



City of Tacoma

Economic Development

Committee Minutes

747 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402, Conference Room 248

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

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

May 09, 2023

10:00 AM

Chair **Keith Blocker**, Vice Chair **Kiara Daniels**, **Joe Bushnell**,
Olgy Diaz, **Sarah Rumbaugh** (alternate)

Call To Order

Chair Blocker called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Roll Call

Present: 3 - Blocker, Bushnell and Diaz

Absent: 1 - Daniels

Vice Chair Daniels arrived at 10:08 a.m.

Public Comment

There was no Public Comment.

Briefing Items

1. [23-0470](#) 2023 BIPOC Chamber Feasibility Study Update
[Carol Wolfe, Division Manager, Community and Economic Development]

At approximately 10:03 a.m, Carol Wolfe, Division Manager, Community and Economic Development (CED), introduced Patricia Colemon and Annie Jones-Barnes, Principal Consultants, Colemon and Associates. Jones-Barnes provided opening remarks and background about Colemon and Associates.

Vice Chair Daniels arrived here, at 10:08 a.m.

Colemon presented the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color Chamber of Commerce feasibility study update, including an introduction; the research process; comparative analysis across the country and region; a sample of data collected between December 2022 to April 2023; aspects of specialized chambers, noting a comparison of the typical chamber model to a race-based chamber; and testimonials from the business community. Wolfe concluded by outlining next steps,

noting that staff plan to present the final report in August 2023.

Discussion ensued regarding sources for business connections; language access; immigration and refugee status; evaluation techniques and ensuring good feedback; goals, noting support and advocacy for BIPOC businesses, reaching non-traditional businesses, understanding the benefits of a separate Chamber, and helping informal businesses get established; and outreach to businesses beyond Tacoma's city limits.

2. [23-0472](#)

Chamber of Commerce Business and Industry Panel

[Jeff Robinson, Director, Community and Economic Development;
Andrea Reay, President, Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber of Commerce]

At approximately 10:33 a.m., Chair Blocker provided opening remarks regarding the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) business and industry panel, including appreciation to the Chamber and panelists, and background. Andrea Reay, President and Chief Executive Officer, Chamber, provided additional opening remarks about collaboration and partnerships, and introduced panelists Christian Faltenberger, General Manager, Tacoma Mall; Bruce Martin, Energy Resource Manager, WestRock; and Michael Hiller, Senior Vice President, Umpqua Bank.

Chair Blocker led the panelists in a panel discussion regarding why they operate a business in Tacoma and what suggestions they have for making Tacoma a better place to own and operate a business; which City departments they interact with most; how they rate the responsiveness of the City; and their ideas for how the City can improve communication channels with the business community.

Discussion ensued throughout regarding the history of each business; concerns, noting public safety, taxes, regulations, permitting, planning, transportation, housing, and utilities; strengths, noting quality of life, people, positive environment for businesses, and communication with staff; differentiating Tacoma from Seattle; communication; predictability; the role of the Chamber; workforce development; and appreciation for local business and the panelists.

Topics for Upcoming Meetings

3. [23-0473](#)

May 23, 2023 - To Be Determined

May 30, 2023 - Cancelled

June 13, 2023 - Business Improvement Area Expansion Update

June 27, 2023 - Business Finance Update

Cathy Satava, Committee Liaison, stated that there are no topics

for the May 23, 2023, meeting; the May 30, 2023, meeting has been cancelled; the June 13, 2023, meeting will include an update on the Business Improvement Area expansion; and the June 27, 2023, meeting will include an update on business finance related to state funds.

Jeff Robinson, Director, CED, stated that staff would reach out to retailers through the Neighborhood Business Districts to schedule an additional panel discussion with small business representatives.

Other Items of Interest

There were no other items of interest.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:14 a.m.



Keith Blocker, Chair



Susan D. Haigh, City Clerk's Office