



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Virtual Meeting  
Albany, CA 94706

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### MINUTES

Thursday, December 3, 2020, 5:00 P.M.

1. **CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL – 5:00 PM**

Committee Members present: Cain, Goldman, Montagh, Tiedemann, Charles  
Committee Members Absent: Cheasty, Sala.

2. **REQUEST FROM MEMBER CAIN TO HOLD A MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR COVID PATIENTS**

At 5:01 pm, a moment of silence was held to pay homage to all of the families and victims of the pandemic, especially those who lost their lives or who lost loved ones.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** October 1, 2020

Approved at 5:02 pm.

4. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

5. **PRESENTATIONS**

**5-1. and 5-2. Presentation from Jeff Bond on Economic Trends & Health Orders**

Mr. Bond presented information on economic trends during the Covid era. Reviewed Albany Taxable Sales in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2020 versus the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2019. There was a 23.9% decline in total taxable sales, which was not as much of a decline as its neighboring cities. Showed graphs on how businesses in the San Francisco Bay Area have been affected by the Coronavirus pandemic, if businesses temporarily closed any of its locations, if there was an increase in the use of online platforms for businesses, and what businesses think they will need in the next six months. Most businesses experienced a large or moderate negative affect. There was a moderate increase in the use of online platforms. Businesses thought they would need an increase in marketing our sales (32.2%), to obtain financial assistance or additional capital (29.8%). Only 13.3% thought they would need to develop online sales or websites.

Mr. Bond provided public health data. New County health orders were getting ready to come out. This was due to an increase in the number of Covid-19 cases and hospitalizations in Alameda County, as well as a decrease in percentage capacity of ICU beds in Alameda County. Albany had the lowest case rates among cities in the County. Mr. Bond presented demographics on County cases based on ethnicity.

Member Montagh – Question on State order, because it was categorized by district. He wanted to know what Albany's district happened to be. Mr. Bond answered that the state order would be based on aggregation of ICU capacity among 11 counties, including Alameda County.



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Member Tiedemann – Wanted to confirm that the health order was not in place yet and that outdoor dining would not need to close until the order was put in place. Ms. Hersch confirmed that he was correct and elaborated on what else would be prohibited if the order was put in place.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

## 5. DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE ACTION ON MATTERS RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

### 5-1. Update on Marketing Plan

*Recommendation: Receive staff update on planned marketing campaign for Albany's business districts and provide input.*

Claire spoke about HAAS school students assistance with the marketing campaign.

### 5-2. Subcommittee Updates

*Recommendation: Receive updates from subcommittees.*

Business Retention/Attraction: Cain, Montagh, Sala

Reopening: Charles, Tiedemann

Arts: Goldman **PRESENTATIONS**

**No new updates to share.**

## 6. DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE ACTION ON MATTERS RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

### 6-1. Update on Marketing Plan

*Recommendation: Receive staff update on planned marketing campaign for Albany's business districts and provide input.*

Anne Hersch spoke about the development of a marketing plan with the Haas School of Business at UC Berkeley at the City. Students prepared step-by-step instructions for businesses if they were to increase their marketing presence through Google and on the Web. City, students, and Chamber of Commerce looking at next steps on how to implement this and what resources would be applied.

Member Montagh – ask if the plan had been presented to the Chamber and staff. Anne Hersch confirmed that a preview had been presented. Member Montagh asked if it seemed user-friendly and intuitive. Ms. Hersch confirmed that the student did a very thorough job. Thought it would be beneficial for businesses looking to increase their web presence. Member Montagh asked if it had information on how to optimize the website for businesses or focused on how to market the business website. Ms. Hersch confirmed that it was more to market the website and increase traffic through search engines. Member Montagh asked if the information included information for non-pay and pay to gain traction. Ms. Hersch answered that information on the cost and budget of implementing the plan was included at the end of the document. The Chamber of Commerce may be interested in providing a contribution to businesses.



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Member Goldman – asked when the Committee gets to see it. Ms. Hersch answered that the Committee will hopefully get to see it at the next meeting. It should be finalized by then.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

Tod Abbott – What was discussed at the meeting was an online campaign for the City. This was a part of it. Sees value in a full campaign strategy for advertising business in Albany in general. The Chamber and the SAA is working on a rebirth of a website that will list all business and the ads would be targeted to this website. Found the most value in the marketing strategy of the students. Did not see this as a plan for the businesses to go out and market themselves. He had offered that type of training before.

### 6-2. Subcommittee Updates

*Recommendation: Receive updates from subcommittees.*

Business Retention/Attraction: Cain, Montagh, Sala

Reopening: Charles, Tiedemann

Arts: Goldman

Arts Sub-Committee – Member Goldman attended the Solano Avenue Association Board of Directors meeting. Went to meeting to discuss desire to work with them more and get plans moving forward. An idea was to use empty storefronts for art exhibits. Will communicate with the Arts Committee to help in this plan. Plans to try and contact business owners about using storefront in this way. Will reach out to other Art Walks in the area to see how they implemented this idea. Member Goldman wants to make sure this has an organized selection process for the art if storefront business owners agree. The hope is that this would encourage the spaces to be rented.

Chair Charles – Commented on this. Thinks the Committee function is doing a disservice to some of our business community. Thinks that the intention of the two committees focus on a recovery aspect for businesses. Thinks that the focus of the sub-committees should change to better serve the businesses. Can a sub-committee look into loans available for businesses?

Member Goldman – Agreed that sub-committees could be more proactive in providing information on new loans for businesses. Asked if Community Development received this type of question.

Member Cain – Stated that he thought businesses are pretty aware of what is available to them based on a necessity to keep their businesses going. Doesn't think this is a practical use of time.

Chair Charles – Asked if there is anything we can do to get more out of the Committees.

Member Tiedemann – Thinks that a reopening plan should be in place the near future, but with a new lockdown coming, maybe it isn't the best time. Is wondering if the sub-committee could look at how to change policy to be more flexible as we move through different tiers.

Jeff Bond – Suggested letting the new City Council come together in the new year to provide direction to the Committee on what to work on. This would include drafting a new work plan. Imagines new sub-committees would emerge from this.

### PUBLIC COMMENT



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None.

### 7. ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### 7-1. San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Update

*Recommendation: Receive staff update on the encroachment permit program for outdoor seating.*

Anne Hersch provided a brief status update.

City is now live with a virtual open house for the specific plan. [Sanpablospecificplan.org](http://Sanpablospecificplan.org) provides a survey and allows for comments.

Additional Announcement – The two-year term for the Committee is up and members are welcome to reapply to be reappointed for the next term.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeremiah: Would like to propose a San Pablo Avenue Business Association. This would be similar to Solano Avenue Association.

Tod Abbott: Found value in Jeremiah's comment and wanted to emphasize that the Chamber of Commerce is working with San Pablo Avenue businesses. One issue involves events. San Pablo is controlled by CalTrans and street closure is not allowable. The types of businesses as whole do not lend themselves to events.

Member Cain: Is this plan still part of the same discussion on the plan to shut San Pablo down to three lanes. Anne Hersch confirmed that this is a different discussion.

### 8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Committee members announce requests for future agenda items.

Member Tiedemann - would like Committee to look at permitting for outside dining and other types of reopening measures. This way the City and businesses are prepared as reopening happens.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeremiah – Would like an agenda item to encourage cleanliness of the Big Belly trash cans and Solano Avenue. Would like a cleanliness task force. Christmas lights not up this year.

### 9. NEXT MEETING: Thursday, January 7, 2020, 5:00pm

### 10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:49pm.