



## Special Business District Tax Advisory Commission Minutes

Wednesday, September 23, 2020 at 4:00 PM

Meeting Held Via: Zoom

1. Roll Call: Jim Barton, Nikki Bisel, Gautam Gatla, David Schlafly, Sheila Suderwalla.
2. Approval of the Minutes from August 26, 2020: The minutes were reviewed, and a motion was made to approve the minutes by Schlafly and seconded by Suderwalla. All were in favor and the motion was passed.
3. Account Information: The accounts were discussed but no motions were made.
4. Events: Miller discussed Tales from Maplewood, a storybook walk for October, and SBD partnering with Maplewood Public Library.

Brews+Spirits will be held every Friday in October. Encourage people to shop and dine.

Staff will reach out to CNB regarding the Brokers Tour. Discussed offering a virtual tour of vacant spaces.

5. Marketing Strategy: Miller will send a memo with proposals to review before the October meeting.
6. Parklet: Miller discussed a “test” parklet in front of Asador Del Sur and Chateau Maplewood. Plan to keep it up through November. The City is considering building a parklet over the winter to debut in the spring. The parklet would be placed in front of a different restaurant/cafe every 30 days. The Commission liked the idea of the parklet.
7. Exterior Grant Application: Miller reported on a discussion she had with a restaurant owner about including decks as part of the exterior renovation grant. The current grant states “Storefront.” For some businesses in the 7300 block of Manchester they offer an entrance off the Marietta parking lot and in some cases, this has become the main entrance. Miller asked if anyone remembered having this discussion at a prior Commission meeting several years ago. Barton mentioned there had been some discussion in the past but at the time felt the Commission needed to concentrate on improving the storefronts along Manchester. Several

Commission members agreed that some entrances are now off the Marietta parking lot. Barton suggested that members should research and not haphazardly change the grant. The Commission discussed possible criteria such as proper public entrance that has been approved by the Maplewood Fire Department. Barton motioned to explore amending the exterior renovation grant. Gatla seconded the motion. Barton, Gatla and Schlafly offered to research before the October meeting.

8. COVID-19 Business Relief: The Commission revisited the discussion of providing some type of monetary relief to the businesses.
  - Some businesses cannot pay the full business license fee
  - Accounting difficulty for the City - businesses that have already paid versus outstanding balances. How is that equitable?
  - Can we offer a payment plan?
  - Council already offered an extension from June 30 to September 1.
  - Can we waive late fees?
  - Offering a \$50-\$100 savings seems more of a gesture is not going to save a business

Schlafly proposed to waive the late fee, Bisel seconded the motion.

9. Update: Vacant SBD Commercial Real Estate (attached document)

#### 10. Other Business

Schlafly mentioned in the last Schlafly mentioned the email response he sent to Mayor Greenberg regarding appointments to Boards and Commissions. Suderwalla questioned why the existing Commission would not have a say in new appointees.

Barton asked if the Commission submitted the letter to the Council regarding the unhoused. Schlafly responded no.

The Commission briefly discussed the unhoused issue.

- What is causing the sudden increase?
- Suderwalla commented that she hadn't seen as many unhoused recently and recommended the Commission meet with Maplewood PD.
- Businesses are already hurting.
- Need to attract people to our businesses, concerned this could detract.

11. Meeting Adjourn at 5:43 PM.