



**COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8TH 2025 - 4:00 P.M.
SECOND FLOOR (CMO) CONFERENCE ROOM, CITY HALL
910 S. FRIENDSWOOD DRIVE, FRIENDSWOOD, TEXAS**

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm with the following members present:

**CHAIR SUSAN ASIMAKIS
COMMITTEE MEMBER JUDY WIGGINS
COMMITTEE MEMBER PAULINE MOORE
COMMITTEE MEMBER DENISE SPRUIELL
COMMITTEE MEMBER KYLE WINNE
COUNCILMEMBER SALLY BRANSON
ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER STEVEN RHEA
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AUBREY HARBIN
SECRETARY KRISTINA CUELLAR**

**ABSENT:
VICE CHAIR BLAISE GUZZETTA**

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

N/A

3. MINUTES

A. Consider approving the minutes of the Community and Economic Development Committee Regular Meeting, held on November 6, 2024.

**Motion to approve: Winnie
Second: Asmakis
Vote: 5/0 - Minutes Approved**

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Discuss the Community and Economic Development Committee economic development and business retention strategy.

Introductions

The committee for the focus group discussion included Mark Anton from Frost Bank, Brad White from VARC Solutions, David Stanley from DC Stanley Photography, Amanda Schoby from Jasmine Journey Healing Center, Leslie Buratti from Sotheby's International Realty, and Desiree Hopping from Hopping Eye Associates.

Small Business Week 2025 – Scheduled for May 5-9, 2025

Chair Asimakis provided an overview of the history of Small Business Week and recapped last year's activities and events. The goal of this meeting is to better understand the challenges, needs, and expectations of business owners. This feedback will help the committee determine the best activities, topics, and networking opportunities for business owners and their teams during this year's Small Business Week.

The first question posed by Asimakis was, "What thoughts and feelings come to mind when you think of the Friendswood Business Community?" The top responses from the focus group included friendly, welcoming, and loyalty.

Participants emphasized the need for more destinations in Friendswood while also considering the importance of avoiding increased traffic for residents. They suggested including more business owners in events, particularly those who usually remain uninvolved.

Reflecting on recent professional development or business conferences, the group shared their reasons for attending, which highlighted the importance of connection, networking, and relationship building. Winnie suggested organizing informal discussions with specific focus topics for Small Business Week, rather than following a structured agenda. Possible discussion topics could include 'leads,' 'people problems,' and 'personal development.'

Participants provided various timeframes that would work for their employees to attend programs hosted by the city.

When asked to describe a speaker or program that had a lasting impact on them and their businesses, they mentioned Barraba Cutsinger from the Bay Area Economic Foundation, who inspired excitement about being part of Friendswood. Last year, Bryan Freedman served as the keynote speaker for Small Business Week.

The group was then asked about their optimism regarding their businesses in 2025. Responses indicated aspirations for growth within each company, an increase in new small businesses, and overall growth within the city.

When discussing areas for improvement among employees, owners identified a need for a 'soft skills' mindset, which includes having the drive to improve, motivation, investing in their future, and financial goal setting. They also highlighted the importance of effectively handling conflicts, leading teams, and catering to multiple generations.

When asked about the importance of marketing for their businesses, participants noted that its relevance depends on their business stage—beginning, intermediate, or advanced. Younger companies may require more marketing, while established businesses may need less.

Finally, the group discussed the best ways for CDEC to reach out to businesses, with face-to-face meetings and communication through the chamber being preferred methods.

Chair Asimakis concluded with a brief outline of "Future Works," an internship program designed to assist high school seniors and college students. Additionally, the committee noted the value of creating a small business directory for the city. Susan expressed her gratitude to the business owners for attending.

5. REPORTS

Skipped due to length of meeting

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:17pm.