



Town of Vienna

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TTY 8111

Meeting Minutes

Town Business Liaison Committee

Thursday, December 12, 2024

7:00 PM

Charles Robinson Jr. Town Hall, 127 Center
St. South

1 Roll Call

Members Present:

Brenda Burns; Bill Comerford; Najee Davis; Mark Lander; Tracy McCarty; Bob Marsh; Jen Morrow; Preeti Penati

Members Absent:

Staff Present: Kelly O'Brien, Acting Director, Ashley Curtis, Marketing and Business Engagement Specialist, Economic Development

2 Approval of the Minutes: none

3 Regular Business

Demonstration of Online Meals Tax Payment System

Staff from the Finance Department presented a demonstration of the new online meals tax payment system. Starting in 2025, the new system will allow businesses to pay meals taxes monthly and renew online. Staff is also working with select businesses to test the new system. A "how to" guide will be available on line. Committee members suggested including the information in the Town Business Matters email newsletter along with testimonials from the test businesses.

Update on Meals Tax Discussion

Following the public hearing on November 18, 2024 regarding a proposed 10-Year temporary 1% increase to the meals tax to fund a proposed aquatics center, Town Council requested additional data from both Staff and consultants, Kimley Horn.

A work session is scheduled for January 21, 2025 to garner feedback from the consultants. The final vote is scheduled for January 27, 2025.

Kelly O'Brien shared a brief overview of how the aquatics center project came to the forefront. The Committee was informed that traffic impact and environmental studies have not been initiated; the meals tax will help pay for these. Should results of these studies indicate a lack of feasibility, the aquatics center will not move forward and the meals tax increase will be sunsetted.

Chairman Morrow indicated that the TBLC should be engaged with the business community regarding the plan in order to serve as an information resource. Ms. O'Brien reminded members that the aquatics center came about as part of a discussion of Annex property use. Once Council agreed that the community appeared to favor an aquatics center use the issue of funding was addressed. The projected costs provided by Kimley Horn suggested that the project was unlikely to

see funding until 2040. To expedite the project, a temporary meals tax, as used to fund the Town Green, was brought to the table for consideration. This action would allow for realization of an aquatics center by 2030. Should there be no increase in the meals tax, the project may remain as part of the CIP for the future; it will find space along with other Town wants and needs.

After additional discussion, it was determined that TBLC must remain as part of the overall conversation. To that end, a memo will be drafted to the Mayor and Council providing a summary of TBLC opinions particularly the continued concern regarding the impact on the business community of an increase in the meals tax. Additionally, questions about the value of the aquatics center for the business community remain, given the ongoing issues along the Church St. corridor and should be addressed by Council. Chairman Morrow and Bob Marsh will provide a draft to the Committee for review. Final memo will be sent to Council by January 9, 2025.

4 Economic Development Department Update

Follow up from Economic Development Listening Session

Kelly O'Brien provided a report on the inaugural listening session for the business community held December 5, 2024 from 10:00-11:00 AM. Five participants joined the call and one business member, unable to join live, emailed a concern. The sessions will provide a resource for sharing concerns when business owners/operators have an issue but are unaware where to take it for resolution.

Staff will provide a summary of the discussions and possible action items from those discussions.

5 New Business

November TOV New and Closed Businesses

Attachments: [NOV 2024 TOV new and closed businesses](#)

Three new businesses received business licenses in the month of November, while two continue to wait for the certificate of occupancy. One business closed.

Tracy McCarty has requested to pass on the postcard writing duty. The request will be placed on the January agenda for discussion. Chairman Morrow noted the intent to initiate a save the date process in an effort to encourage greater participation in business recognition events like the THRIVE Business Awards ceremony, which is typically held in mid-May during Economic Development Week

Annual Report for FY23-24

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This year, the Town Council has initiated an annual cycle of holding work sessions with Vienna's appointed boards and commissions.

Attachment 1 is a draft Annual Report for the TBLC to review and recommend any changes before voting to accept and present to the Town Council at their January 13, 2025, work session.

Jen Morrow, TBLC Chair, will attend the work session and present the report to the Town Council. Kelly O'Brien, Acting Economic Development Director, will

also be in attendance. Other members of the TBLC may also attend. The draft report provides information regarding the membership of the committee and TBLC's activities during Fiscal Year 2024, which was from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024.

Attachments: [FY2024 TBLC Annual Report DRAFT](#)

[ATTACHMENT: EDW 2024 Report Final](#)

January 2024, Town Council initiated an annual cycle of holding work sessions with all appointed boards and commissions. Sessions include presentation of a summary annual report of activities to include committee attendance and activities during Fiscal Year 2024, July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024.

Kelly O'Brien presented a draft copy of the TBLC report for presentation at the January 13, 2025, work session.

Committee members reviewed the attached report including goals and provided additional comments as follows:

- *Stress the goal of becoming a more valued partner with the Town Council;*
- *Role is to communicate to the Town Council concerns and needs of the business community;*
- *TBLC is voice from the Council to the business community as well as voice from business community to Council; Must assure these remain in balance;*
- *Reflect work as advocate in goals- Advocating for business needs with the Town of Vienna government;*
- *Review goals in January to determine role of TBLC in various business sectors.*

A motion was made to accept the annual report for FY23-24 with recommendations.

Motion, Brenda Burns; second, Jen Morrow.

Motion accepted unanimously.

Jen Morrow, TBLC Chair, will attend the work session and present the report to the Town Council. Kelly O'Brien, Acting Economic Development Director, will also be in attendance. Other members of the TBLC are encouraged to attend.

Discussion of Role of TBLC and 2025 Goals and Initiatives

Kelly O'Brien opened discussion of the TBLC vision and mission statements.

Highlighting the need for clarity she presented several alternatives to the existing statements reflecting the evolving role of the TBLC in supporting Vienna's business community.

Committee members discussed the most efficient way to group the diverse activities of the TBLC. Subcommittees should encompass both internal and external actions. The topic of Area Champions was also explored. The Committee is currently divided with each member responsible for a particular business area domain. These designations were determined to be effective and will remain as earlier assigned. Several ideas for Committee strategies were presented and discussed.

Ashley Curtis provided an update on the inquiry regarding Church Street event related street closures. In an effort to determine the level of concern for this issue, a survey has been sent to Church Street businesses. Town Council, who has the authority to act, must hear concerns of this magnitude. The newly initiated listening sessions will allow businesses the platform to voice matters of this nature and the

TBLC has the opportunity to take them to Council as an unbiased voice. A memo to Council for consideration during a work session was discussed.

Additional discussion included information on the Casino Bill. The bill is expected to drop around January 17, 2025.

6 TBLC Chair's Report

Chairman Morrow thanked both Kelly O'Brien and Ashley Curtis for their hard work and guidance during this past year.

7 Meeting Adjournment

*Chairman Morrow called for a motion to adjourn at 8:48 PM.
Motion, Bob Marsh; second, Bill Comerford.*

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