



**SMALL BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Small Business Development Committee Meeting

April 13, 2021 | 9:00 – 10:30am | via Zoom Videoconference

Committee Member Attendance: *Attendance noted as Yes (Y) or No (N)*

Raul Fernandez, Chair	Y	Jenn Mason	Y
Elias Audy	Y	Anne Meyers	Y
Tracy Chen	Y	Debbie G. Miller	Y
Raj Dhanda	N	Colleen Suhanosky	Y
David Gladstone	Y	Debbie Raisner Thompson	Y
Talia Glass	Y	LeRoy Watkins	Y
Melissa Tapper Goldman	Y	Andrew Weiner	Y
David Leschinsky	Y		

Staff: Meredith L. Mooney

Members of the Public: None

Materials Presented: [4/13/2021 meeting agenda](#), [March 9, 2021 draft meeting minutes](#), [April 9, 2021 Memo Economic Development Division Staff Updates to the Small Business Development Committee \(SBDC\)](#), [Brookline Chamber of Commerce's May 2021 Town Meeting Warrant Article Positions](#)

Zoom Recording Link:

https://brooklinema.zoomgov.com/rec/share/ZvaglOa_B9n4ka2sQxlEkyuUm_9RP3rP1-OV8BVJ88YBJhJ49PMqXXQ08-hLHEDP.Q8PHp8gfP1JZNWKR?startTime=1618319114000

Meeting Minutes

With a quorum present, Chair Raul Fernandez convened the meeting.

March 9, 2021 Meeting Minutes

- The committee approved the draft March 9, 2021 meeting minutes by a vote of 10-0-4.

Public Comment

- No public comment was given. No members of the public attended the meeting.

Committee Housekeeping

- A new committee photo was taken. Anne Meyers volunteered to help gather and standardize committee member bios for the webpage.

Small Business Relief Grant Program update & committee discussion about updating the Comparative Criteria section of the [Small Business Relief Grant Program](#)

- Staff sought the committee's feedback on how the scoring criteria for the second round of Small Business Relief Grants should be updated.
- The committee advised that eligible applicants who did not receive funding in the first round should receive priority in the second round of applications.
- Minority and women-owned business applicants should receive additional points in the scoring rubric. Staff will consult with Town Counsel as well as the City of Cambridge, which has experimented with prioritizing women and minority-owned businesses in some of its economic development programs, about prioritizing women and minority business applicants. At the very least, applications should seek to gather information about applicants' business ownership.
- The maximum grant award should be reduced from \$15,000 to \$10,000 to maximize the number of grant recipients.
- The COVID-19 Impact criteria should be modified to assess the extent of an applicant's sustained financial losses during the pandemic.
- Raul, Jenn, Colleen, and Andrew volunteered to review and provide additional comments and feedback to staff on the revised grant rubric.

Rapid Recovery Plan update & committee discussion about next steps and focus groups

- Findings from the Local Rapid Recovery Plan (LRRP) survey and data collection process will be presented to the SBDC and Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB) in late May.
- SBDC members provided feedback on staff's proposed LRRP focus groups. The amended categories included:
 - Property owners
 - Storefront businesses (Restaurant, retail, service businesses) [potentially more than one focus group session]
 - Transportation/Sustainability advocates
 - Arts and entertainment
- Staff encouraged SBDC members to participate in the LRRP's educational webinar series, which Brookline has access to through its participate in this program.

Continued discussion about committee goals and focus areas for 2021, decision about potential review of other warrant articles

- **Future of Outdoor Dining:**
 - o With Town Meeting's anticipated approval of Warrant Articles 29 and 30, which would expand the scope of Brookline's outdoor dining program, weighing and navigating the tradeoffs of repurposing public space in our commercial areas for a private entity's exclusive use was identified as an agenda topic for a future SBDC meeting.
 - o Select Board Member Fernandez will speak as both the Select Board and Small Business Development Committee representative in support of Warrant Articles 29 and 30 at Town Meeting. David Leschinsky will speak in support of the outdoor seating warrant articles, as well, as a representative of the Coolidge Corner Merchants' Association.
 - o The committee declined to hold public hearings on any additional Spring Town Meeting warrant articles.
- **Committee Site Visit/Research:** Debbie Raisner Thompson encouraged committee members to visit Starlight Square in Central Square, as well as Bow Market, for inspiration.

Other Business

- **Fare Free Route 66 MBTA Bus Route Proposal:** Select Board Member Fernandez provided an update on the MBTA Route 66 Fare Free Bus Route pilot program proposal. Chair Fernandez will continue to work with the Town's Transportation Administrator on this proposal.
- **Art in Public Spaces:** Select Board Member Fernandez is working with the Town's Arts Coordinator Gillian Jackson to identify funding sources to support arts events or performances in our commercial areas and possibly in vacant storefronts. More updates to come.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30am.