

Meeting of the Redevelopment Agency of Sandy City

October 1, 2024 – Online/In Person Meeting
City Council Chambers, Sandy City Hall
10000 South Centennial Parkway, Sandy, Utah
MINUTES

Present: Present: Chair Zach Robinson, Vice Chair Aaron Dekeyzer, Marci Houseman, Brooke D’Sousa, Alison Stroud, Ryan Mecham, Cyndi Sharkey

Executive Director: Monica Zoltanski

Others in Attendance: Justin Sorenson, Assistant Director, Christine Edwards, Council Clerk, Liz Theriault, Sr. Policy and Comms Analyst, Shane Pace, CAO, Lynn Pace, City Attorney, Ryan McConaghie, Fire, Greg Severson, Police, Brian Kelley, Administrative Services, James Sorensen, Community Development, Kasey Dunlavy, Economic Development

1. Motion to convene Redevelopment Agency meeting.

Motion was made by Board Member Mecham to adjourn the meeting of the City Council and convene the Sandy City Redevelopment Agency Meeting. Board Member D’Sousa seconded the motion with all voting “yes”

The Redevelopment Agency Meeting commenced at approximately 6:50 p.m.

2. Resolution RD 24-03. A resolution of the Redevelopment Agency of Sandy City Authorizing The Execution of a Consulting Agreement with Cottonwood Business Consulting, LLC, for Small Business Liaison Services.

Kasey Dunlavy briefly discussed agenda item two, focusing on the approval of resolution RD 24-03. Previously tabled for further refinement, Kasey worked with Katie Johnson to incorporate performance metrics into the contract, responding to board members' feedback. These metrics aim to enhance tracking and reporting in the annual report. Kasey also shared supportive emails from local business owners, highlighting the positive impact of the Business Connect program and Katie Johnson's assistance. The first email from Craig Tyrell of Gajo Games emphasizes increased city engagement, while Shera Penner of BodyFit Training praises Ms. Johnson's support and resources since her business opened. Kasey requested these emails be added to the record.

Board Member Houseman thanked Kasey for considering the KPIs and acknowledged their efforts. She expressed a desire for more outcome-based KPIs that would indicate the impact of actions taken. Board Member Houseman noted that while there were a couple of KPIs related to improvements in survey results and issue resolution, they still didn't adequately reflect actual economic impact. She encouraged the use of outcome-based

metrics to ensure that the significant investment would lead to measurable economic outcomes. She reiterated concerns about spending \$40,000 on this contract, emphasizing the importance of directly supporting businesses in increasing revenue and contributing to economic development, rather than merely making them feel heard. Ultimately, Board Member Houseman felt the current KPIs did not meet their expectations for measuring meaningful outcomes.

Kasey Dunlavy added that the Economic Development department has been working with business licensing in community development to analyze new business license data. They were cross-referencing this information with sales tax data, particularly focusing on businesses involved in their Shop & Stroll events. Although not directly related, they hoped to use this analysis and performance metrics to provide updates in their annual report.

Board Member Sharkey commented that given the additional expenditure of \$40,000, there should be a measurable return on investment. Since the South Valley Chamber had expanded to include Herriman and Bluffdale, the chamber is the best avenue to address the small businesses' requests for more networking, marketing opportunities, and business promotion. She added that further investments to promote businesses should be directed through the South Valley Chamber, rather than other avenues, and if any additional business promotion could be done without increasing the budget, she supports it.

Kasey Dunlavy agreed that the chamber is a valuable asset and he has been working with Jay on programs to promote businesses in Sandy that aren't members of the chamber. From the 1-on-1 business visits, they found that smaller businesses, despite receiving information about the chamber, often didn't benefit as much from it due to costs and limited engagement. The Economic Development team has been distributing chamber resources during their business visits. Many businesses were unaware of these resources until they were directly informed. This outreach has become an essential part of the contract, allowing them to promote the chamber to busy small businesses. Additionally, the city has sponsored chamber luncheons, giving Sandy businesses an opportunity to see what the chamber offers. Through these efforts, the chamber has gained new members.

Board Chair Robinson expressed support for the position and agreed with Board Member Sharkey about the importance of bridging the gap between businesses and the Chamber. He highlighted how crucial it is for the city to help facilitate connections between new business owners and the Chamber, often seen during ribbon-cutting events. He believes that having the city involved in these introductions not only strengthens relationships between the businesses and the Chamber but also fosters a connection between the business owners and the city. This, in turn, helps ensure that business owners feel comfortable reaching out to the city when needed. Board Chair Robinson views the contract as a supplement to the city's ongoing investment in the South Valley Chamber and appreciated the inclusion of KPIs in the contract, seeing it as a step in the right direction.

The RDA meeting opened for public comment. Brent Allsop, Owner of Canonizer, added his thanks to Katie Johnson and mentioned what she has done to help his business.

Executive Director Zoltanski expressed pride in the small business program developed during her administration and emphasized its role in strengthening the local small business community, which has been a top priority over the past three years. She stated that following COVID, small business owners felt disconnected, and prior efforts, were inadequate in providing a strong connection with the city. Executive Director Zoltanski highlighted the importance of having the city serve as the primary point of contact for small businesses. She believes that a healthy small business community is essential to attracting larger businesses and fostering excitement in the local economy. She added that the South Valley Chamber has seen significant growth and is strongly supported but that Sandy's Economic Development efforts could not be entirely outsourced to the chamber. The chamber represents six cities, while Sandy's primary focus needs to remain on its own business community. She praised the work of Katie Johnson, stating that the business spotlight contract had already yielded a return on investment far beyond its cost. She sees the program as a modest yet high-yield investment in building the community and supporting local businesses.

Board Member D'Sousa acknowledged that her previous comments on the topic still held and recognized the additional KPIs provided. She feels that the KPIs focus more on the contractor's actions rather than the return on investment for the city of Sandy and questioned the value of renewing the contract with a broader scope, particularly regarding the city's role in supporting businesses. She expressed concern over whether the \$40,000 investment was justified for the face-to-face interactions and believed that the city could bridge the gap between businesses and the chamber using existing resources like the website and chatbot. As a small business owner herself, she understands the importance of marketing but does not believe it is the city's responsibility to market small businesses. Board Member D'Sousa is also concerned about the perception of favoritism within the business community and questioned whether one person could achieve broad outreach effectively. She does not support renewing the contract and said that it is not the role of city government to take on such responsibilities.

Kasey Dunlavy mentioned that he benchmarked other cities' practices regarding business development and outreach. Many cities employed full-time positions for similar work, spending significantly more than Sandy. He explains that the current contract was designed to be cost-effective by paying for services based on actual performance, rather than hiring a full-time employee with a higher salary. This approach allows the city to achieve the same results as other cities but at a lower cost. Mr. Dunlavy mentioned attending an economic development conference in Denver, where a key theme was the increased focus on small business retention and expansion. He emphasized that Sandy is already prioritizing this and views the current program as important in supporting small businesses.

Board Member Houseman commented that she values a \$40,000 investment that empowers businesses, but the responsibility ultimately lay with the businesses themselves. As a small business owner with limited resources, she understands the importance of carefully choosing how to invest in her business, including engaging with the Chamber. She appreciates the idea of reducing barriers for businesses but is hesitant to support the city doing too much on behalf of small businesses. Board Member Houseman recalled an earlier discussion about potentially reducing the cost of joining the Chamber to help businesses and suggested leveraging technology to spread information and encourage engagement. She supports the city's outreach efforts, but the city's role is to reduce barriers and offer support, not to handle everything for small businesses. They emphasized that businesses needed to invest in their own growth, and while they believed the Chamber was a valuable resource, they felt it was up to the businesses to make that decision. Board Member Houseman does not believe the \$40,000—or the \$120,000 over three years—is justified without clearer measures to demonstrate the return on investment. She is supportive of small businesses but does not see the current proposal as the right approach.

Board Member Sharkey agreed with Board Member Houseman that the city's role is to help small businesses help themselves, not do the work for them. She acknowledged that the Chamber has reduced membership fees and offers valuable support to help businesses grow. Board Member Sharkey stated that it's up to the businesses to invest in their own growth, and the city's role is to point them to the Chamber and remove barriers rather than fill gaps. She expressed concern about the \$40,000 investment, particularly because it involves a three-year, \$120,000 commitment. She feels there aren't sufficient measures to justify that level of investment but commended the Chamber for doing a great job with its seminars and business support and suggested that the city should invest in the Chamber to help small businesses.

Board Member Stroud reiterated that the Economic Development department is small and adding another individual through a contract is more cost-effective than hiring a full-time or part-time employee with benefits. She expressed trust in the department's judgment, seeing the proposed contract as beneficial and acknowledged that the three-year contract can be reevaluated if needed, offering flexibility and comfort in making the commitment. As a former small business owner of 22 years, Board Member Stroud relates to the challenges small business owners face and understands the value of having a city representative reach out to businesses that may not have contacted the Chamber. She mentions the allocation of city funds to various causes, such as the Sandy Museum or the Boys and Girls Club, which, like this program, provide intangible benefits that are hard to measure but still considered valuable. She emphasized the importance of trusting the department's recommendation, tweaking the KPIs as needed, and monitoring the program's effectiveness. Board Member Stroud expressed her support for the contract, while being open to reevaluating it if necessary.

Board Member Mecham made a motion to adopt Resolution RD 24-03. Board Member Stroud seconded the motion.

Vote: Stroud: Yes Houseman: No Mecham: Yes D’Sousa: No
Sharkey: No Robinson: Yes Dekeyzer: Yes

Motion Passed: Yes 4, No 3

3. Approval of the amended RDA minutes for June 4, 2024 and June 18, 2024:

Board Member Mecham made a motion to adopt the amended Minutes for June 4, 2024 and June 18, 2024. Board Member Dekeyser seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with all voting yes.

Motion Passed: Yes 7, No 0

4. Motion to adjourn Redevelopment Agency Meeting:

Board Member Robinson made a motion to adjourn the meeting of the RDA. Board Member Mecham seconded the motion, with all voting “yes”.

The meeting recessed at 7:30 p.m.

ATTEST:

Zach Robinson – Chair

Hannah Knudson- Secretary