



MINUTES OF THE CITY OF MIRAMAR COMMISSION WORKSHOP

February 19, 2020

6:00 P.M.

A Workshop of the Miramar City Commission to discuss the Economic Development Fund was called to order by Mayor Messam at 6:11 p.m. in the Commission Chambers, Town Center, 2300 Civic Center Place, Miramar, Florida.

Upon call of the roll, the following members of the City Commission were present:

Mayor Wayne M. Messam
Vice Mayor Alexandra P. Davis
Commissioner Winston F. Barnes
Commissioner Maxwell B. Chambers (Late 6:14 p.m.)
Commissioner Yvette Colbourne

The following members of staff were present:

City Manager Vernon E. Hargray
Assistant City Manager Shaun Gayle
Chief Financial Officer Susan Gooding-Liburd
Assistant City Manager Kelvin Baker
Director of Economic & Business Development Anita Taylor
Asst. Director of Economic & Business Dev. Richard Hughes
City Attorney Burnadette Norris-Weeks (Late 6:43 p.m.)
City Attorney Norman Powell
City Clerk Denise A. Gibbs

CITY MANAGER HARGRAY: Sixteen months ago, we had a visioning session, and we spoke about the economic development plan to address Historic Miramar. Today, we have the opportunity to go back and bring back the subject matter and be able to work with the Commission in terms of having a very successful Historic Miramar plan for economic and redevelopment of our historic site. Historic Miramar is where it all started, but we could never get off the ground, because of the amount of revenue that was generated in the area. It is our belief that if we can increase the density, bring in affordable housing, work with the small businesses, create an incubator for training young folks or

elderly folks that are in need of retraining, I think that we believe that we can make an impact on Historic Miramar, and that it will be the three hubs all being sustainable. At this time, Mr. Kelvin Baker, IACM over community development and economic development will lay out the foundation of our vision for a better Historic Miramar.

Assistant City Manager, Community & Economic Development, Kelvin Baker stated the City invested significant dollars annually in attracting new businesses to Miramar; but there equally needed to be programs to retain existing business. Business retention efforts would be included in the presentation, focusing on programs staff was eager to implement; he was approached by small business owners at many events he attended about the City providing them with some form of assistance. Staff believed the programs with this goal highlighted in the presentation were exactly what many of the City's local small businesses needed, and staff and he hoped the City Commission would give them the green light to move forward with these initiatives to help save some businesses that would fail to thrive without some assistance.

Director of Economic & Business Development Anita Taylor gave a PowerPoint presentation, as illustrated in the backup, highlighting the following:

- On July 3, 2018, the City Commission approved Resolution No. 18-146, establishing the Economic Fund to support the redevelopment/revitalization in the City, specifically in Historic Miramar
- In the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 budget, the Commission approved \$4.3 million to go toward that initiative; 80 percent of those funds would go to Historic Miramar, and 20 percent would go to the rest of the City
- The focus was on four funding programs for commercial improvements or rehab, improvements dealing with internal renovations, signage and microbusiness.

Assistant Director of Economic & Business Development Richard Hughes continued the presentation, highlighting the four programs as follows:

- Commercial Property Improvement: the primary applicants would be commercial property owners in Historic Miramar not eligible for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for façade improvements; should no owners wish to participate, the funding would be opened up to businesses in the target area; covered façade improvements included: new roofs, signage, landscaping, drainage, lighting; the proposed maximum City funding was 50 percent of the construction cost, with the owner responsible for design services and 50 percent of the construction costs; City funding would be structured similarly to that under the CDBG program, which was a forgivable loan; a tiered structure was proposed, that is, for project costs up to \$200,000.00, it would be 20 percent ranked down over five years, and if the owner sold the property during that period, the City could recapture funds for the program; as improvement projects costing over \$200,000.00 would require a bigger investment, the timeframe would be stretched out to ten percent over ten years; it would be a onetime assistance per property

owner, and the contractor selected had to meet the City's procurement policies, including the Business Inclusion Diversity registered companies (BID); six commercial properties fell outside the CDBG target areas

- Commercial Tenant Improvements: this was a new program that was not eligible for CDBG funding; the funds would assist businesses with interior construction, renovation, expansion; staff recommended national retailers/franchises be ineligible for this program; tenants had to have written consent from property owners to apply; it would be a reimbursable grant of 75 percent of all costs, including design, contractor, construction, etc. up to a maximum of \$25,000.00; the intent of this program was to assist more established local businesses, so they should have at least three or more years remaining on their lease, or a new lease of three or more years executed within 30 days of applying to the program; assistance to tenant space was of two types; one was limited to two different tenants on the same property, but it would not be a repeat program for the same space, so assistance would be for two different tenants at two different times; the second was assistance to a single commercial property limited to four times for different tenants; the two types worked together with a goal of spreading the funding; the City's requirements were the same, as applicants needed to meet City procurement policies and the BID
- Commercial Signage: this new program would provide assistance to commercial property owners and/or tenants to eliminate nonconforming signs on older properties, such as pole signs; assistance was for only small businesses, and national chains/franchises were ineligible; a grant of up to \$5,000.00 would go straight to the sign vendor, not the property owner or tenant; for signs costing more, the applicant had to provide proof of funds to cover anything over \$5,000.00; nonconforming signs could be removed or replaced, or an existing sign could be replaced; new owners or tenants were eligible for assistance; applicants would be required to satisfy the City's procurement policies and BID; many older signs were located in Historic Miramar, as City sign codes changed over the years
- The Small Business Grant: this was modeled on the microenterprise program under the CDBG program; assistance would be provided to small businesses with a maximum of five employees for expansion, increasing revenues via capacity building; local businesses were eligible, national chains and franchises were not; staff suggested a maximum grant of \$10,000.00 to go straight to the vendor(s) supplying the service(s), and if more than \$10,000.00 was needed, a business had to provide proof of additional funding; the funds could be used to purchase machinery or equipment, hire professional services, technology infrastructure improvements, etc.; applicants were required to satisfy the City's procurement policies, including the BID; applicants had to meet with a SCORE counselor or a similar professional to review how program's funds would help advance their business plan, and if they had no plan, they would be helped to develop one; this would show the applicant was thinking through how the money would be utilized, as staff's goal was for them to tie the funding to advancing their business capacity; business owners could apply for additional assistance after two years of their first award, and they were limited to two rounds of funding.

Chief Financial Officer Susan Gooding-Liburd continued the presentation, focusing on the funding the Economic Development Fund:

- \$3,414,714.00 was currently budgeted in the Economic Development Fund; via ordinance, with 80 percent or \$2,731,771.00 of those funds allocated to Historic Miramar; the remaining 20 percent or \$682,943.00 went to the rest of Miramar
- The City currently had \$2.4 million for land acquisition, with \$1,014,714.00 available for economic incentive; the City Manager indicated in a recent discussion he was open to proposing a budget amendment to transfer any funding allocated to land acquisition to the economic incentive account to accommodate any program enhancement within Historic Miramar.

MAYOR MESSAM: Thank you. Thanks for the presentation; very concise and comprehensive, and provides us a good baseline in which we can have a discussion, in terms of how we move this initiative forward. As was mentioned earlier by the City Manager, before the discussion, about 16 months ago, we did not have any vehicle to assist the business community outside of CDBG funding, so this allows us a mechanism to be able to put economic development incentives in place, short of us not having a CRA in the City of Miramar. So, at this time, if I can have any Commissioners or the Vice Mayor, if you all have any questions or comments, if you can make indication on your device, so I can get an order, and we can go from there. Any questions or comments from the Commission? Commissioner Barnes, you're recognized.

COMMISSIONER BARNES: Just some quick observations. Over the last many weeks, I've been seeking to assist a small business owner, and one of the problems I have run into is what appears to be an excess of red tape and call for documentation. Without giving too many details, it involves comparing the cost of equipment between vendors, and mention has been made of priority being given to a local business as the vendor. What I'm going to ask staff to do, and maybe we can talk about it in a meeting; look at the situation where, for example, there is the requirement or the advantage given to local business. What, though, in a situation, where there are no local businesses that supply the specific need. And, yes, I understand the need to look at a number of comparisons before you make a final decision; and, yes, I also understand the value of vending with local businesses. But the reality is we don't have every kind of business in the City of Miramar, so, going forward -- and, as I said, we can talk about it in a meeting if you choose. Going forward, give us clearer guidelines as to how we can obviate that component of the requirements, because this is a situation where the small business owner needs to streamline certain situations, and it's been going on too long, because he's been unable to provide some of the documentation that we have required. That is my only major observation. And, of course, to acknowledge the need that has existed for this for a while. Part of the reason why we call our eastern segment historic is because it is historic and, therefore, property, the environment, equipment would have aged over time. I come from the school where something goes wrong you fix it. Some people buy the new stuff, I like the fix it part myself. But look, if you would, at those observations I'm

making, and call me and let us talk when you've looked at it. I have no problem sitting down and talking about that.

MS. TAYLOR: Thank you, Commissioner.

MAYOR MESSAM: Any other comments or observations? I don't see any other -- Vice Mayor, you're recognized.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Thank you for the presentation. I noticed when the memo was sent, there was some other attachments; for example, I know you have the application.

MS. TAYLOR: Yes.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: I know you didn't show that on the screen there. And to the issue raised by Commissioner Barnes, I mean a little bit more detail would help everybody make some decisions here this evening. Is it to do with the application process? That's what's being asked of folks? Because I see the application here.

MS. TAYLOR: I think Commissioner Barnes would be able to respond to that. I think he's talking about a different issue.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: And is this for the tenant?

COMMISSIONER BARNES: Not the application process.

MS. TAYLOR: It's not about this process.

COMMISSIONER BARNES: The actual provision of a benefit for a small business owner.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: So it's none of these benefits here that we're talking about today?

MS. TAYLOR: I don't believe it is. Correct, Commissioner?

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: I just wanted to be clear. It's which one of the programs are you referring to, so we could actually iron it out if there is an issue that we need to iron out.

COMMISSIONER BARNES: Yeah, but I don't need to have anything ironed out, I need to have staff look at it, make revisions.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: So it's nothing to do with this?

MS. TAYLOR: No, it's not.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: All right, perfect. One of the questions I had, the tenants looking for help, and you mentioned it's first come, first served?

MS. TAYLOR: First come, first qualified.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Right. I wanted to look at -- because they may not be first in line, but they may be more needy and have an older business that needs help, so what are the provisions for that, because I think first come, first serve could mean the person most in need is not being addressed.

MS. TAYLOR: So your idea is that it's not necessarily first come, first serve, what we do is we look at the applications and determine which one is in greater need?

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Like you do with the other programs, the SHIP program. Even though it is those who apply, but then it's kind of a system where, well if your roof is caving in --

MS. TAYLOR: Right.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Just because you came first, --

MS. TAYLOR: I understand what you're saying.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: -- my roof is caving in, so who was more of a need here? So if you could look at that. And I know for the commercial, for the façade improvements, you mentioned some areas in red, could you specify which businesses, where is that? Is any of them on the northeast corner of University where the Century 21 is? Or is that now included in the CDBG qualifying?

MS. TAYLOR: It's in the target area. You're talking about the corner of University and Miramar Parkway.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Right. So that's in the target area?

MS. TAYLOR: Yes.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: And I'll get to that in a minute, because the other ones in red, what specific locations are those that you're reaching out to?

MS. TAYLOR: Those are commercial properties outside of the target area, which would include University Drive near the Turnpike.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Is there a specific plaza?

MS. TAYLOR: That's near the plaza where we did the --

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: The BizFit?

MS. TAYLOR: I can't remember the name where we did the BizFit.

MR. HUGHES: Oh, that. That's the self-storage area, and there's the stuff north of that, which is the fast food area. You have at Rivera office building, I think.

MS. TAYLOR: Right.

MR. HUGHES: You had one of your BizFits at Riviera office?

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Right. Is that University right there?

MR. HUGHES: Yeah.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: By the Turnpike?

MR. HUGHES: It's nearby, it's behind those, that's where that office building is.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Is that a new office complex?

MR. HUGHES: Yeah.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: But they would need a façade?

MR. HUGHES: No, no, they're not --

MS. TAYLOR: They're outside the target area.

MR. HUGHES: That red area is self-storage and the gas station.

MS. TAYLOR: Yeah.

MR. HUGHES: Right?

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: But you're saying that they can apply for façade improvement. Are they in need of a façade?

MR. HUGHES: The self-storage, not likely.

MS. TAYLOR: No.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: And the other one neither, so --

MR. HUGHES: The gas station might benefit.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: The gas station?

MR. HUGHES: Yeah, they're older.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Okay. Where else?

MR. HUGHES: We have the Walgreens on the northwest corner of Miramar Parkway and University.

MS. TAYLOR: And we have El Presidente.

MR. HUGHES: Then we have the Sienna commercial, which is very new, which is right at the corner of Miramar Boulevard.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: So these ones, you've pretty much identified them, but they're new.

MR. HUGHES: Enough of them are. It's just the nature of how the target area expanded over the last year, which we anticipated. B & M Market, when they came through a few years, it was outside the target area; ironically, now it's in, so it's just the nature of how we get --

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Oh, so you're saying most of the older buildings and stuff are already in the target area.

MR. HUGHES: They have become eligible. With the rezoning, they have been become that way.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: So the ones in the red, you've identified them, because they are older than the ones in the green?

MR. HUGHES: No, no, they simply fall outside the target area.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: No, but the ones in the green, you said if the red don't want it, it'll go to the green.

MR. HUGHES: Oh, no, those are just -- those are the commercially zoned properties in Historic Miramar, the green, the other commercially zoned properties.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Are there properties there that could do with a façade improvement?

MR. HUGHES: Oh, yeah, no doubt, there is.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: What I'm trying to gather is how you came to that conclusion that the red goes before the green.

MR. HUGHES: It was a product of if you're in the target area, you already have access to some money.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Yeah, I know, but what my question is, you said the green is not in the target area.

MR. HUGHES: Right.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Right. So I'm talking about the red and the green. You said if the red doesn't want it, it will go to the green. Am I clear on that?

MR. HUGHES: Yes.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Okay. So the red and the green are outside the target area?

MS. TAYLOR: No.

MR. HUGHES: No, no.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: So why would you help the green if they're in the target area?

MR. HUGHES: We would make it eligible as a secondary sort of pool of potential applicants if none of the owners of the red, the ones in the red would be interested for whatever reason.

MS. TAYLOR: In addition, there may be someone in the green who does internal renovations, and that would not qualify for Community Development grant.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Right. But I thought this map was strictly for the commercial.

MR. HUGHES: It is.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: The outside.

MR. HUGHES: That's the priority, but because it's such a limited number of properties, as it turns out, we might not even move the money, so we just thought, why not propose expanding it to be eligible to a secondary group, which is shown in the green. The other thing I'll make mention about the target areas, we generally are kind of limited the amount of CDBG money that we have available for that program, because some of it goes to residential rehab, some of it goes to Social Services, and the program requirements of the CDBG are a lot more stringent than they would be under this separate program. Because after Davis Bacon, they have to do a lot of federal requirements.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: All right, so that being the case, for example, the corner of University, the northeast corner, is that in the red?

MR. HUGHES: No.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Well, why wouldn't you put it in the red then? I mean they qualify for CDBG; obviously, they're not using it. Maybe our program is better, because I'd like to see that moved forward. So if somehow they're not biting with the CDBG, maybe they will bite on our program, but it really has to change. We can't be improving areas, and that's the major thoroughfare, and we're not reaching out to try to see how we can engage that owner to change the façade. So if we don't care if they're getting CDBG, qualifications or not, then I think we should really target the ones that we know need to really improve, and say, "Listen, you're in this -- if this is too tough for you, how about our program that we have, because we really would like to see some improvements on your property." And that's the same with the place that we did have the BizFit over there by the Trinidadian place there. Part of it is done, the other part is not done, and so why is that?

MS. TAYLOR: We did schedule a meeting to meet with the property owner, and they cancelled, and we're rescheduling the meeting to talk about renovating the other half of that.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Right. All right. So that's the couple of questions I have. Maybe I'll have something later on. Thank you.

MAYOR MESSAM: All right. Thank you, Vice Mayor. Commissioner Colbourne?

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: Thank you. Yes. If I can pick up on what Vice Mayor was saying. You're saying the way it's being proposed is that you would address the needs in the area outside the target area, and then address those that are in the target area. If I can see the screen again. My concern with that, and it may be the same thing that Vice Mayor was saying, is that there is a lot of area in Historic Miramar that's already in the target area, but that does not mean that they're getting the assistance that they need, and our program goes beyond what's offered in the CDBG program. So, one, I don't want this other area not to be able to qualify for our program, all of these businesses in Historic Miramar, because they are in the target area. So I don't like the fact that you have to be in that area first, and then if you have any money left, then it can go to the area outside the target area. I definitely would like to see it based on needs, whether they're in the target area or they're not in the target area, because there might be a greater need, some of them in Historic Miramar, and they don't qualify for the target area, even though they're in the target area. So, at a minimum, I would like to see that we've determined, at least, maybe they don't qualify for that, so, therefore, they are eligible for ours. The other question is, because you're eligible for CDBG, they should still be eligible for our program. And the different programs that we have, one business can be eligible for more than one program as well.

MS. TAYLOR: The way that it's currently written, yes.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: They will be eligible. Because the needs can be -- you can have multiple needs. On the signs, I like that you have addressed signs, because that is a very important part; it's a very important look, and it addresses whether or not folks know that they're there. It addresses how the City looks. I definitely want to see that funds in this area go towards switching out those that are nonconforming. How are you going to reach out to those individuals?

MS. TAYLOR: We've already made contact with code enforcement and planning to get a list of all the businesses nonconforming signage, so that we can let them know that this funding is available.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: Do we currently know how many or what's the percentage or a dollar amount or any kind of estimate?

MS. TAYLOR: That information is available, we were just unable to retrieve it prior to the meeting, but I could get that for you, for the Mayor and Commission through the City Manager later, if you'd like.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: Okay. Well I wish I had for the meeting. But I think it's important that we address the nonconforming signs. I think it's important for us to give businesses that have been here for a number of years the opportunity to be eligible and to take advantage of this benefit before we talk about new owners. And I would like to think that before we make this investment, that new owners would at least be established, and be in business, perhaps, maybe about three years before we start giving out money to them, especially when we have businesses, older businesses that have been around for a long time. Small business grant, on the fourth one, the maximum grant amount is \$10,000.00. This is a new program; we don't have this now?

MS. TAYLOR: We do have a microbusiness program through the Community Development Block Grant.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: We do. And it's \$10,000.00 as well?

MS. TAYLOR: Yes, it's a \$10,000.00-grant, yes.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: Do we have a lot of businesses that take advantage of that?

MR. HUGHES: It's not a lot. We've probably assisted about a dozen over the last four or five years. We've been budgeting around anywhere from \$30,000.00 to \$50,000.00 a year, and closer to \$50,000.00 actually, so that could assist a maximum of five businesses in a given year.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: I'm thinking \$10,000.00 is a little low, when you talk about equipment and different types of technology infrastructure and so forth. What is the experience in terms of the other companies, in terms of that amount? What is it we

have been able to do? I don't know that we can make a significant difference in a business.

MR. HUGHES: We've had companies buy equipment. One company, a marketing company, bought a new computer system to upgrade their ability to do their marketing work. We had another who did fingerprinting analysis, when she was doing that kind of work, she needed a state-of-the-art fingerprinting machine, and so that was kind of a specialty item, so she did that. We've had people do marketing services or professional services to help their businesses. We had a food business that got some assistance with some interior stuff, some shelving and things like that, just so they could have capacity. Unfortunately, that went out of business. But that's the sampling of what they've used. There's been a few that's also used it for hiring, and under that program you can do more than one thing, and that's what the idea here too. You're not limited to one thing, so if you want to hire a full-time person, you can do that, and you can get a piece of equipment, do that. So, to your point, \$10,000.00 has been done in combination on a couple of occasions, but more money would allow you to do more things, especially if you wanted to do more than one thing.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: It seems very limited. For a company who's really in need, I think it's very limited. I would like to see that amount increased to \$20,000.00. And, finally, my last remark is on Sam's. I know that we have been able to help B & M, and it's still a project that's in the process, started back in, in don't know 2013, 2014, when we originally allocated that, and going back to 2014, Sam's grocery store, Mr. Morrison, has been asking us for assistance. And I would just hate to see him get tied up in splitting ends with all the other companies, when he has been asking us for assistance throughout, and we know him to be a struggling business, yet a business that provides a service to our community, and it's been in the community for a long time. So I would ask that this Commission -- would get consensus from this Commission at this point, so that we can ask the City Manager to take a look at Sam's business, take a look at the issue, take a look at the request that he has made, and to be able to address that. Mr. Manager, is that something that you can work on?

CITY MANAGER HARGRAY: Yes, Commissioner, I can work with Sam. I've been there before. Almost makes me feel that I'm back in the Keys going inside the store. So, yes, I can. And, if you remember, it was me who initiated the B & M, and going there this weekend, I really felt proud of the project, because the place just looks gorgeous, it's just changed everything. And it's a different personality, so we can't be limited just to the historic area by B & M, but as you go down University, there's a presence there that we need to bring up. A lot of things have been lost; we're talking about you got the stadium down the street, with a pancake house across from there. There's something wrong about -- if you do all the improvements where we're talking about, and don't address off of University, you're kind of missing something. And I've been there with the Deputy and the Assistant City Manager over there off of University, because someone told us about a restaurant; I think that Vice Mayor Davis told us about a restaurant. Anyway, going over there, I realized that we had lost something there, so we need to be able to find something.

So I will be able to sit down and get with the team, and we'll come up with a plan to be able to assist.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: I certainly appreciate it. I do have consensus from the dais here for the City Manager to be able to work with B & M and provide him assistance.

MAYOR MESSAM: You mean Sam's. You mean Sam's.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: I'm sorry. Work with Sam's and provide him the assistance that he needs in order to continue to serve his community and provide the unique products from the Caribbean that he has been able to do so far.

CITY MANAGER HARGRAY: I think one big point. I watch this commercial and it said: every small business that you support is like 69 cents that goes back into the community. And we've always got to remember, it's not the large companies that create all the jobs, it's the small ones. So we need to feed the small ones. A person that lived in Key West, it was a small business that fed the residents.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: Okay. Wonderful. So do I have consensus from this dais.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: Aye.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Yeah. I mean I believe that Sam has been before us for some time over the years, and that's one of the reasons why I was really particular in saying that; it should be based upon need, and not just because somebody jumps a line and is first. So he has been before this Commission before, requested assistance, and anything that we can do to assist him without the encumbrances of all the stuff that he has to go through, which we understand there are processes, but if he could work through those one-on-one with the persons in charge here to get something accomplished, rather than the bottle neck. And that's how all we would ask, that you would try to guide him through the process, and work with the City Manager to get him the assistance he needs.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: Go ahead.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: If I may, I must say after going through the process with B & M, I made a commitment, so no one should question where I stand, because that was a difficult process. And I made a commitment right here that whichever small business or businesses come before us, to support our resident. I'm a yes. So I'm going to stand by my word, and if a resident need any help or assistance, I'm here to lend my vote for that process. So they just need to find two more, so I'm a yes when it comes to helping our residents and our small businesses. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER BARNES: Just to insert here, Mr. Mayor. We've been working with Sam over the last three or so months.

MAYOR MESSAM: So it looks like you have the support for it. Only thing I would add is for these unique situations that we, as best, try to -- as we study them, scenarios with Sam, with B & M, and other businesses that may fall in this situation, that we try to document what the commonalities are, so that we can have at least some best practices in these, to kind of help guide us to be more efficient, so it's more of a quick decision, so that we can get out of the lane of, necessarily, like a political decision. It's a process that we see; I'm not saying it's a scientific process, but we know the businesses that have been here, we know the businesses that have invested in this community, that have been a part of this community for, some cases, decades, and are contributing to the community, so that we can be able to identify individuals who may not even know to come to the Commission, that we can proactively go out to them in the community and say that this opportunity is available for you.

CITY MANAGER HARGRAY: Mayor, I just want to add one more thing. We will be working with Nova, and Nova has a program to support our incubator that we're talking about. So it's not just a matter of just giving money away, but you've got to sit down and help them develop their business plan. So there's another component that's going to be added to that for sustainability. So you have Nova and BCC, both of them are going to be working along with us with our small businesses.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: If I could finish up. That's a very good point, Mr. City Manager. In addition to the funding, it's really important that we provide whatever technical experience education, where we can help those small businesses. And if we can partner with different universities and provide that to them, it would be good. I just want to make sure that I have consensus to change the \$10,000.00 to \$20,000.00 for small business grant, and also for the signs, on the signs area, that the emphasis is on replacing the signs that are nonconforming.

MAYOR MESSAM: I'm fine with that.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: I'm okay with that.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: Okay.

- City Commission consensus directing staff to increase the small business grant from \$10,000.00 to \$20,000.00; and to focus the funding of the business sign program on replacing nonconforming signs.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: But I didn't get consensus on mine. Are we doing that now? The stuff that I asked for, which was that we go with not the first come, first serve, that the most in need.

MS. TAYLOR: Most in need, correct.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Consensus there?

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: Yeah, you have consensus.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: Yeah.

MAYOR MESSAM: Yeah.

- City Commission consensus directing staff to first consider grant applicants in greater need of assistance rather than in the order of first come, first served.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: And also about with the northeast corner, those specific ones, that property.

MAYOR MESSAM: Which intersection are we talking about?

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: The intersection of University, northeast. That property owner be allowed to look at our program, and also the one that you're working on over by 62nd, be allowed to look at that program. And so, meaning that those most in need are approached first, rather than just first come, yes.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: You have my consensus on both.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: If I may add, also,. I know, Commissioner Colbourne, you mentioned moving from \$10,000.00 to \$20,000.00, which I really like that idea. And you suggest small business got to be here at least one year.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: At least three years.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: Yeah. I'm not sure if I'm totally agree with that, if we can still have something in place that, a case-by-case, take a look, as from time to time we have resident that might not have an option of keeping a job somewhere; the job market is tight, and they're an entrepreneur, and they want to start their own business, and they need some support. So it's something that we can look at to help a resident who desire to start a business, and it's a great idea. If we can support that, we want to keep that in place, the startup, or maybe if they fall into the one-year bracket. We don't want to just eliminate that idea, if we can keep that.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: So you say one year instead of three years?

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: Well, maybe look at a smaller program, some assistance to get somebody up and running.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: I would go with the one year. Usually it take about that time to get up and running.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: Because we do have residents -- right, so it can be two separate programs, or we still have it on the books, so we can take a look on case-by-case to assist a small business to get them up and running.

MAYOR MESSAM: Let me get a clarification on Commissioner Colbourne. Is this for all the programs or is it just for -- because there are several programs; one is commercial rehabilitation. For example, you may have an investor that buys a commercial -- let's say one of these owners who have not done anything and will not do anything, won't take advantage of this program, and says: hey, I want to get out. And they sell. If they have not -- so are we saying they have to own it for a year before they -- or should a new investor who's buying a commercial property be also in these targeted areas? So that's why I want to make the clarification.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: Let me clarify. First of all, you're referring to the signage or the number of years?

MAYOR MESSAM: No, no, no. I'm talking about --

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: Which one? Which of the --

MAYOR MESSAM: Well, there are several programs. That's why I was asking is your --

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: I only made comments, changes on one, the sign.

MAYOR MESSAM: And the business program/

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: Which my thought was to emphasize to use the funds on businesses that are nonconforming signs in Historic Miramar.

MAYOR MESSAM: Yeah, I agree with that.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: That's where I want that money to be used. Any new signs, I would say it would have to be for a business that's been around for at least a year, so that's where I was going with that. The other one that I made changes to was the small business grant program; I thought \$10,000.00, although it may help more businesses, I don't think it can do anything significant. Not anything, but I think it would be more significant to increase that amount to \$20,000.00 to really make a better impact on a business that needs help.

MAYOR MESSAM: Okay. All right. Thank you. Any other comments on the program?

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: That's it.

COMMISSIONER BARNES: Just that --

MAYOR MESSAM: Wait, Commissioner Barnes.

COMMISSIONER BARNES: Okay, sorry.

MAYOR MESSAM: Commissioner Chambers hasn't had an opportunity yet, then Commissioner Barnes.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: I just want to thank staff for the due diligent work, a great presentation. I want to thank the team, I want to thank the City Manager, especially the Commission, the first lady, and we wasn't nowhere here a few years ago, and now we're here. So I think it's a lot of progress that we have made. And the only thing I could think of is for those of you who follow horse racing, you have the jockey, you have the horse, and you have the owner and so forth, spectator. No one usually thinks about the -- the guy who open the gate, and I'm proud to be here and to say I'm the guy who behind the scene that open the gate. Without the gate is opened, the race won't run. So I'm very grateful for where we are, and just it's amazing the team that come together that making good things happen here for this community. So I must say no monkey business here, thank you.

MAYOR MESSAM: Just a couple of quick questions. Is there an application window? When is the window opened annually? Is there an application window?

MS. TAYLOR: We didn't establish one just yet, but we can put the application online right now, March 1.

MAYOR MESSAM: Because that's imperative towards the point Vice Mayor Davis was making in terms of prioritizing funding for those who are in need, because if those who are in need -- so we have to be proactive and let them know that it's available. Because you will have folks applying and just waiting, but until we identify those who actually are in the greatest need, so let's take a look in terms of how we -- perhaps having a starting point annually kind of sets like a benchmark, so it sets the clock, so as to go out and get folks to go ahead and apply and, perhaps, have those individuals apply by a certain date, so that they are kind of first in queue. Because one thing about business, business owners need to be able to schedule, predict, to have some certainty that things are available, and when they are available, as opposed to just ambiguity. So that may help facilitate the point that Vice Mayor made. Also, with the CDBG commercial funding, what is the funding limits for that program? I know it's a percentage of cost or -- I'm not sure if it's a fixed ceiling.

MR. HUGHES: There's no maximum on the total cost project. There is a 50:50 percent match owner and the City.

MAYOR MESSAM: So it would be imperative for staffs, when applicants come forward, that although this program may be more easily accessible, there's a ceiling at \$200,000.00, but if it's more of a significant commercial façade or commercial rehabilitation project, if they can qualify for the CDBG program, at least inform them of that, because they may be more interested in that program if they can qualify for it. Otherwise, if they don't or feel that it's not in their best interest, they will always have this program available as well. So the more information we can provide applicants for what their options are, then they can make the best business decision for themselves. Because, at the end of the day, the City benefits, because retain a business, we improve property, that's really what the goal is. We want to make sure that we give this money out to businesses that can put it to work, so that we can reach our ultimate goal. And just, finally, is that regardless of how this program evolves and moves forward, I think if we move in the spirit of being flexible with the business community, with some standard and some procedures that can be followed, so that everyone has that fair opportunity for this funding. Because, as this takes off, it will become very popular, and the line is going to get long, and we have to be prepared to standardize, as much as possible, our processes, so that we can be able to not only have accountability, but we can have a process of fairness for those individuals are able to qualify. So good work, and this will be an evolving process, and I appreciate my colleagues for all of your thoughtful comments towards making this program better.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: That's it. Good work. Thank you.

MR. WHITTINGHAM: Thank you, Mr. Mayor and Commissioners.

MAYOR MESSAM: And, on that note, we have a Commission meeting to go to. We'll do a five to ten-minute break, and we'll be ready to start our Commission meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

MAYOR MESSAM: This workshop is concluded.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

Denise A. Gibbs, CMC
City Clerk
DG/cp