study looks only at minorities and non-minority women and that is what we will be measured by. She explained that Council was asked to reduce the excess liability coverage requirement under the Mentor Protégé Program (MPP) from \$10 million to \$2 million.

Ms. Dana Higgins, City Engineer explained that they have implemented protégé only and protégé led projects to help protégés develop projects with help from the mentor, while realizing the majority of the contract. She said the current ordinance required everyone to have \$10 million in liability coverage, but the smaller companies had difficulty meeting that requirement. She said that by lowering the requirement, it will allow the companies to compete for other projects. She noted that for a \$50,000 construction project, the protégé was able to do the work, but it would cost the company \$40,000 to get the insurance.

Ms. Tina Herbert, Executive Director of the Office of Business Opportunities said that all mentor-protégé teams had to reapply as of October 1, 2014 and we have a new pool of teams to select from. She said the level of participation has decreased, but she anticipates that this will create greater opportunities for the teams. She noted that the percentage of protégés that are disadvantaged business enterprises (DBE) have increased to 66% and the percentage of protégés located in Richland County and the City of Columbia have also increased.

Councilor Baddourah asked if there is a goal for local participation in the MPP.

Ms. Tina Herbert, Executive Director of the Office of Business Opportunities said no, but that is something we can do. She reported that in 2013 we had over \$17 million in MPP contracts were awarded and 8% of those dollars went to protégé DBEs; in 2014 we doubled the number of DBEs; and we have a 25% DBE participation goal for the current fiscal year.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager asked if Ms. Herbert is saying midstream that we are going to start tracking the numbers on a fiscal year basis. She said we all support the 25% goal on a fiscal year basis.

Ms. Tina Herbert, Executive Director of the Office of Business Opportunities said we are trending towards that; the new teams were finalized; and we are hoping to see a big difference over the next six (6) months. She said it is very feasible that we will reach the 25% goal this fiscal year. She said the next steps for the MPP is to meet with the City Manager's Mentor-Protégé Advisory Council; conduct individual meetings with protégés about business plans and goals; recruit in identified areas; seek funding for a Contractor Financing Program; and partner with a bonding education program. She acknowledged that a lot of time has been spent on the Mentor Protégé Program and the next area of emphasis will be the Subcontracting Outreach Program (SOP). She explained that the goal of the SOP is to maximize opportunities for subcontractors to be involved; there is a mandatory 20% subcontracting minimum; and the prime contractor must take affirmative steps to ensure that maximum efforts are taken to recruit subcontractors including disadvantaged and disabled veteran enterprises. She noted that the 2015 goals will remain as follows: Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) 20%, Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) 10% and Other Business Enterprise (OBE) 70%.

Ms. Dana Higgins, City Engineer for the Department of Utilities and Engineering reported that the guidelines for the Subcontracting Outreach Program have been updated to eliminate the requirement to advertise in the newspaper and reducing the number of days prior to bid submittal to request assistance from recruitment agencies to 10 days.

Ms. Tina Herbert, Executive Director of the Office of Business Opportunities reported that in 2012, \$31 million went into the Subcontracting Outreach Program with \$11 million going to subcontractors. She reported that \$29 million was expended through the SOP in 2014 with over \$14 million going to subcontractors. She said in order to increase DBE/DVBE participation, staff will publish and routinely announce the goals; there will be a stricter review of good faith efforts; and staff will continue to enhance tracking

capabilities. She said that the Disparity Study included 28 citywide recommendations to eliminate the underutilization of minorities and women across the city. She outlined the recommendations that have been implemented. For the remaining recommendations, she recommended the implementation of a citywide goal of 10% spending with Minority and Women Business Enterprises (MWBE) effective July 1, 2015; performance reviews for City departments; list subcontractors and minority owned businesses on our website; a purchasing manual; bonding and insurance assistance; and access to capital or commercial revolving loan funds. In closing, Ms. Herbert stated that if you put forth good effort in trying to implement race neutral alternatives, it increases the likelihood that you will have the ability to introduce a race or gender conscience program.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said she has been interested in having a list of subcontractors that can do utility cut repairs. She asked if that would help increase the numbers and also provide smaller businesses an opportunity to work. She asked where staff is with implementing that with the Purchasing Division.

Ms. Missy Gentry, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Operations said they were working on the asphalt and concrete contractors first and then they will focus on this.

2. [Façade Improvement Program Update](#): Main/North Main Street Close-Out Report and Two Notch Road Program Guidelines – Ms. Tina Herbert, Executive Director of the Office of Business Opportunities and Ms. Gerry Lynn Hall, Program Coordinator for the Office of Business Opportunities

Ms. Gerry Lynn Hall, Program Coordinator for the Office of Business Opportunities outlined the existing resources that were utilized to develop the Façade Improvement Program for Main Street/North Main Street along with bus tours with stakeholders through the target area. She noted that the 2008 retail study indicated that we had great housing values, rising incomes and many businesses with a dedicated customer base. She said some of our weaknesses included poor signage, street orientation and aesthetics. She said we needed educational initiatives for businesses. She outlined the program structure and eligible improvements. There was a total investment in the amount of \$641,833 and other investments along the corridor are valued at \$380,350. She noted that two (2) vacant and distressed buildings were purchased and up-fitted through this program. She noted that eight (8) business owners received additional technical assistance through OBO programming. She announced that Sweet Temptations Bakery will begin a \$50,000 storefront remodeling project in a few weeks and Zestos is undergoing a large renovation project.

Mr. Fred Monk, President of ECI Find New Markets said they work with small and medium sized enterprises to find new markets and to conduct fundamental marketing. He said they have been working with OBO in a very effective way.

Ms. Mary Farrow, Director of Business Development for ECI Find New Markets said they work with grad students from the University of South Carolina and six (6) interns to assist these companies. She said they strategically address the individual needs of each business. She said the North Main merchants were great to work with.

Ms. Sabrina Odom, Executive Director of the North Columbia Business Association and Advisory Member of the Façade Improvement Program Approval Committee said it was a pleasure to work with City staff; we were very excited about the project; and we really appreciate it.

Councilor Davis said there were longstanding businesses that didn't have the tools and this type of resource can go a long way to help small businesses; I would like to see us do more of that as we look at maintaining existing businesses.

Ms. Tina Herbert, Director of the Office of Business Opportunities indicated that they ended the Façade Improvement Program on North Main Street and moving to Two Notch Road. She outlined the existing resources that were utilized to develop the Façade Improvement Program for Two Notch Road along with bus tours with stakeholders through the target area. She noted that a legal memo has been provided by Danny Crowe, Esq. on the use of public dollars. She indicated that merchants from North Main felt like \$10,000 wasn't enough; therefore, the loan amount has been increased to \$15,000 per single storefront and up to \$20,000 for buildings with three storefronts. She announced that an additional \$10,000 incentive will be provided for buildings that have been vacant for over two years.

Ms. Gerry Hall, Program Coordinator for the Office of Business Opportunities said the area is very excited about the program. She noted that landscaping improvements have been modified to include trees only.

Ms. Tina Herbert, Director of the Office of Business Opportunities added that the memo from Danny Crowe, Esq. addressed public versus private improvements; therefore, parking lots were removed from the program and we kept security cameras, because merchants are required to allow the Columbia Police Department to access the footage.

Councilor Devine said she heard concerns about the owner's ability to obtain drawings.

Ms. Tina Herbert, Director of the Office of Business Opportunities said drawings are required for permitting purposes. She said OBO can't pay for professional fees. She said we will emphasize upfront when drawings are required.

Ms. Gerry Hall, Program Coordinator for the Office of Business Opportunities said she can help with concept drawings, but scale drawings require professional assistance. She noted that there is now a guide for applicants to identify the elements of a project so that questions can be answered upfront. She said the target area along Two Notch Road is from Providence Hospital to Pinebelt and Cushman Roads and all eligible properties have been identified.

Ms. Tina Herbert, Director of the Office of Business Opportunities noted that one side of Two Notch Road doesn't fall within the neighborhood revitalization service area. She said that OBO has put \$100,000 towards Two Notch Road; applied for \$100,000 from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG); and will request \$100,000 from the General Fund for a total of \$300,000. She noted that ECI is working with the Two Notch Business Association to develop a theme and a website.

Ms. Gerry Hall, Program Coordinator for the Office of Business Opportunities stated that for the next 30-days all materials will be available on the website; there will be a press announcement; and a minimum of two orientation sessions will be held for applicants.

Councilor Baddourah asked how businesses outside of the designated area are assisted.

Ms. Tina Herbert, Director of the Office of Business Opportunities said those businesses outside of the designated area are asked to see a loan officer for assistance. She noted that inquiries have been made about extending the program to West Beltline; however, one side of West Beltline is not in our neighborhood revitalization service area. She requested \$150,000 from the General Fund for the program which would launch in August. She said they would need to initiate discussions with Richland County about doing a Façade Program on the other side of West Beltline. She asked if this is the will of Council. She noted that the total request from the General Fund is \$250,000.

Mayor Benjamin said yes, with the significant investment in the proposed utilities and engineering facility, the potential for the façade investment and the significant desire for a new park, this is a real chance to redefine Beltline Boulevard. He suggested that there be a media event to kick off Two Notch Road.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Upon a motion made by Mr. Runyan and seconded by Mr. Baddourah, Council voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 3:26 p.m. for the discussion of **Items 3 and 4**. Mr. Davis was not present for the vote.

3. Receipt of legal advice which relates to a matter covered by attorney-client privilege – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
4. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Moore  
City Clerk