

Windsor, Ontario August 29, 2011

REPORT NO. 7 of the
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STANDING COMMITTEE
of its meeting held July 6, 2011

Present:

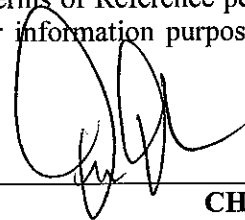
- Councillor Dilkens, Chair**
- Councillor Sleiman**
- Councillor Valentinis**
- Councillor Marra**
- Councillor Payne**

That the following recommendation of the Economic Development Standing Committee **BE APPROVED** as follows:

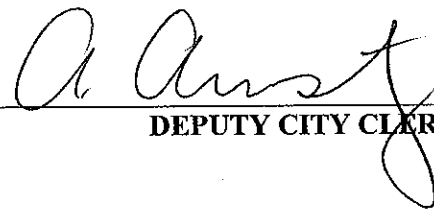
Moved by Councillor Sleiman, seconded by Councillor Payne

That the comments provided by the Windsor Small Business Advisory Panel Progress report to City Council dated January 27, 2011 **BE FORWARDED** to City Council for information purposes attached as Appendix "A" and further that the Mandate and Terms of Reference pertaining to the Windsor Small Business Advisory Panel **BE INCLUDED** for information purposes attached as Appendix "B".

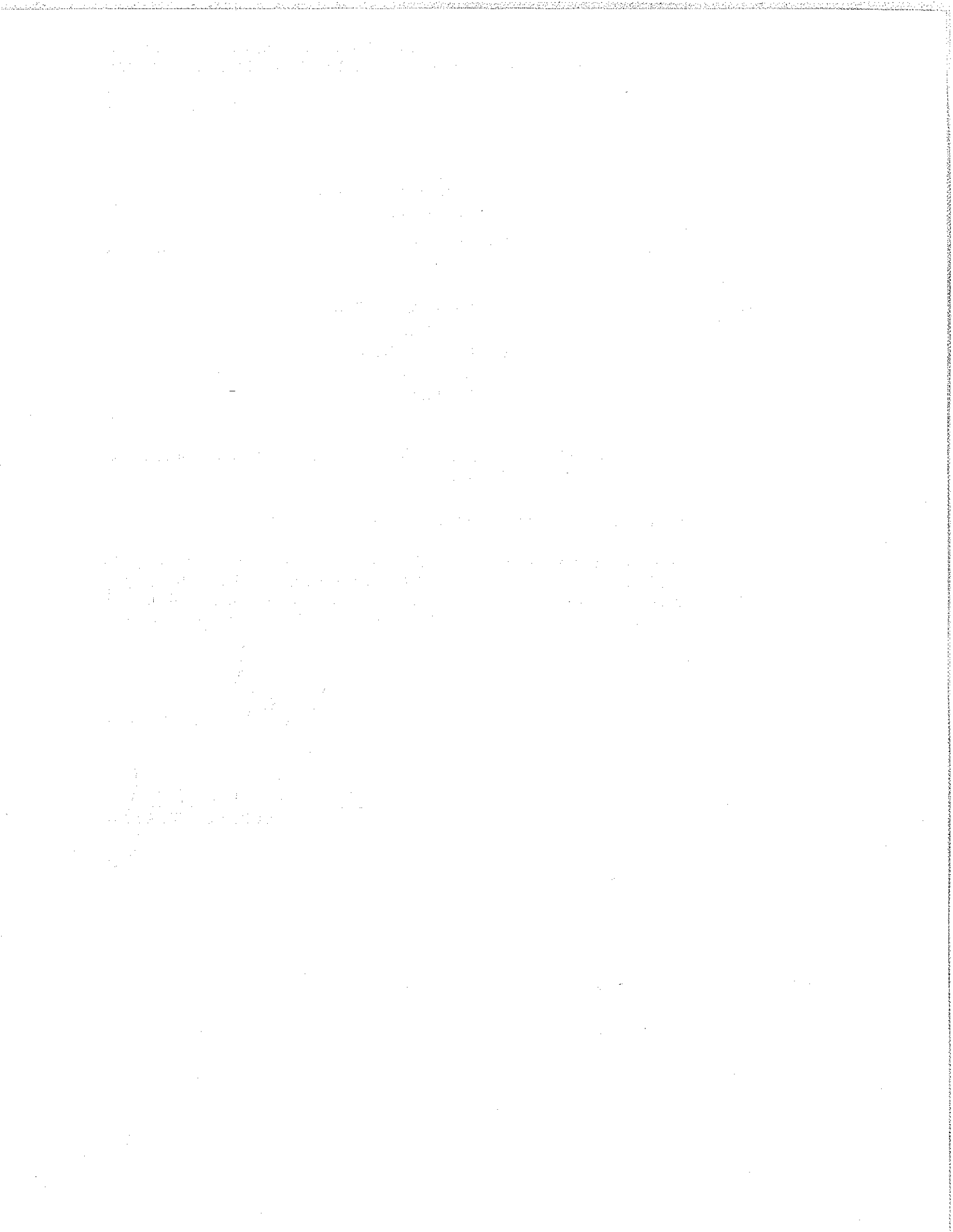
Carried.



CHAIRPERSON



DEPUTY CITY CLERK



SV
Windsor, Ontario July 6, 2011

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STANDING COMMITTEE

REPORT NO. 3
of the
Small Business Advisory Panel
at its meeting held
February 8, 2011
Meeting Room 303, 400 City Hall Square East

Present: **Dr. Alfie Morgan, Chair**
 Councillor Alan Halberstadt
 Norm Marcoux
 James Marsh
 Vicky Smith
 Jim Williams

The Small Business Advisory Panel submits the following recommendations:

That the comments provided by the Windsor Small Business Advisory Panel Progress Report to City Council dated January 27, 2011 **BE FORWARDED** to City Council for information purposes attached as Appendix "A" and further that the Mandate and Terms of Reference pertaining to the Windsor Small Business Advisory Panel **BE INCLUDED** for information purposes attached as Appendix "B".

Carried.

NOTE: Progress Report to City Council dated January 27, 2011 is attached as Appendix "A"

NOTE: Windsor Small Business Advisory Panel Mandate and Terms of Reference dated January 12, 2009 and Report of Small Business Coordinator dated November 24, 2010 is attached as Appendix "B"

CHAIR

COMMITTEE COORDINATOR

NOTIFICATION		
Small Business Advisory Panel		
City Planner / Executive Director		

January 27, 2011

Windsor Small Business Advisory Panel

Progress Report to City Council

In its July 26, 2010 session, City Council passed a motion (stated in CR274/2010) accepting seven recommendations made by the Small Business Advisory Panel. As a part of the motion, the Panel was requested to report back to Council on the implementation of these recommendations. The Panel is pleased to submit this document as its assessment of the status of the implementation of each recommendation. The panel would like to thank the Mayor and Council for the opportunity to report back. Hopefully, this would keep the attention focused on the small business sector. The Panel has only one major goal, and that is to maintain the small business sector as a major job creation engine for Windsor. It is worth emphasizing that in the current economy, small business has been the number one job generator, not the multinationals. Recently, Mr. Alan Goodyear, Federal Minister for small business and research & development mentioned in a budget round-table with businesspeople that the Federal Government credits small and medium size enterprises with creating and maintaining 95-97% of jobs in Canada!

Below, each Council-approved recommendation will be stated, the progress of its implementation will be assessed along with the Panel's views on moving matters forward.

1. Council's Approved Recommendation no. 1: *"That the existing Customer Service Coordinator BE APPOINTED as the "small business coordinator" as a pilot project for a period of 6 months, and whose responsibilities will include the following:*

- *Act as a point person to address specific inquiries and concerns brought forward by small business owners regarding access and ability to navigate through municipal processes;*
- *Monitor and collect data on inquiries and specific concerns that are brought forward by the small business community;*
- *Liaise with municipal departments and key personnel as required when specific concerns or issues are identified, and when new policies and procedures that could have possible implications for small business are being considered;*
- *Provide information and referral to existing community resources to assist small business; and,*
- *Report back to Council at the end of the pilot project on the specific issues identified through the monitoring of inquiries, and provide recommendations on how to best address the issues identified on a go-forward basis."*

1.1 Status of Implementation: The Panel received a progress report from the Customer Service Coordinator (attached). The implementation amounted to simply tracking calls to the City's 311 number.

1.2 Panel's Assessment and Further Recommendation: The Panel feels that it will take more than just tracking 311 calls. In sum, the implementation of the pilot project fell short of the intention of the recommendation. As of now, there is no internal champion—who is known and

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publicized in the community— who can fix and smooth the problems for small business owners in dealing with City Hall. There appears to be no proactive activities going on.

The Panel welcomes Mayor Francis' concept of establishing a Rapid Business Response Team at City Hall to act as a one-shop single point of contact to process all proposed developments quickly. There would obviously need to be a Small Business champion at City Hall to steer this process, not an add-on to the already full plate of the City's Customer Service Coordinator. The Panel further endorses and urges the implementation of Mayor Francis' vision of "restructuring City Hall's customer service operations to provide a "one-stop" single point of contact to ensure quick and consistent review for all new developments. Moreover, we must review and reform all City permitting processes and business licensing processes to become "City LEAN", eliminating any barriers to growth and expansion."

2. Council's Approved Recommendation no. II: *"That Administration BE DIRECTED to prepare a report to Council presenting possible financial incentive programs aimed at addressing the main challenges facing small businesses as identified in consultation with the Small Business Advisory Panel, and further that the report include a recommended Terms of Reference for the preparation of a Small Business Community Improvement Plan that will implement the Council-endorsed financial incentive programs."*

2.1. Status of Implementation: Recently, the Administration has developed the Community Improvement Plan (CIP). The Panel feels that the CIP is a major step forward and wholeheartedly endorses the excellent measures proposed in it. The CIP would help in attracting new businesses and in transforming the City's economy into the designated strategic sectors. This is to be lauded and applauded.

2.2. Panel's Assessment and Further Recommendations:

While the Panel appreciates the valiant effort expressed in the CIP, it would like to urge the Mayor, Council, and the Administration to establish another CIP (or expand the CIP) to include:

- Existing small businesses (especially 15 and under in employment): We need to sustain current enterprises so that they may continue to be part of the City's tax-base and continue to be a job generation instrument;
- Existing small business in the sectors of hospitality, service, and retail. They are still a major component of the tax base and provide significant employment.

3. Council's Approved Recommendation no. III: *"That a "Small Business Strategic Planning Meeting" BE CONVENEED between the Small Business Advisory Panel and City Council within 60 days to identify the issues impacting the small business sector (with presentations from small business spokespersons) and to develop action plans to address these issues, and that Council then provide direction to administration about the implementation of the action plans developed"*.

3.1 Status of Implementation: This recommendation is yet to be implemented. The Panel felt that the timing of this strategic planning meeting be delayed until the new City Council is elected to give time to the newly elected members to feel comfortable in the position.

3.2 Panel's Assessment and Further Recommendations: The Panel would urge the Mayor and the new Council to hold the strategic planning meeting on the very strategic topic of

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small business. Small business is the major job creator in Windsor and deserves to be viewed and utilized as an economic development strategy for Windsor.

The Panel is recommending this important meeting be structured as follows:

- That Mayor Francis chairs the session.
- That the session be at least a half-day commitment.
- The session will be a "regular" Council strategic planning session rather than a public forum. However, the Mayor and Council can invite other important community stakeholders interested in the small business sector such as the Development Commission and the representative of the Ontario Ministry of Small Business among others.
- The ultimate objective and outcome of the meeting will be a set of actionable strategic initiatives to make the small business sector a strategic instrument for generating jobs and economic development.
- That the agenda of the meeting (subject to the Mayor and Council approval) be structured as follows:
 - Hour 1: Mayor and Council hear the concerns of about 6-8 small business owners expressing issues facing their sector. The Panel can help in recruiting these individuals.
 - Hour 2: Mayor and Council hear a presentation by the Small Business Advisory Panel on the issues facing the small business sector in Windsor and then Council discusses these issues.
 - Hours 3 and 4: Mayor and Council discuss approaches for tackling these issues head-on, commit to a set of significant initiatives to be delegated to the City's Administration for implementation along with time benchmarks.

4. Council's Approved Recommendation no. IV: *"That the issue of "any further property tax relief measures that should be implemented as it relates to small business", BE REFERRED to the proposed "Small Business Strategic Planning Meeting"*

4.1 Status of Implementation: The implementation of this recommendation awaits the implementation of Recommendation no.III above. This will be in the topics in hours 2, 3, and 4 of the strategic planning meeting.

4.2. Panel's Assessment and Further Recommendations: The Panel is of the opinion that the current level of taxation is high for small business and is inhibiting economic development. For example, the taxes in arrears on some properties are almost equal to the value of such properties.

Taxes in arrears on certain properties make it hard for investors and users to buy a property. The Panel is fully aware that forgiving taxes in arrears might provide an excuse for others to default hoping for forgiveness of the debt, not to mention the unfairness to those who paid their taxes on time. It is a serious problem that begs for creative solutions.

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The Panel recommends a reduction in the 15% penalty rate for taxes in arrears. Many small businesses have fallen behind in their tax payments due to the recession. They might never be able to pay off the principal on their arrears because the 15% annual penalty keeps compounding the debt. The Panel has been searching for possible ways to assist respected existing businesses to deal with the tax debt. One possibility is the establishment of an amnesty period – whereby taxpayers who pay off the principal on their arrears within a prescribed period of time would have the penalties reduced or even erased. We live in difficult economic times and they require radical departures from established norms.

5. Council's Approved Recommendation no. V: *"That the Small Business Advisory Panel recognition program recommendations BE DIRECTED to the Staff Appreciation and Recognition (STAR) Committee for consideration within the framework of the existing corporate Staff Appreciation and Recognition program".*

5.1 Status of Implementation: This recommendation has not been implemented. The recommendation was referred to the Customer Service Coordinator to include in its STAR program. The Panel understands that there has been a preliminary discussion by STAR committee on this, but no awards program was established for employees who provide identifiable exemplary service to small businesses in their dealings at City Hall.

5.2. Panel's Assessment and Further Recommendations: The Panel's original intent was to enlist the support of the City's front line employees (in the course of performing their city jobs) to be a supportive force for small business owners, namely to help them save money or make more money so that they can stay in business—in the tax base. Further, the Panel wanted a tool to help the recommendations made at the top (by well-meaning administrators) to trickle down to the front-line. The Panel urges the Mayor, Council, and the Administration to go beyond an awards program— to devise other more potent programs that would enrol and enlist front line employees in the cause of keeping small business as a major job generator for Windsor.

6. Council's Approved Recommendation no. VI: *"That City Council ENCOURAGE the University of Windsor, St. Clair College and the Windsor Essex Development Commission to create a Windsor Small Business Enterprise (SBE) Centre to establish an SBE funding and financial support team that not only identifies all the provincial and federal programs, but most importantly works in project teams to research and write these applications to engage associated ministries, ministers, deputies, assistants, MP's and MPP's to secure grants and interest free loans, low interest financing and to set up a mechanism to measure the results."*

6.1. Status of Implementation: This recommendation has been implemented but with no conclusive action. The CAO called a meeting of the three parties. After a long aimless discussion, the meeting ended up with no concrete will or plan to set up such a centre. One party insisted that small business owners applying for grants should hire lawyers and accountants to do it for them. Naturally, it will be better to have such documents prepared by professionals. However, the Panel members know that small business owners do not have the funds to afford the fees for lawyers and accountants. Students are still an affordable alternative. The University was willing and prepared. St. Clair College was willing but with the provision that the Development Commission be a home for such a centre. At the end of the meeting, there was no firm commitment to set up the centre.

6.2. Panel's Assessment and Further Recommendations: The Panel recommends that such a centre be established. There are many government grants at various levels that our local

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small business people have not been able to access because they don't have the time and resources to prepare such lengthy grant proposals. Acquiring such grants would provide badly needed funding for a financially strapped business community. Students, with proper supervision, can prepare the needed applications with the understanding that they and their institutions will not be held responsible for the content of the grant application. This responsibility rests with the owner of the business who is making the application. His/signature will be on the application, not the students, not the institutions where they study.

7. Council's Approved Recommendation no. VII: *"That Administration BE DIRECTED to meet with representatives from the Small Business Advisory Panel to discuss the possibility of the City accommodating a store-front location for a Windsor Small Business Enterprises (SBE) Centre which would perhaps be a joint venture between the University of Windsor, St. Clair College and the Windsor Essex Development Commission".*

7.1. Status of Implementation: Happily, this recommendation has been implemented and exceeded expectations. Mr. Patrick Persichilli, VP of the Development Commission and Mrs. Sabrina Demarco undertook the implementation of this recommendation. Mr. Persichilli arranged for space for the Odette Business School students to work with Mrs. Demarco to assist small business owners who contact the Commission for assistance in starting a small business. As of now, there are about 20 University students involved, supervised by Mr. James Marsh of the Odette School of Business.

8. Council's Approved Recommendation no. VIII: *"That the Small Business Advisory Panel BE REQUESTED to provide Council with an update in 3 months."*

8.1. Status of Implementation: With the submission of this report, this recommendation is implemented. There is a delay in order to give the new Council time to settle in the governance process.

8.2. Panel's Assessment and Further Recommendations: The Panel seeks the support of the Mayor and Council in reaffirming its mission to keep the small business sector as a major job creation/retention engine and a major contributor to its tax base. To that extent, the Panel recommends the following:

- That the Mayor meets with the Panel periodically so that its effort can be a part of the agenda for job creation and prosperity.
- That the current vacancy of a second Council member (that of former Councillor Caroline Postma) be filled.
- That the Panel's terms of reference be publicised among City staffers so that they can consult with the Panel on matters pertaining to small business.
- As stated on the City's Website, the role of the Panel is headlined **"Who's looking out for small business owners? The Small Business Advisory Panel (SBAP) is a committee of Council that seeks to develop and implement strategies to promote and enhance the small business sector of Windsor's economy. Comprised of small business owners, council members and municipal administration, it also serves as a liaison and point of contact between the City of Windsor and the small business community".** The Panel would like this role to be publicised in the community so that small business owners know who is looking out for small business.

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In conclusion, the Panel is pleased to report that some progress has been made toward the cause of small business. Such progress is due to several City Hall executives especially Ms. Helga Reidel, CAO, Mr. Thom Hunt, Mr. Neil Robertson, Ms. Janice Guthrie, Mr. Gary Cian, Mr. Michael Chantler, Ms. Alena Sleziak, and Ms. Agatha Armstrong, and the able committee assistants Ms. Karen Kadour and Ms. Susan Vadori. The Panel would like to acknowledge and welcome their demonstrated commitment to the small business sector and the valuable information and guidance they provided to the Panel. The Panel would also like to acknowledge Ms. Karen Kadour and Ms. Susan Vadori for their valuable assistance in making its transactions take place smoothly and efficiently.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alfie Morgan, Ph.D., Chair. Professor Emeritus, Odette School of Business, University of Windsor, Management Consultant

Mr. Alan Halberstadt, City Councillor, Vice Chair. Council Representative on the Panel

Donald Larkin, President, Windsor Credit Bureau and Collection Services of Windsor

Mr. James Marsh, President, WFT Investments

Mr. Norm Marcoux, President, Advanced Machining Services, Inc.

Mr. Charlie Regan, President, Nerds-On-Site, The Coffee Office, and several enterprises

Mrs. Vicky Smith, Franchisee, Tim Horton Enterprises

Mr. Jim Williams, President, Remax Capital, Inc.

Attachments:

Attachment no. 1: Panel's Terms of Reference

Attachment no. 2: Report of the Customer Service Coordinator

**SMALL BUSINESS ADVISORY PANEL
MANDATE AND TERMS OF REFERENCE**

PREFACE

On September 29, City Council passed the following motion: "That a small business advisory panel be established to liaise with all City departments..." To implement Council's decision, the following mandate and terms of reference have been formulated:

NAME: "Windsor Small Business Advisory Panel"

MANDATE:

The Windsor Small Business Advisory Panel will advise and assist the Corporation of the City of Windsor in developing and implementing strategies and actions toward promoting and enhancing the small business sector of Windsor's economy.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

In order to achieve its mandate, the Small Business Advisory Panel is hereby empowered to:

- Represent Windsor's small business interests before City Council, Departments, Agencies, Boards, and Commissions, on matters that affect small business as a sector of Windsor's economy.
- Provide periodic reports to City Council about the major issues that impact the small business sector including specific policy, tax and budget recommendations aimed at improving the small business climate in Windsor
- Monitor the implementation of the Small Business Task Force's recommendations
- On its own initiative, or at the request of City Council or City Departments, provide advice and/or assistance on matters that are relevant to the small business community in Windsor
- Function as the liaison and an important point of contact intended to facilitate ongoing communication between the small business community and the City of Windsor
- Assist City Council and Administration with disseminating information to the Small Business Community on matters that would be of interest to it.

MEMBERSHIP

Composition: the

The Windsor Small Business Advisory Panel membership will consist of:

- Five or more members of the small business community.
- Two councillors.
- Two general managers from the Administration.

Primary Criteria for Appointment:

Openings for the Panel will be filled utilizing The Striking Committee of City Council procedure for appointing panels. The main criteria for member selection are:

- Members from the small business community: They have to own a small business in Windsor. Advocates for the small business cause (including professionals and retired entrepreneurs) are eligible as well. In general, should be persons who are affected or directly impacted by City Hall's decisions and policies or persons whose decisions impact the small business sector. They should be genuinely interested in developing and enhancing small business as a viable strategy for growing and sustaining Windsor's economy. They should have the level of expertise necessary for executing the Panel's mandate and terms of reference. Finally, they should be more or established enough that they can spare the time to come to the panel's meetings and participate effectively in carrying out its mandate.
- Councillors: Council members who are keenly interested in the small business sector.
- Members from the Administration: They should be at the rank of "general manager"--with portfolios that include departments whose activities directly impact the small business sector

Duration of the Panel

The panel shall be a continuing body. Members will be appointed for a period of four years

Administrative Support

City Hall is to provide the necessary administrative support for the operations of the panel in the form of a Committee Coordinators from Council Services who can provide secretarial support, scheduling meeting, keeping minutes, arranging public meetings, providing information on critical issues, and coordinating the dissemination of information.

Operations of the Panel:

Leadership:

The panel will elect a chair who will be spokesperson for it. It will also elect a vice-chair to act as an alternate for the chair. Meetings will be informal. The panel will meet once a month or as needed by City departments and City Council.

Agenda and Minutes

An agenda will be provided prior to each meeting. Panel members may suggest items for the agenda within a reasonable amount of time to the chair through the administrative assistant.

Voting and Attendance:

At least four members of the Panel shall be present to constitute a quorum. Voting will be by consensus. Members who are absent four meetings in row will be sent a reminder by the chair. If they are unable to participate on a regular basis, their positions will be open for replacement.

The voting members will be seven namely the five business members plus the councillors.

Conflict of Interest

The Panel will not be an instrument for any member to influence the decisions of the Panel to favour his/her own business or personal interest. There is only one interest for the Panel and that is the common good of the small business community as a whole. When conflict occurs, the member shall declare his/her potential conflict excuse himself/herself from the discussion of the respective agenda item.

REPORT
Small Business Coordinator

1. Tracking of Inquiries

Following the last meeting, small business inquiries were tracked through the 211/311 Call Centre. Operators were instructed to categorize all small business inquiries.

- Inquiries directed to other levels of government, community agencies or organizations are categorized under 211.
- Inquiries specific to the City of Windsor are categorized under 311.

Data collected from the period of August 1 to October 31 is outlined in the table below.

211/311 Call Centre Small Business Inquiries Report Period: August 1 - October 31, 2010		
Category	Description	No. of Inquiries
211 Consumer/Commercial	general small business small business centre	22
211 Government - Federal	small business grants	1
311 Council Services	small business advisory panel	1
311 Licensing	small business licensing	12
	Total	36

In addition to this data, one inquiry was directed specifically to the Small Business Coordinator. The inquiry pertained to garbage collection and parking restrictions on Tecumseh Road East which prohibit on street parking between 3-5 p.m.

2. Small Business Webpage

A small business page on the City of Windsor website has been created. This includes a consolidation of useful small business information as well as some key additional resource links. It is organized in a manner to make accessing small business information quickly and easily. Content can be added as required. A corporate website re-design is currently underway which should provide for enhancement in the future.
Small Business

3. Small Business Recognition Program

The STAR (Staff Appreciation Committee) was advised of the SBAP request to consider the establishment of a small business recognition program and issued an invitation to the SBAP to present at a STAR Committee meeting on October 18th. Unfortunately because of scheduling conflicts this did not occur. This will be rescheduled for early in the new year.

REPORT
Small Business Coordinator

**4. Legislative Changes affecting Small Business
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act**

Ontario has developed a new Accessible Customer Service Standard. This legislation outlines what businesses must do to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities. All businesses with at least one employee will have to comply with the new standard by January 1, 2012.

The opportunity exists to have the SBAP and the Windsor Accessibility Advisory Committee work together to outreach to small businesses on this law, how it will impact them, what they need to do etc. Suggested time frame would be early next year to allow businesses to plan accordingly.

Respectfully submitted by:
Alena Slezak
Small Business Coordinator (A)