

Town Business Liaison Committee (TBLC)

Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Report

Introduction

The Town Business Liaison Committee (TBLC) is an advisory body to the Town Council and serves as a bridge between the Town of Vienna's government and its vibrant business community. Established in 1982, the committee aims to foster collaboration, promote economic growth, and support local businesses. Over the years, the TBLC has evolved to better align with the town's needs, as reflected in recent updates to its bylaws and mission.

In the fiscal year 2024 (FY 23-24), from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024, the TBLC prioritized community engagement, business recognition, and the advancement of policies to support economic development. This report highlights the committee's accomplishments, ongoing initiatives, and future plans.

Membership and Meetings

The Town Business Liaison Committee (TBLC) is composed of nine dedicated individuals representing a diverse cross-section of Vienna's business community and residents. Members work collaboratively to advance the committee's mission. In FY 23-24, the TBLC was chaired by Jen Morrow, owner of Bards Alley Bookshop, with support from Vice Chair Tim Fricker (July 2023 – Feb 2024) and Tracy McCarty (Feb 2024 – current). This year, the committee welcomed two new members: Najee Davis, a Business Member and owner of Chick-fil-A, and Robert Marsh, a Resident Member. Vice Chair Tim Fricker, owner of Bikes at Vienna, left the committee in April 2024.

The TBLC held ten regular monthly meetings on the second Thursday of each month, except July and August, throughout FY 23-24, maintaining a consistent schedule to address ongoing projects, new initiatives, and collaborations. Highlights from these meetings include discussions on awards programs, the Shine Bright Vienna Holiday Decorating Contest, and updates on the town's economic development initiatives. The committee also reviewed new business licenses monthly, ensuring outreach to new business community members.

FY 23-24 Accomplishments

The TBLC achieved several milestones during this fiscal year, reflecting its commitment to Vienna's business community:

- **Business Recognition:**
 - Finalized and implemented updated criteria for the Robert Leggett Outstanding Service Award and the Carole Wolfand Community Service Award. These awards recognized exemplary contributions by local businesses and employees
 - Created new recognition programs for business milestones, highlighting long-standing contributions to the town's economy

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- Supported the Economic Development Department’s programming during Economic Development Week 2024, including the annual Thrive Business Awards Ceremony. Over 75 businesses were honored for 20 or more years in Vienna, and TBLC members helped plan and lead the event, which included a networking reception attended by more than 40 guests.
- **Community Engagement:**
 - Actively participated in ribbon-cutting ceremonies throughout the year, showcasing the committee’s commitment to fostering a welcoming business environment.
 - Organized the 2023 Shine Bright, Vienna! holiday decorating contest. Participation grew significantly, with 50 total entries (22 businesses) and more than 1,100 votes cast, showcasing increased community interest.
 - During Economic Development Week 2024, TBLC members joined business retention visits to Blue Ribbon Barbershop and Gimga Design Group to understand their needs better and discuss how the Town can support their growth. Members also visited Cedar Park Shopping Center to explore placemaking and business attraction opportunities.
- **Marketing and Outreach:**
 - Supported marketing campaigns led by the Economic Development Department, including Restaurant Week and Economic Development Week. Members engaged with these efforts through social media and in-person outreach.
 - Distributed welcome postcards to new business license holders, fostering a culture of inclusivity.
- **Policy Contributions:**
 - Provided feedback on the town’s parking study, contributing to improved infrastructure planning.
 - Actively supported updates to Vienna’s comprehensive plan, emphasizing economic development priorities.
 - During Economic Development Week, the TBLC hosted a public conversation about Vienna’s Comprehensive Plan. Attendees provided more than 50 comments and feedback points, particularly on the Economic Development Chapter, which were submitted to the Department of Planning and Zoning for review. Please see the attached EDW 2024 Final Report for more details about Economic Development Week (EDW).
 - In June 2024, TBLC members hosted a walking tour of Vienna’s Historic Church Street corridor with representatives from Main Street America. This initiative aimed to explore the value of Main Street programs and gather insights for preserving the area’s charm. A follow-up meeting occurred in fall 2024 to discuss findings.

Looking Ahead: FY24-25 Goals

As the Town Business Liaison Committee (TBLC) continues its mission to support and strengthen Vienna's business community, the focus for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 is on enhancing engagement, fostering innovation, and building partnerships. The committee has identified several key priorities for the upcoming year:

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1. Deepening Community-Business Engagement, including Home Based Businesses
2. Strengthening Business Recognition Programs
3. Supporting Economic Development Initiatives
4. Expanding Marketing and Outreach Efforts
5. Enhancing Committee Operations
6. Promoting Inclusivity and Innovation
7. Collaborating with other Town committees/commissions on shared objectives

By pursuing these goals, the TBLC aims to reinforce its advisory role to the Town Council and be a champion for Vienna's vibrant business community. The committee looks forward to a year of growth, collaboration, and success.

Attachment: *Economic Development Week (EDW) 2024 Final Report*

For more information on the success of Economic Development Week, see the attached EDW 2024 Final Report, which details key events, participation metrics, and future recommendations