



City of Tacoma Economic Development Committee Minutes

Dial: 253-215-8782 Meeting ID: 882 2753 9908

Webinar Link: www.zoom.us/j/88227539908 Passcode: 614650

March 09, 2021

10:00 AM

Chair Robert Thoms, Vice Chair Conor McCarthy, Keith Blocker,
Catherine Ushka, Chris Beale (alternate)

Call To Order

Chair Thoms called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Roll Call

Present: 3 - McCarthy, Thoms and Ushka

Absent: 1 - Blocker

Deputy Mayor Blocker arrived at 10:08 a.m.

All Council Members participated virtually.

Approval of Minutes

1. [21-0230](#) Approval of the minutes of the December 8, 2020, meeting

MOTION: Council Member McCarthy moved to approve the minutes of the December 8, 2020, meeting.

SECONDED BY: Chair Thoms.

ACTION: Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was declared adopted.

Briefing Items

2. [21-0248](#) Discussion of Grocery Worker Compensation during the COVID-19 Proclamation of Emergency
[Council Member Robert Thoms, Chair, Economic Development Committee]

At approximately 10:06 a.m., Chair Thoms made opening remarks regarding grocery worker compensation during the COVID-19 Proclamation of Emergency, and invited groups representing grocery workers and grocery stores to present more information.

Deputy Mayor Blocker arrived here, at 10:08 a.m.

Angel Gonzalez, President, United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 367, gave a presentation expressing his support of hazard pay for grocery store workers, including an overview of the elevated risk of contracting COVID-19 for essential grocery workers; a store case study; and elevated profits at supermarket chains.

Charlie Brown, Principal, Cascade Government Affairs; Holly Chisa, Lobbyist, Northwest Grocery Association; and Tammie Hetrick, President and CEO, Washington Food Industry Association, expressed opposition of hazard pay for grocery store workers and provided information on the current measures being taken to protect the grocery workers; the relationship between stores and the labor union; an agreement regarding additional wages and benefits; the enforcement of health policies; grocery exposure rates; the value of customers; and job security during the pandemic.

Discussion ensued regarding appreciation for grocery workers; impacts in jurisdictions that have issued hazard pay; types of workers and stores included; whether record profits of grocery stores are being distributed inequitably; rewarding individuals who work in challenging environments; risks to City government getting involved; unintended consequences of store closures and job losses; if an alternative has been proposed to instead cover medical costs; potential alternatives to reduce hazards; further study of data in the presentation; equity issues, noting those caused by food deserts and smaller stores; economic and racial diversity in grocery stores; creating deeper inequities; vaccination sites; partnerships with employers regarding assistance resources; vaccination phases; hazard pay termination date; emergency orders; the number of stores impacted; information from the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department; potential profiteering; the efficacy of safety implementations; and feedback from the presentation speakers.

3. [21-0226](#) Hotel Worker Recall Rights Informational Briefing
[Dylan Carlson, Senior Labor Relations Manager; and
Chris Bacha, Chief Deputy City Attorney]

At approximately 11:09 a.m., Chair Thoms introduced Dylan Carlson, Senior Labor Relations Manager, and Chris Bacha, Chief Deputy City Attorney. Mr. Carlson presented an overview of hotel worker recall rights, including a definition of recall rights, a flowchart of how recall rights function, recall advantages and challenges, and a request from Tacoma workers for recall rights related to the Murano Hotel. Mr. Bacha reviewed the complications that exist, and potential legal challenges.

Discussion ensued regarding statewide recall rights, legal challenges, employment requirements, whether an Executive Session should be held to further discuss this matter, how many former Murano Hotel workers are still looking for employment, workforce training, and partnering with Pierce County to improve workforce options.

Topics for Upcoming Meetings

4. [21-0227](#) March 23, 2021 - South Sound Manufacturing Industrial Council;
Downtown Tacoma Partnership

Chair Thoms stated the next meeting will be on March 23, 2021, and will include presentations on the South Sound Manufacturing Industrial Council and the Downtown Tacoma Partnership.

Other Items of Interest

Council Member McCarthy expressed interest in discussing the use of federal funds related to economic development and workforce development.

Public Comment

Public Comment was heard from:

1. Maris Zivarts, speaking on grocery worker compensation, and recall rights.
2. Nick Leider, speaking on recall rights for hotel workers.
3. Julie Richards, speaking on grocery worker compensation.
4. Zack Pattin, speaking on hotel workers.
5. Alex B., speaking on grocery worker compensation and hotel workers.
6. Jenna Hain, speaking on grocery worker compensation and hotel workers.
7. Angel Gonzalez, speaking on grocery worker compensation and hotel workers.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:58 a.m.



Robert Thoms, Chair



Jered Lobban, City Clerk's Office