

Pima County Small Business Commission

County Administration Building
130 W. Congress, 1st Floor
Thursday May 21st, 2009
3:00 PM

Members Present

Tom Ward
Lea Marquez-Peterson

Ken Goodman
Jim Leader, Jr.
Jerry Long
Lyra Done

Others Present

Carmine DeBonis
Carla Blackwell
Aurora Hernandez

Members Absent

Pat Taviss
Greg Geile

Call to Order- The meeting was called to order by at 3:15 P.M. by Tom Ward, Chairman, who led the pledge.

Approval of Minutes- Minutes of the April 16th meeting were approved with a correction to Lyra Done's geographical information.

Chairman's Report- Meeting with County Administrator Chuck Huckelberry- Chairman Ward and Commissioners Jerry Long, and Ken Goodman met with County Administrator Chuck Huckelberry to discuss better communications between the County Administration and the Commission.

The discussion covered several recent actions by the Administration affecting small business that might have benefited from Commission involvement. The following examples were given:

1. The request for a voluntary reduction of fees from engineering firms that contract with the county.
2. The extensions of the shelf life of various development permits by Development Services.
3. Increase in fees and taxes for restaurant and hotel businesses.

Also discussed was the possibility of the presentation of an annual report by the Commission to the Board of Supervisors at one or more public hearings with small businesses to ascertain their concerns.

The Chairman and the two commissioners also requested input concerning the county's economic development expenditures, particularly Tucson Regional Economic Opportunities (TREO) expenditures and why funds are not being spent on helping small businesses.

Development Services Presentation by Carmine DeBonis, Jr. and Carla Blackwell

A presentation was made by Development Services to keep the Commission informed of happenings in Development Services. There have been significant reductions in revenue; single family residential development was generating most of the revenue with 500-650 permits per month, during the 2005 boom, now permits are down to 30 a month. With this downturn in revenue there have been two rounds of layoffs resulting in the loss of 40 people. (A copy of the presentation is attached as part of the Commissions' permanent record.)

It was suggested that a general flow chart -- path to permits—be prepared outlining procedures to obtaining a permit. That would give the public a general idea of where they are headed and what is needed to complete the procedures.

Jim Leader Jr. presented a personal view of the problems he encountered with Development Services in obtaining a building permit for his company. This gave the Commission a first hand look at the problems and roadblocks encountered by the public.

JTED Report - Commissioner Ken Goodman gave an update on JTED- Mr. Goodman, being the Chairman of the JTED Business and Industry Committee stated that JTED was very happy with the Commissions' resolution sent out on behalf of JTED. Several radio responses were received due to the resolution.

Also 176 students graduated from the construction module of the program. Unfortunately the Principal from Sahuaro High School pulled the construction program and the students were placed in other courses. The Construction teacher from Sahuaro will be going to Santa Rita High School to continue the program.

Small Business Development Council- which is funded by The SBA and Pima Community College will be closing. The Small Business Center served up to 977 small businesses in Pima County during the last three years. It is staffed by 3 counselors and 1 administrator. The Chairman said he would invite the director of the center to the June meeting.

AGM Container Controls- it was voted unanimously to send a congratulatory letter to AGM for being named the Small Business of the Year by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Chairman Ward will prepare the letter.

Call to the Public- No Response

Adjournment-The meeting adjourned at 4:45 PM.