



Charlotte City Council
Workforce & Business Development Committee
Summary
January 4, 2021

COMMITTEE AGENDA TOPICS

Discuss 2021 Meeting Schedule (action required)
Tax Increment Grant Policy
Workforce Policy Update
Charlotte Tech Talent Study
Disparity Study Selection Update
RENEW Update

COMMITTEE INFORMATION

Committee Members Present: James Mitchell (Chair), Tariq Bokhari (Vice Chair), Malcolm Graham, Dimple Ajmera and Renee Johnson

Others: Councilmember Braxton Winston
Denada Jackson, Office of Constituent Services

Staff Resources: Tracy Dodson, City Manager's Office
Fran West, Economic Development Department
Todd DeLong, Economic Development Department
Emily Cantrell, Economic Development Department
Steven Coker, General Services Department
Anna Schleunes, City Attorney's Office

Meeting Duration: 12:00pm-1:45pm

ATTACHMENTS

1. Agenda – January 4, 2021
2. Presentations – Tax Increment Grant Policy, Workforce Policy, Charlotte Tech Talent Study, Disparity Study Selection and RENEW

DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

Chairman Mitchell called the virtual meeting to order and asked Committee members and City staff to introduce themselves. He then turned the meeting over to Assistant City Manager Tracy Dodson to introduce the agenda topics.

Discuss 2021 Meeting Schedule

The Committee voted unanimously to approve their 2021 meeting schedule for the 1st Mondays at Noon. The July and September meetings conflicting with City holidays were moved to Tuesdays at 2:00pm.

Tax Increment Grant Policy

Todd DeLong provided the committee with an update on the purpose of the Tax Increment Grant (TIG) program, which is used to encourage public/private partnerships. Though TIGs are one of the best tools available for transformative projects, not a one size fits all so they are evaluated on a project by project basis. They are most commonly used for infrastructure, cultural facilities and public parking facilities. Mr. DeLong shared with the committee that TIGs are one mechanism in which the City can partner with the private sector to deliver a development that is financially feasible and provides opportunities for enhancing the program to meet the current community goals and objectives. Staff is also looking at ways to customize redevelopment in our Corridors of Opportunity and other new development projects.

Staff does not recommend any changes to the TIG policy at this time. However, they will continue to engage the committee annually to provide a summary of activities for the year and ensure negotiations align with Council's priorities (e.g. housing affordability, MWSBE participation, transportation and multimodal connectivity and how to possibly incorporate talent development into agreements).

Discussions with the committee produced the following feedback:

- Talk about investments in budget for Corridors of Opportunity at the City Council Retreat.
- Looking at smaller developers, is the language in the TIG policy appropriate to improve blighted areas?
- Can we get the Transportation Committee's feedback on this policy to make sure we're not going backwards on some of our other policies?
- How are we implementing our total economic incentive package to help with our goals and priorities?
- We need to go a little deeper on staff's recommendations (ED incentives rely on environmental policies, etc.) – we need to be more prescribed. What will confirmation of priorities look like from Council Retreat? Is this the proper place to do this yearly – we can come up with a statement letter – recess proprieties (ex. Pandemic).
- Flexibility, collaboration with other City departments, include Council priorities with check-in.

Workforce Policy Update

Tracy Dodson reminded the committee of the work to date on the workforce policy referrals that will continue to guide the City's investment on our workforce initiatives throughout 2021.

Fran West provided an update on the workforce policy referrals and the City's goal to create a job strategy to address reducing unemployment, diversion programs, Corridors of Opportunity strategy and a policy to guide City investment.

Though we cannot mandate hiring practices with our workforce development partners, staff is recommending reducing unemployment through creating opportunities for residents to gain successful employment in the construction industry, facilitated through City-led construction projects, required through the inclusion of a city value statement, workforce hiring and wage reporting, and recognition of apprenticeship programs. Ms. West also shared the timelines for phases one and two for City construction projects and the need to assemble a diverse city team to develop an implementation strategy.

Current efforts underway include:

- Conducting a study with EY around unemployment strategies in our corridors, including strategic outreach to unemployed residents to connect them with partners
- Partnering with Charlotte Works and Workforce Providers Council to enhance the Talent Source Network – connecting residents to employers and employers to jobs
- Connect businesses to workforce partners who will screen and source candidates for employment.
- Tech Talent Study- understanding how we best position our residents for careers in technology
- Launch our Strategic Employment Plan

Discussions with the committee produced the following feedback:

- Tie jobs strategy to focus on Corridors of Opportunity and include input from the Office of Equity, Mobility and Immigrant Integration
- Invest in the people to make sure they're employed
- Work with N.C. Works to gather information
- With new direction, can we include labor-apprenticeship programs (ex. IBW – I am Workers)?
- Include labor markets as part of industry standards

Next steps including bringing a Pilot policy language before the committee for approval by Council and continue to gather data from our workforce partners to refine our efforts. Staff will continue discussions on the Strategic Employment Plan at the City Council Retreat.

Charlotte Tech Talent Study

Tracy Dodson introduced the topic and shared with the committee the tech talent study was done in partnership with the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance and will be tied to the City's job strategy.

Emily Cantrell provided an overview on the Charlotte Tech Talent Study. The goal is to develop the Charlotte region into a top destination for diverse technology talent. The City and the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance engaged Shalom to conduct research with educational institutions, staffing agencies, large talent employers in the region, including four Fortune 500 companies. Charlotte's tech talent market continues to be ranked among top locations in the country. During 2018-2019, close to 4,000 new tech talent jobs were announced. Ms. Cantrell also shared insights and recommendations from the study to establish and maintain our region as a top destination for technology talent across the country.

Disparity Study Selection Update

Steve Coker provided the committee with an update on Charlotte Business INclusion's (CBI) Disparity Study selection process. The City has conducted these studies since 2002 and the last study was done in 2017 to analyze our contracting practices/utilization of firms to address disparities. Mr. Coker shared

the history of CBI's programs and stressed an important element of their work is the disparity study to advance their "best in class" model. During the RFP process, six proposals were received. The RFP Evaluation Committee selected Collette Holt and Associates to conduct the 2022 Study. The consultant will start their work in March 2021 and staff anticipates their work to be complete and a new policy adopted by Council in December of 2022. The Committee suggested including Veterans in the scope of work for future proposals.

RENEW Update

Emily Cantrell provided the committee with an update on the RENEW (Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Workforce Training Program), an enhanced program of Project P.I.E.C.E. The program provides participants with paid skilled training to prepare them for careers in HVAC and electrical occupations. The first cohort graduated on December 17th and three individuals from that cohort are working fulltime. Applicants are currently under review for the January 18th cohort. Staff plans to feature success stories on the City's Open for Business website.

Thirty-nine participants are currently enrolled in training classes with the Urban League and Goodwill. We also have strong corporate partnership from other industries including Trane Technologies and MMS Solutions. Ms. Cantrell acknowledged the City's financial commitment was important to the success of this program. She also shared RENEW received statewide recognition by the Research Triangle Cleantech Cluster at the 2020 Cleantech Innovation Award as the "Diversity Program of the Year".

Tracy Dodson and several committee members recognized Emily for her work with the RENEW Program as well as our workforce partners for their commitment.

The meeting adjourned at 1:45pm