



CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS
Video Teleconference
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Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Beverly Hills City Council Liaison / Property Owners Task Force Committee

TELEPHONIC VIDEO CONFERENCE SPECIAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Thursday, November 19, 2020
4:00 PM

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Date / Time: November 19, 2020 / 4:02 PM

IN ATTENDANCE: Julian Gold, M.D., Councilmember; Lili Bosse, Councilmember; Nancy Hunt-Coffey, Assistant City Manager; Gabriella Yap, Deputy City Manager; Laura Biery, Marketing and Economic Sustainability Manager; Helen Morales, Deputy Director Housing; Todd Johnson; Blair Schlecter; Dar Mahooby, Property Owner; David Mirharooni, Property Owner; Anna Gorbacheva, Property Owner; Dennis Ferrazzano, Attorney; Mark Tronstein, Property Owner, Bill Wiley, Two Rodeo Drive; Susan Healy-Keene, Director of Community Development; Jeff Muir, Director of Finance; Matthew Burke, Caller; Sam Hakim, Property Owner; Shana Epstein, Director of Public Works, Ming Shin, Property Owner; Bradley Adams, Property Owner; Heather Hassler, Prop Owner; Daniel Bermudez, Chamber of Commerce; David Mirharooni, Property Owner; Evan Meyer, Property Owner; Julian Javor, Property Owner; Wally Marks, Property Owner; Deb Goodman, Welltower; Ada Edwards, Welltower; Yas Baravarian, Property Owner; Deb Goodman; Anish Melwani, LVMH; Chris Ley, Communications Specialist; Lisa Karson, Executive Assistant.

1) PUBLIC COMMENT

Members of the public will be given the opportunity to directly address the Committee on any item listed on the agenda.

Speakers/Public comment: None.

2) Welcome and Introductions

Members listed in attendance were welcomed, introduced themselves and provided a brief background.

3) Purpose of the Property Owners Taskforce

The Property Owners Taskforce has been organized in order that property owners, the City and the Chamber can work collaboratively to identify City policies that either support, or act as a barrier, to fill vacant commercial spaces and retain existing commercial tenants.

4) Discussion of Ground Rules and Expectations of Attendees Including the Format and Frequency of Meetings

Please arrive early or on time; attendees are requested to enable cameras for improved personal interaction.

5) Discussion Regarding Potential Areas of Focus for the Task Force

- Todd Johnson of the Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce asked Task Force members what policies they felt the City should keep to attract and retain businesses.
 - Councilmember Gold shared one of the fortunate things that came out of the pandemic is that they were able to expedite the LA Metro Subway construction by months. David Mirharooni of Brickstar Capital recommended that for capital improvement projects the City has scheduled, the work should be expedited which would entice more tenants into the City. Councilmember Gold then asked if there are any other items the City could help expedite.
 - Heather Hassler of Starpoint Properties stated she has spoken to many residents in Beverly Hills and prospective tenants about the patio usage for outdoor dining and that it is a top priority to extend the outdoor use and to get more patio space. Councilmember Bosse asked how quickly businesses may be approved to extend their businesses outdoors. Laura Biery, Marketing and Economic Sustainability Manager, explained that some businesses have been approved as quickly as five days and 103 businesses have been approved through this process to date.
 - Dar Mahboubi stated the City should work to expedite the permitting process for businesses during this downtime with the COVID-19 pandemic so that businesses are ready to go once the pandemic is over. Todd Johnson added that Deb Goodman from Welltower agreed the process should be expedited.
 - Bill Wiley of Two Rodeo complimented the City for the OpenBH program and the communication with the community during the pandemic. He added that some sort of an incubator program for businesses to start up in Beverly Hills so they can open up quickly in currently vacant spaces would be helpful; if the businesses do well they can sign longer leases. He also suggested a City tax break to create incentives for them.
 - Councilmember Gold asked if there is interest in continuing the OpenBH program once the pandemic is over. If the City Council were to consider keeping the program in place, they would need to know how many businesses are interested; Todd Johnson stated he has about 150 restaurants that he can reach out to and inquire. Councilmember Bosse stated she believes most would want to keep them based on the restaurants she has received feedback

- from; Laura Biery added that many applicants to the OpenBH program have inquired on being able to keep the space for a longer time period to get a return on their investment. Councilmember Gold added that it may be good to highlight this topic as a future study session item for City Council.
- Wally Marks asked the City what are the expectations from developers as far as number of housing units and number of people expected over the next 10 years. Councilmember Gold replied they have been discussing the State demands of 3,100 units by 2028; there is an expectation to at least work towards that over the next decade. Councilmember Bosse added that the recently approved mixed use buildings in parts of the City are a great way to add more vibrancy and growth.
 - Wally Marks inquired if the City is looking to have more of an 18-hour use environment as a goal of the City. Councilmember Gold replied that in certain parts of the City that would definitely be great to provide a better pedestrian experience. Councilmember Bosse added that was one of the reasons for the BOLD program, to demonstrate that the City can be more vibrant. Todd Johnson added that the addition of the outdoor dining and parklets has also brought more vibrancy to the City.
 - Councilmember Bosse requested that Task Force members brainstorm incentives to attract more businesses and get back to her for the City Council to consider.
- Todd Johnson of the Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce asked what policies are currently in place that restrict tenants from coming in that other cities do not have.
 - Dar Mahboubi stated they receive many complaints from tenants regarding the amount of fees involved in order to open their business in the City. For small businesses, these fees can be up to 50% of their budget. Other cities allow businesses to open up with fewer fees and costs. He noted signage fees for businesses to the Architectural Commission are very high and still more costly if a business is required to go before the Planning Commission; Councilmember Gold stated that the City recently changed the structure of the Architectural Commission to reduce fees.
 - Julian Javor of GEK Construction stated there are rules regarding signage that does not allow for anything that adversely affects the character of the neighborhood; he expressed that is a subjective opinion that is problematic and requires business owners to appeal to the Architectural Commission.
 - David Mirharooni of Brickstar Capital believes the Chamber should work with the City to create some sort of campaign to promote the fact that it is not as expensive as people may think to open a business in Beverly Hills.
 - Ming Kou, a property owner on La Cienega, explained it took him several months to get an answer from the City on an issue affecting his property. He would like to see a coordinator that can navigate businesses to get through to the correct contacts in the City for whatever they may need; Todd Johnson added that this same topic has also been suggested previously at Small Business Task Force meetings.
 - Julian Javor of GEK Construction inquired with the Council liaisons if the City receives 50% of their budget from property taxes; Councilmember Gold responded that property tax makes up only 25-30%. He added the four primary revenue sources for the City are transient occupancy tax (visitors to

hotels), business tax, property tax, and sales tax; they each account for approximately 25% of the total general fund budget.

- The Property Owners Task Force will be meeting again in January 2021.

ADJOURNMENT

Date / Time: November 19, 2020 / 5:02 PM