
**SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, February 27, 2023

4:30 P.M.

City Hall, Room 400

1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, San Francisco, CA 94102

SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSIONERS

Cynthia Huie, President;

Miriam Zouzounis, Vice-President;

Tiffany Carter, Lawanda Dickerson; Rachel Herbert; William Ortiz-Cartagena;

1. Call to order and roll call

Meeting called to order at 4:35pm

Present: Dickerson, Herbert, Huie, Ortiz-Cartagena, Zouzounis (late)

Absent: Carter

2. Approval of Legacy Business Registry Applications and Resolutions (Discussion and Action Item)

The Commission heard the following Legacy Business Registry applications, presented by Richard Kurylo, Legacy Business Program Manager, Office of Small Business.

- a. La Mejor Bakery (Application No.: [LBR-2022-23-028](#))
- b. Peña Pachamama (Application No.: [LBR-2022-23-029](#))
- c. Tony Nik's Café (Application No.: [LBR-2022-23-018](#))

Public comment:

Quentin Navia, Pena Pachamama: started as a musical group and took over the space. Spoke to the community nature of the venue and the joy that it brings.

Sebastian Scala, Tony Nik's: Talked about the history of the cocktail lounge, whose 90th anniversary is coming up. It's been passed down by family to employees for generations.

Gabriela Lozano, founder of Calle 24 cultural district, speaking in support of La Mejor: She helped with this Legacy Business app for La Mejor five years ago. Spoke about the cultural significance and proliferation of bakeries in the neighborhood.

Commissioner Comment:

Ortiz-Cartagena: Gave accolades to La Mejor Bakery. Spoke about seeing shows at Pena Pachamama, and remembering friends who went to Tony Nik's Café. You're the reason why we're SF.

Dickerson: You're the reason that people also visit SF. People don't know how much goes into running a small business – it's not small.

Zouzounis: Thanked all businesses for their work. Grateful that Pena Pachamama features Arabic music and culture.

Herbert: Thank you all

Huie: Thank you for sharing your stories and all that you do.

Motion to approve Legacy Business Applications: Ortiz-Cartagena

2nd: Dickerson

Aye: Dickerson, Herbert, Huie, Ortiz-Cartagena, Zouzounis

Absent: Carter

3. **Small Business Survey Update (Discussion Item)**

Anoshua Chaudhuri, Professor and Chair of the Department of Economics at San Francisco State University, presented initial results from the 2022 small business survey. Highlights:

- Business receipts have shrunk.
- More micro-businesses (with less than 10 employees) in 2022 compared to their status in 2019.
- Businesses have used Financial Assistance from federal, local, friends and self and they've pivoted business operations: More than 25% resorted to curbside pick-up, online services, online sales, outdoor operations. It worked extremely well for about a third of the businesses who moved to online or outdoor operations.
- Accommodation and Food Services and Real Estate asked for improved street conditions
- Arts & Entertainment and Retail asked for more marketing and messaging to increase customers
- Education, Health Care and Manufacturing asked for increased security
- Professional, technical and other services asked for more grants and loans
- Asian and Middle-Eastern owners asked for increased security
- Black, Latinx, Mixed Race owners asked for more loans and grants
- White owners asked for improved street conditions

Commissioner comments:

Ortiz-Cartagena: Thank you – so helpful. This survey flagged parking as a challenge, and that's true for my community. Transit first is wrong. We got more in-language surveys this time around. Online just doesn't translate for older folks.

Director Tang: Thank you. This data is so helpful.

Herbert: I'm stuck on the stat about white businesses upset about dirty streets.

Huie: Seeing this info again just sparks new interest and questions. 35% of Asian businesses took the survey in language. Similar for latinx businesses. That's so many businesses who function in another language entirely with so much confidence. It makes me very proud to live in SF.

Zouzounis: This data help proves that small businesses are a force for fighting gentrification and we're doing our part to collect feedback from monolingual communities.

4. **Approval of Draft Meeting Minutes (Discussion and Action Item)**

The Commission discussed and took action to approve the January 23, 2023 draft meeting minutes.

Motion: Zouzounis

2nd: Dickerson

Aye: Dickerson, Herbert, Huie, Ortiz-Cartagena, Zouzounis

Absent: Carter

5. **General Public Comment (Discussion Item)**

No members of the public requested to speak.

6. **Director's Report (Discussion Item)**

Flood grant update: businesses have been notified if they were awarded.

Awning workshop in Chinatown: we're hosting to help small businesses who received NOV's as a result of complaints lodged to Dept. Of Building Inspection.

ABE Barrier removal grants: we've expanded the program so that now we're reimbursing for labor and design work. That work needs to come from companies that are following City labor laws like prevailing wages. We've also expanded business gross receipts threshold to \$8 million to allow more businesses to apply.

City recovery roadmap: the Mayor announced economic recovery efforts focused on the downtown. There are dashboards tracking recovery.

OSB continues to do multiple merchant walks per week. If there is a corridor with a pressing need, let us know.

Ortiz-Cartagena: Why is the city looking at awnings? Director Tang clarified that a person is filing complaints that the City is legally obligated to follow up on. The city is not proactively inspecting business awnings. RE: merchant walks – it really means a lot to the community.

7. **Commissioner Discussion and New Business (Discussion Item)**

Allows President, Vice President, and Commissioners to report on recent small business activities, make announcements that are of interest to the small business community, and make inquiries of staff. Allows Commissioners to introduce new agenda items for future consideration by the Commission.

Ortiz-Cartagena: An elderly person was attacked in my community in broad daylight. My nonprofit is trying to activate these dangerous corridors. Departmental staff are not doing their job properly – there is no accountability. Coming up: March 10 evening at 16th and 24th street BART activations.

Zouzounis: ERTC deadline is coming up so reminder to apply. SBA has a new website to help businesses pay their EIDL loans.

Huie: Chinatown community is weighing in on SFMTA proposals re: CA 1 bus route. Want to open discussion for how we weigh specific community needs with transit policies.

Ortiz-Cartagena: similar struggles in the Mission with red lanes to expedite the bus. It's hurt small businesses – now we have 60 vacant storefronts in the corridor.

Herbert: yes, we need to figure out a way to move through spaces that are acceptable with cultural norms.

Dickerson: There is nothing normal about SF – we are culturally very unique. When an outsider tells us how we travel in our community it's a complete violation. Regarding third street, we need to have a zero-tolerance policy for what people think they can get away with in small businesses – they violate small businesses.

Ortiz-Cartagena: My daughter doesn't want to go into the neighborhood anymore because of the behavior of people there.

Huie: Speaking of awnings, ADA, etc. in Chinatown I talked with business owners and thought about the built environment there. Communities of color have often been unwanted and our communities have persisted over time. We've had to piece together our communities after redevelopment, etc. But the fact that we can't come into compliance now may not be 100% our fault. It's important to acknowledge that.

Herbert: It's an important and huge issue.

Zouzounis: we need to do code cleanup to remove institutional damage. Maybe we should consider auditing some of these policies.

8. **Adjournment**