

Business Development Committee Meeting Minutes
151 Martin Street, Conference Room 202 & 203
May 1, 2023, at 8:00 a.m.

M. McKenzie called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

In Attendance: M. McKenzie (Co-Chairperson), S. Surnow (Co-Chairperson), J. Hockman, S. Quintal,
Staff: C. Sheppard-Decius
Guests: C. Quezada, D. Gilbert, A. Thomas
Absent: N/A

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Approval of Minutes: Motion by Surnow, second by Quintal, to approve the minutes from the March 21, 2023, Business Development Committee meeting. All ayes. Motion passes.

Business Recruitment – Business Mix Analysis & Recommendation Presentation

McKenzie stated that the purpose of the Business Mix Analysis is broken into three ideas: Improvement that gets people to visit Birmingham on a regular basis, recruiting other small businesses from other locations (Zingerman's, bookstore, etc.), and communicating the gaps to fill to landlords and brokers for the national mix. Sheppard-Decius stated that there are currently not a lot of retail spaces available, but there should be long range planning to think about the future and what will be needed, as well as tenant retention and recruitment. McKenzie added that the data shows there is room for growth, but also being mindful as to not lose the community feel by adding too many national retailers. He added that there is a need for apparel across all categories, apart from jewelry, as well as quick service lunches. Quezada added that being socially conscious about the national brands that come into Birmingham and avoiding fast fashion choices such as H & M is of the utmost importance. Thomas added that Birmingham should be a unique, sophisticated, curated collection that's different from Somerset and other places. McKenzie inquired about other tools to share information with businesses, and Sheppard-Decius recommended utilizing the Placer.ai data to share with individuals about the traction of Birmingham, potentially inviting brokers and landlords to a lunch to understand the data.

Community Survey

Sheppard-Decius stated that the committee is looking to create a community survey via Engage to understand what people are looking for in Downtown Birmingham. The committee agreed that the survey will be directed to residents, merchants, and employees. The committee agreed that the survey should be short (5 questions or less) and will consist of the following ideas:

1. Do you live/work in town, if not, how often are you in town?
2. Collecting the demographic of survey respondents
3. Retail section, services section, restaurant section
4. What's prohibiting you from frequenting the downtown area more often?
5. What do you do when you come into town? Shop, eat, etc?

The questions will be finalized and discussed further in the next committee meeting.

Business Marketing – Retail Market Profile

Retail Market Profile: Sheppard-Decius stated that she updated the retail market profile so when connecting with brokers and potential stores they have the data of the business mix and understand the strength of the market of Birmingham. Thomas recommended a space availability report and mapping program. There was also a recommendation to connect Placer.ai to this data as well.

Organizational Items - Action Plan

Sheppard-Decius recommended creating an action plan to dive deeper into benchmarks, goals, and timeline to accomplish these goals. McKenzie suggested the format of goal setting with creating a number of businesses to reach out to per quarter, or per month. This will be discussed more in-depth at the next committee meeting.

Other Business

The committee agreed to move the next Business Development meeting from May 23, 2023, to May 30, 2023, due to ICSC Las Vegas convention.

Meeting ended at 9:32am

NEXT MEETING DATE – May 30, 2023, at 8:30 a.m.

APPROVED

Drafted by: N. Gerkey Reviewed by: C. Sheppard-Decius 5/26/23
