



**CITY OF LOS ANGELES
SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION**

Wednesday, May 27, 2020,

12:30-1:30 pm

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Small Business Commissioners (7): Ronda Jackson, Mott Smith, Charles Lew, Jesse Torres, Elise Swanson, Gail Lara, Roslynm Simpson

EWDD Representatives: Vanessa Willis, Jacqueline Rodriguez, Kwesi Hanciles

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Jackson.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Approved by Commissioner Jackson. Seconded by Commissioner Torres.

3. Public Comment

Ronnell Hampton- Los Angeles Food Council/Good Food Zones

Mr. Hampton addressed the benefits of prioritizing the support of food and beverage industries especially with allowing the "Good Food Zones" to provide healthy food options to communities in need.

Ana Alicia Carr- American Heart Association/ Good Food Economy Workgroup

Ms. Carr echoed the importance of the good food zone policy. Proposed that a member of the "Good Food Zones" council is included in decision making groups and or meetings in concerns with the city and the Food and Beverage industry.

Mira Kelper- Co-Chair Good Food Economy Working Group

Ms. Kelper discusses her appreciation for the SBC and the City of Los Angeles focusing on getting small businesses up and running. Ms. Kelper feels the "Good Food Policy" will provide the best guidance for being able to understand the direct needs of these businesses when it comes to streamlining the process for which businesses can operate. She also discusses the importance of the city looking into extending the amount of time commercial tenants have for repayment of, especially in concerns to extending the 12 months because business mainly those with less than 50 employees will need more time to recover post- COVID.

4. Streamlining City Processes for Food and Beverage Businesses

Mrs. Rodriguez introduces EWDD staff on the call individually and initiates a discussion about the working group that will be leading the charge to streamline processes for the food and beverage business that will need assistance when reopening their businesses. She explains the survey that will be sent to various members of the food and beverage community to outline any detours they have incurred while opening their business. This will allow the Food and Beverage Industry Committee to develop immediate solutions to the problems being faced by business owners in this industry.

Information and input will also be taken from various other states and counties to have a broad range of data when considering the best possible solutions for the city of Los Angeles.

Commissioner Smith discussed the motivation for the group due to the recommendations of Councilmember Blumenfield. Mr. Smith provides insight on services businesses want to provide, such as patio dining. Though Mr. Smith also explains that there has to be building ramifications that can cause tens of thousands of dollars such as sprinkler systems where he sees an avenue for the Food and Beverage Committee to work with City departments that enforce those laws to minimize requirements or extend conditional permits. This will give businesses time to complete the renovations and allow them to use their capital in other ways to improve economic situations sooner.

Commissioner Torres provided information on organizations such as Cal-ed, Small Business Authority, Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce, etc. that are doing similar work for similar causes that will provide a good background for the Food and Beverage Committee.

Commissioner Lara discussed her recommendation work with the street vendors that would be great to partner with to provide service and healthy eating options to city residents in need.

Commissioner Swanson provided feedback on issues raised by restaurants and bar owners about reopening under the new guidelines of the department of health.

Commissioner Jackson recommended that it is taken into consideration that any fees for the proposed programs by the Food and Beverage Committee should not cripple businesses from growth or sustainability beyond COVID- 19. Ms. Rodriguez proposed tabling these discussions until we gain more information from the resources such as the survey and Food and Beverage Committee to make recommendations.

Commissioner Jackson recommended attaching an amount of relief in the form of permits and regulations in comparison to the business' revenue stream.

Commissioner Swanson discussed how outdoor dining should be expedited as the Food and Beverage Committee tries to decipher what other plans can be implemented.

Commissioner Lara suggested that there be a large effort set forth by the City that will connect restaurants to mobile delivery services as another revenue source.

5. Temporary Protection of Commercial Tenants During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Chris Espinoza- Chief Legislative Analyst Office

Mr. Espinoza discussed the amendment approved in March to relieve commercial tenants of rents. He also explained that when the order is been lifted there will be a set

time for deferment of payment. Espinoza seeks the insight of the SBC to find the best ways to navigate through this amendment.

Commissioner Lew expands on the multiple recommendations that he provides in concerns to defaults in leases, security deposits, and how some commercial landlords are working with tenants on reasonable accommodations such as paying common ground fees in place of full rental fees at this time. Lew also recommends that the city further educate the public on the different scenarios small businesses might incur in the means of the extenuating cost when it comes to defending themselves in a legal battle with a landlord. Allowing them to understand that this isn't an affirmative defense to an eviction.

Commissioner Smith recommends the city to find ways to provide relief to landlords who are not able to forgive lease agreements so that tenants that can pay don't take advantage of this situation.

Commissioner Jackson suggests that it be considered that landlord owners receive some type of relief in the form of maybe property taxes or BTRC's since they are also suffering. Commissioner Torres seconds that suggestion.

Commissioner Swanson echoed the idea that small property owners are also a part of our small business community and express that their concerns should also be taken into consideration. Commissioner Swanson also discusses how educational efforts should be extended to small businesses educating them on the difference between deferral and forgiveness.

Commissioner Jackson inquired about the feedback in concerns to what commercial landlord associations feel will be the long-term results of the problems they are incurring. He also presents the question of how commercial renting will be affected in the future.

Mr. Espinoza responds to commissioners about their concerns for landlord relief and discussed that the city has received federal funds that are prepared to be offered to landlords to providing relief.

Commissioner Lew expresses his concerns about the ever-changing small business relief requirements and being able to relay the changes or new information effectively to small businesses.

ADJOURNMENT

May 27th, 2020 1:19 PM