



## **Berkeley City Council Ad-Hoc Subcommittee on Small Business**

**Tuesday, September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
10:00am – 12:00pm  
1947 Center Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Magnolia Conference Room**

### **Subcommittee Members**

- Mayor Jesse Arreguin (Subcommittee Chair)
- Councilmember Lori Droste, District 8
- Councilmember Kate Harrison, District 4
- Councilmember Linda Maio, District 1

#### **1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 10:07 AM. Mayor Arreguin and Councilmembers Droste and Harrison were present. Councilmember Maio was not present.

#### **2. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items Related to Scope of Subcommittee**

Kirsten MacDonald from the Chamber of Commerce mentioned that the RV situation has become untenable and that it does not promote a safe or clean environment. She feels it is also a bigger issue because there is only a 72 hour rule.

Mayor Arreguin commented that in the next council meeting, they will be talking about additional regulatory tools to handle this, and trying to find better practices than the 72 hour rule.

#### **3. Approval of Minutes (Attachment A)**

Minutes were approved from the August 6, 2018 with one amendment: including in item 6 that there was mention of getting an update on protecting pedestrian pathways during construction, as it may affect businesses.

#### **4. Neighborhood Conditions**

Jordan Klein was asked to begin the discussion by providing an overview of concerns the Office of Economic Development have heard from the business community. The three main concerns have been neighborhood cleanliness, parking availability, and illegal street behavior.

### *Neighborhood Cleanliness*

Cleanliness as a broad category, with issues reported including trash, graffiti, and quality of sidewalks, all of which affect pedestrian traffic/access and quality of shopping time. There have always been efforts to help this:

- Regular schedules city wide for city-led cleaning
- Baseline services for each commercial district; however these change over time depending on the demands on Public Works
- Paving schedule and sidewalk replacement schedule over time

### *Parking Availability*

Business owners have reported that finding parking is challenging for them and their employees just as often as for their customers. There has been an increase in this issue with UC Berkeley accepting more students, and the expansion of rideshare services. Jordan suspects it is exacerbated by the housing crisis causing people to have to commute. He also noted that people need better bicycle facilities, though this could further conflict with parking supply.

### *Illegal Street Behavior*

Illegal street behavior is also a top concern, including public urination and defecation, and mentally-ill or otherwise aggressive people entering businesses, harassing or physically threatening patrons and employees. He encouraged business owners to call 911 if they feel any threat to their safety.

### *Discussion*

- Councilmember Harrison questioned whether business owners were clear on the fact that drug use is considered an emergency, and therefore should necessitate the calling of 911. Jordan will follow-up with the police chief and deputy city manager on this.
- Mayor Arreguin turned the discussion to public restrooms, which could deter public urination and defecation.
- Councilmember Harrison commented that it would be useful to get additional street parking around Berkeley Way. She is meeting with someone who has ideas about how to put more angled parking in to deal with both employee and shopper issues.
- A bookstore owner, who has over a dozen employees commented on the issue of having only one parking permit for her business, to which there was the response that the council may need to look into modifying the policy of business owners only being allowed one.
- Games of Berkeley owner questioned if there was more that police officers could do with repeat homeless offenders who stole small amounts from stores consistently. Noted that even just officers occasionally patrolling outside of their vehicles may help.
- Group encampments were discussed as being an issue, from impacts to employees at Keiser on 2<sup>nd</sup> street to the fact that Sweet Adeline was forced to close their café. Mayor Arreguin noted that he's asked the city manager many times to deal with many specific encampments. Councilmember Droste reiterated that she wants to have a discussion at some point about how sanctioned encampments are not a solution to homelessness, to which the

Mayor replied that they are having a meeting October 6 about objects on sidewalks. Also emphasized that at no time has anyone on the council said that we want sanctioned encampments all over Berkeley.

- Councilmember Harrison would like to work out a better schedule for trash pick-up and ask that the city look at how it is collected in residential vs business areas to facilitate business schedules that allow them to move their cans back inside after pick-up so that others do not overuse the cans or mix trash and recyclables.

## **5. Discussion and Action: Formation of a Small Business Commission or Advisory Council**

Would the formation of a Small Business Commission or Advisory Council be useful for small business owners?

- Jordan noted that depending on how active the commission is (whether they establish subcommittees, etc.) greatly affects staff resources from OED, and without the inclusion of additional FTE would reduce their ability to perform other needed services
- There are 12 business-led business associations in Berkeley. Nine meet once a month. Participation by OED would greatly reduce if a Commission is formed.
- Small businesses have said they want the chance to become more involved in policy. However many have owners/leaders have also expressed publicly and privately that a Small Business Commission wouldn't help them engage with council the way that these ad-hoc meetings have.
- Jordan believes that continuing a council committee would be more effective.
- Heather Haxo Phillips from the Lorin Business District agreed with Jordan's comments, adding that the ad-hoc meetings are comprehensive, deep, make them feel heard, and that action is taken. She is not in favor of a Commission.
- Another business owner commented that the Labor Commission should be expanded so that people are forced to come to agreements, instead of commissions battling it out and leaving it for the council to solve. It should be two interested parties working at an intimate level.
- Councilmember Droste said that she would love to continue the ad-hoc meetings, or move to standard committees. She doesn't think that small business owners want a commission, and the council should listen to them and create something like a policy committee or extend this ad-hoc.
- Councilmember Harrison doesn't want to extend the ad-hoc, but wants to fold it into a regular Council committee (soon to be formed) so they can continue regular conversations
- The Mayor noted that they will be having a workshop discussion October 16, and that he would like to put a Council committee system in place by the end of November, coinciding with the new council taking office.

## **6. Next Steps for Reporting Back to Council**

Minutes will be sent out to councilmembers for approval electronically. When the discussion on October 16<sup>th</sup> occurs at council, subcommittee members will report out on takeways from this meeting, including their recommendation to incorporate

small business issues into a policy committee. An info report to council summarizing key issues will be led by the Mayor's office.

**7. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 11:22 AM.