

MINUTES FOR THE
BUSINESS ADVISORY BOARD
Wednesday, March 12th, 2025

1. Roll Call

The following members of the Business Advisory Board were present:

Scott Lyttle, Chair	Sheridan Mordue, Vice-Chair
Jeff Carleton	Jocelyn Kearl
Pook Carson	Isaac Atencio
Abudujaannah Soud	Barri Allaire
Alfonso Brito	Andy Robertson
Brittany Reese	

Also Present:

Peter Makowski, Department of Economic Development; Will Wright, Department of Economic Development; Kiara Polee, Department of Economic Development; Ibrahim Ramazani, Department of Economic Development, Andie Feldman, Department of Economic Development; Angela Price, Utah Legislature; James McCormack, Building Services; Alyn Toalepai, Utah Pacific Island Chamber of Commerce.

Absent:

Anne Olsen, Young Professionals of Salt Lake City.
Kristen Lavelett, Downtown Alliance

1. Approval of the minutes

- a. Review and Approval of February 12th, 2025, BAB Minutes.

Mr. Carleton made a motion to approve the minutes of February 12th, 2025. Mrs. Reese seconded the motion. Upon roll call, the motion passed unanimously.

- b. Review and Approval of February 26th, 2025, BAB Minutes.

Ms. Kearl made a motion to approve the minutes of February 26th, 2025. Ms. Allaire seconded the motion. Upon roll call, the motion passed unanimously.

2. Briefings by the Staff

- a. Report from the Director.

Mr. Makowski, the Assistant Director of Business Development, provided several updates on recent developments. He highlighted the conclusion of the legislative session and thanked the board for their

support. He shared that three EDLF loans were approved by the city council, supporting the relocation of Policy Kings Brewery (Utah's first Black owned brewery) from Cedar City to Salt Lake City's Central 9th area. Himalayan Kitchen also received funding as part of the Engine Block development, aiming to revitalize the 1300 S 300 W portion of the Ballpark Neighborhood. Additionally, Cold Plunge Coffee, a startup from Seattle, recently opened with support from the EDLF program. The loan application portal saw significant activity, and while it was temporarily paused, it will soon reopen after ensuring long-term program sustainability.

Mr. Makowski also provided updates on Open Streets planning, emphasizing collaboration with event planners Collaborative by Design and marketing team Honey Communications. The focus this year is on creating attractions and programming to draw people downtown, with particular involvement from Gallivan Center. A business town hall will be held to coordinate with participating businesses. Additionally, the team recognized and thanked Andy, a departing member who will continue working remotely. The board will receive further updates as plans progress toward the June event.

3. Business Items

A. 2025 Utah Legislative Review

Ms. Price, the Legislative Affairs Division Director, provided a comprehensive overview of the 2025 Utah Legislative Session, emphasizing the challenging political climate and the City's proactive efforts in legislative affairs. She highlighted the formation of her division and the importance of early engagement in policy discussions through task forces like the Land Use Task Force. Ms. Price noted that Salt Lake City often faces significant scrutiny at the Capitol but remains respected. Her team collaborates with departments to analyze and prioritize bills, determining which ones to support or oppose. Despite facing a tough legislative environment, the city worked tirelessly to amend problematic bills, including a controversial public safety bill that initially threatened significant financial penalties. Ms. Price expressed appreciation for the support from other cities and the Utah League of Cities and Towns, which stood in solidarity against bills with concerning precedents.

Additionally, Ms. Price discussed the city's focus on public safety and homelessness, explaining that while the city has made progress, they often face unclear expectations from the state. She emphasized the importance of partnerships, particularly with the business community, to counteract misleading narratives. Ms. Price invited the Board to explore ways to better support city initiatives in future sessions. She also acknowledged the recent hiring of Chief Red, whose leadership has received positive feedback. Looking ahead, the City plans to reassess its political strategies to navigate the increasingly complex legislative landscape while continuing to advocate for policies aligned with City values.

B. Building Services and Economic Development Liaison

Mr. McCormack, the Building Services and Economic Development Liaison, provided an overview of permit activity and economic challenges faced by small businesses in 2024 and early 2025. He reported that over 2,000 permits were issued, with a notable increase in residential projects while commercial development slowed. Many small businesses operated on tight budgets, encountering cost overruns of 20-30% due to rising construction expenses and high interest rates. Mr. McCormack highlighted the lack of opportunities for small businesses to own their commercial spaces, emphasizing the need for developers to offer ground-floor condominium options. Ownership would provide stability, prevent rent increases, and enable businesses to become long-term community stakeholders. He stressed the importance of creating policies that support this model to ensure local businesses can grow sustainably.

Additionally, Mr. McCormack pointed out the difficulties small businesses face in accessing reliable design professionals, such as architects and engineers, which can lead to code compliance issues and legal risks. While he cannot endorse specific providers, he suggested the creation of a roster or directory through the Business Advisory Board or City partnerships to offer vetted recommendations. Mr. McCormack praised the City's efforts to reduce permit review times and provide hands-on support to small businesses. He noted successful collaborations with enterprises like Policy Kings, Star of India, and Tandoori Taqueria, reflecting the city's commitment to fostering business growth. Moving forward, he remains optimistic about supporting new projects and ensuring businesses receive the necessary resources and guidance to succeed.

4. City Council Announcements

The following updates were provided to the Business Advisory Board.

- A. Brian Redd was nominated by Mayor Mendenhall as the new Salt Lake City Police Department Chief and approved by the City Council during the Council's recent March 4 meeting.
- B. CRA The Council also approved the appointments of Kim Shelley as the Director of the Public Lands Department on March 4, and Mark Kittrell as the City Attorney on February 18.
- C. The Council approved an EDLF loan for Cold Plunge Coffee on March 4 and an EDLF loan for Policy Kings Brewery on February 18.
- D. The Council's next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 8.

5. BAB Member Announcements

- A. HB 465 and BAB letter update, Deputy Director Makowski
- B. 2025 Board Priorities, Chair Lyttle, Vice Chair
 - a. Support the City Public Safety Plan
 - b. Advocate for Easier Permitting
 - c. Support and Promote the EDLF
- C. Introducing Alyn Toalepai, new Board member, CEO, Utah Pacific Island Chamber of Commerce.

Deputy Director Makowski expressed appreciation for the Business Advisory Board's (BAB) efforts in drafting and submitting a letter regarding HB 465. Despite the letter not influencing the final outcome, it was acknowledged by the Governor, with support from the mayor's office. Mr. Makowski emphasized that while the outcome was disappointing, the Board's work remains valuable. Moving forward, discussions will be held to define a more impactful role for the BAB in future legislative sessions, ensuring timely advocacy and involvement. Chair Lyttle and Vice Chair Mordue outlined the 2025 Board priorities, which include supporting the city's public safety plan, advocating for a more streamlined permitting process, and promoting the Economic Development Loan Fund (EDLF). These focus areas will guide their efforts over the year, with further updates and presentations anticipated in the coming months.

Additionally, Alyn Toalepai, the newly appointed Board member and CEO of the Utah Pacific Island Chamber of Commerce, introduced himself. As a business owner of Cocoa Creations Company, Mr. Toalepai emphasized his commitment to representing the perspectives of Pacific Islander entrepreneurs. He highlighted the challenges his community faces with permitting processes, often repurposing business spaces without understanding regulatory requirements. His experiences underscore the need for clearer communication and resource accessibility for small businesses. Mr. Toalepai aims to bridge the gap

between high-level policy discussions and grassroots business realities, providing practical insights to enhance the permitting process and foster economic growth within underrepresented communities.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Scott Lyttle
Scott Lyttle (Apr 28, 2025 11:41 MDT)
Scott Lyttle, Chair

This document and the recording constitute the official minutes of the Economic Development Business Advisory Board meeting held on March 12th, 2025.