

Highlights from the Beverly COVID-19 Emergency Business Support Task Force Meeting on May 28, 2020.

OVERVIEW OF ZOOM CALL WITH MAYOR CAHILL, BILL BURKE, LESLIE GOULD AND GIN WALLACE

- Mayor Cahill is more than willing to schedule another Zoom call if people would find it helpful
- Recommendation that if another call takes place it not be scheduled at the end of day
- Recommendation that with greater notice the call could be more widely publicized.

RESPONSES TO CONSUMER CONFIDENCE SURVEY

- Review of responses from the consumer confidence survey produced by the Greater Beverly Chamber of Commerce. There were 639 respondents.
- Vast majority of the respondents were between the ages of 30-70
- City of Salem interested in the survey results
- Many people experiencing Zoom-fatigue. Mostly Zoom-ing with friends and family. Not necessarily Zoom-ing to engage in activity requiring a purchase such as fitness classes.
- Approximately 55% of respondents note that having a COVID-19 vaccine available would be a major factor in encouraging them to return to pre-COVID 19 consumer habits. When respondents were asked how many were likely to dine out once it was allowed 45% responded “perhaps” and another 28% responded “not likely”. Take out will be important even after indoor dining returns. Consumers are going to visit restaurants where they know and trust the owner and/or staff. Consumers are doing a lot of shopping on line but look forward to a time when they can resume in person shopping, dining and receiving personal services.

UPDATE ON OUTREACH TO LARGER EMPLOYERS

- A list of questions has been drafted
- Next step is to identify businesses that will be contacted.

REPORTS FROM TASK FORCE SUBCOMMITTEES

Restaurant Re-Opening Committee-

- Restaurants finding very creative solutions. For instance, a restaurant in Essex is placing a paper bag in the middle of each table. Diners are asked to dispose of all used items in that bag after they eat. Then the wait staff removes the bag.
- Restaurants understand consumer confidence just not that high right now
- People will first return to those restaurants where they know and trust the owner and/or wait staff
- People may be waiting to return after the vaccine becomes available but when it is available, will there be reluctance to be vaccinated.

- Some restaurants have hung clear shower curtains between tables
- The City has been working to draft its own outdoor dining policy. Representatives of relevant department have met to discuss it. There will be a meeting next week with the restaurants to discuss the draft policy.
- The City really needs to know which restaurants want to move ahead with outdoor dining and where they would prefer the outdoor dining to be located.
- Restaurant owners would like the Mayor to participate in another call with them
- City suggests scheduling Project Review Team meeting that would be dedicated to answering questions from individual restaurants as to how they might proceed with outdoor dining.
- Depending upon where outdoor dining is located barriers may need to be put in place to protect diners from vehicular traffic. City looking into availability of jersey barriers.
- Mayor suggests Darlene, Gin and Leslie touch base after meeting re next steps for outdoor dining conversation

Events subcommittee-

- Mayor doesn't see large gatherings taking place any time soon
- Mayor would like to sit down with the Homecoming Committee. Are there events that could be held as one-offs?
- The Cabot willing to explore how they could be helpful. Would like to figure out what is possible outdoors.

UPDATE ON CABOT STREET CONSTRUCTION

- Last concrete sidewalk pour tomorrow
- Brick layer returns on Monday to finish
- One section of sidewalk in front of one building will remain open for a period to facilitate repair of the building foundation by the property owner.
- It has not yet been determined if the City will undertake a full reconstruction of the road. The City is still reviewing facts.

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

- City will apply for CDBG-CV funds. The maximum award possible is \$400,000 per community. There is funding specifically available for microenterprises defined as businesses with 1-5 employees, one of them being the owner. The City tried to team up with 2 "mini-entitlement" communities as the Notice of Funding Availability advises. The nearest mini-entitlement communities are Everett and Chelsea. Both communities had concerns about any application possibility resulting in a decrease in the amount of the funding they could receive if they applied independently. The City will participate in a regional application with twenty-two other communities-only three of which are

located on the North Shore (including Beverly). Even with this scenario, it is unlikely that Beverly would receive the maximum award possible but will apply for the full amount. Deadline from application submission is June 12. There will be a public hearing sponsored by Ashland. Ashland volunteered to be the lead community. If Beverly does receive an award the Mass. Growth Capital Corp. will manage it. The MGCC will be managing all of the awards. Eligible businesses could receive a maximum of \$10,000 per business.

- Darlene Wynne and Denise Deschamps participated in a webinar sponsored by the Massachusetts Municipal Association detailing resources they may be available to communities or individual businesses. City will share information from the webinar.
- There will be a Phase 2 CDBG round and the State is asking potential recipients to complete the survey, identifying needs that could benefit from the funds.

OTHER TOPICS

- State has issued guidance related to high school graduations
- Looking ahead to guidance around summer camps
- Will infants be allowed at day care facilities? If not, this could impact the workforce.
- Child care providers may also be impacted by the need to hire more staff to care for fewer children
- The State has said that child care facilities currently open are only at 35% capacity but does availability vary by region or by community. The Beverly Y reportedly has a wait list.
- The Cabot is open to creative options such as a potential drive-in. Mayor is ready to engage in conversation at any time.
- Tenants of Cummings Center are slowly beginning to return. Larger tenants continue to encourage employees to work remotely
- What about the possibility of encouraging pop-up retail in parking lots or other public spaces? Need to balance with future demand for parking.