Recommendations of City of Tulsa

Business Services Task Force

Presented to:

Mayor Dewey F. Bartlett and Tulsa City Council

November 29, 2012

Background

The Mayor and City Council met for a retreat to determine the goals and objectives for the vision of Tulsa's future. A resolution confirming and adopting the shared priorities and desired outcomes were adopted and by the Mayor, and Tulsa City Council, on March 15, 2012. As a result, the Business Services Taskforce was birthed along with the Beautification Taskforce, Energy Industry Taskforce, Public Safety Taskforce and River Development Taskforce.

Membership

Doug Talley	Chair Business Services Task Force, Vice-President, Western Printing Company, Inc.
Angela Lawrence	Managing Partner, AcrobatAnt
David J. McAfee	Vice President, DT Specialized Services Inc.
Elliot Nelson	Founder/CEO, McNellies Group
Steve Roemerman	Sr. Programmer, Avis Budget Group
Tom Wallace	Structural Engineer, Wallace Engineering-Structural Consultants, Inc.
Allecia Ratliff	Council Aide, Tulsa City Council Office
Kerri Fothergill	Liaison, City of Tulsa Mayor's Office
Crystal Keller	Development Services Coordinator, City of Tulsa

*Website references: http://www.nyc.gov/portal/site/businessexpress

Timeline and Process

The Business Services Taskforce (BSTF) convened six times between June 18, 2012 and November 8, 2012. The initial meeting was held in the Mayor's office with subsequent meetings in the Dorothy DeWitty, Tulsa City Council Library. BSTF selected Doug Tally as Chair of the Business Services Taskforce (BSTF), due to his extensive background in this arena. Allecia Chatman- Ratliff and Keri Fothergill were assigned support staff from the Tulsa City Council, and City of Tulsa Mayor's office, respectively. A highlight in the 2012 Goals and Objectives vision and agenda, outlined the importance of a "commitment from Development Services to better accommodate new business development", as a result, Crystal Keller, Business Services Coordinator, played a vital role with the BSTF.

Charge to the Task Force

BSTF will recommend actionable steps to help attract new or better accommodate existing businesses in the City of Tulsa. BSTF will also draft a business services agreement to highlight the expectations of the City of Tulsa, and business owner responsibilities.

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Overall Approach

The Business Services Taskforce approached the project in several steps:

1. Survey stakeholders who have solicited City of Tulsa services to gain insight of their experience.
2. Researched other cities' websites and small business policies.
3. Determine best practices and develop actionable steps to present to the Mayor and Tulsa City Council.
4. Draft Business Services Agreement-"Business Owner's Bill of Rights and Responsibilities".

Step 1: Survey stakeholders with a vested interest who frequent City of Tulsa Services, to determine "best practices" in an effort to improve

BSTF members were each assigned the task to interview two stakeholders i.e., business owners, Developers, Architects, etc. who have utilized City of Tulsa services to find out their experience, and report their findings. This information was used help identify, and outline innovative ways to determine best practices to attract new business to the City of Tulsa, and expand existing commerce with the City of Tulsa.

BSTF invited various guests to meetings, to gain a better perspective, on how the City of Tulsa could take a more proactive approach, in assisting projects on the frontend, in an effort to make the project a seamless transition. For example, Dr. Gerald Clancy, President of the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa, was

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extended an invitation to discuss the proposed plans for a four year medical institution, and brainstorm how the City of Tulsa could take a proactive approach with this project.

The general consensus of the survey findings were:

- Need for more improved customer service.
- Need for more public awareness about the pre-development process, and increased education about the permitting process.
- Improve proactive approach from the City of Tulsa toward reaching, and meeting the needs of new projects.

Step 2: Reviewed other cities' websites and small business policies

- New York City Small Business Express website.
- Kansas City Small Business Express website.
- Identified resources available on the Tulsa Metro Chamber of Commerce website, and City of Tulsa website that could be consolidated as a single resource.

Step 3: Determine best practices and develop actionable steps to present to the Mayor and City Council

BSTF would like to ensure citizens have the critical tools, and resources necessary, to ensure the project will be successful. BSTF would like the City of Tulsa to take a more proactive approach with the concept of "roll out the red carpet and not the red tape."

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BSTF would like to change the public perception of the City of Tulsa to meet the needs of the business owner through the following proposed actionable steps:

A. <u>Create a Customer Centric Culture within the City of Tulsa</u>

Superior customer service was a strong underlying component when developing the actionable steps. This component alone could be a critical determining factor if a developer or business owner would do, or continue to do business, with the City of Tulsa. The following were proposed recommendations to help accentuate higher quality customer services:

- Implement reward system throughout the City of Tulsa for employees that exemplify good customer service skills.
    - i. Recognition should be customer and peer driven
    - ii. Metrics for recognition and rewards should be department based and determined by department leadership
- Require on-going customer service refresher courses for all City of Tulsa employees.
- Develop an internal campaign based off the theme "Roll out the Red Carpet and Not the Red tape". In an effort to rally City of Tulsa employees around the idea of good customer service.
- Cross train frontend office staff because they are the face of the initial contact
- Survey citizens that recently utilized City of Tulsa services via email or USPS

B. <u>Ensure business owners/developers have essential tools and resources</u>

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Between BSTF committee members own personal experience with the City of Tulsa, and feedback from other business owners/developers, there is a substantial lack of public awareness of the requirements for permits.

BSTF identified and made suggestions for the City of Tulsa's website, in an effort to streamline processes by answering questions on the front end. In addition the website could a useful resource to gain basic knowledge of City of Tulsa requirements.

Develop business services website to include:

a. Requirements Wizard
b. Links to PALS system
c. FAQ and/or Tips section
d. Online application for permits, licenses, etc.
e. Page of links/resources for small business owners/prospects to include but not limited to:
    i. Tulsa Metro Chamber of Commerce resources
    ii. List of City of Tulsa licensed professional contractors
    iii. Suggestions/comments section to encourage feedback
    iv. Business Development services listing
f. Business Services section link to essential services offered by City of Tulsa
g. Flowchart of timeline processes to determine expected turnaround times(could be part of wizard feature, rather than flow chart)
h. Business resource library of information to include:
    i. How to launch a business-(Step by Step of How the City of Tulsa should/ could be of service)

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ii. Video Education-including but not limited to:

i. Ten Steps on how to start a business in the City of Tulsa

ii. Meet the Staff

i. Key contacts

j. Fee structure table or matrix of estimation of services

k. Downloadable documents available in both English and Spanish

l. Copy of Service Agreement (Business owners bill of rights and responsibilities)

m. *include Development Services Coordinator contact information on each page of the business website-Not just on Key contacts page

Step 4. Draft Business Services Agreement

The BSTF drafted a "Business Owner's Bill of Rights and Responsibilities" agreement to highlight clear expectations of the City of Tulsa's commitment to business owners, and stakeholders. BSTF conducted research in other cities such as New York City, and Kansas City, and found similar agreements with their community. Agreements of this nature have been successful with the business community.

The Business Owner's Bill of Rights and Responsibilities should be made available in all public departments:

a. Printed version with "footer" resources available in hard copy.

b. Electronic version on the website with hyperlinks to additional resources.

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AS A BUSINESS OWNER, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

1. Receive available services regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation, marital status, or political belief.
2. Courteous and professional treatment by our employees.
3. Inspectors who are polite, professionally dressed, and properly identified.
4. Have clear expectations with regard to the turnaround time and fees for requests made to the city including inquiries, permits or other city services.
5. Knowledgeable inspectors who enforce rules uniformly.
6. Receive information about code requirements from inspectors or other employees.
7. Contest a violation through a hearing, trial or other relevant process.
8. Request a review of inspection results or re-inspection as soon as possible.
9. Have access to a Development Services Division Liaison to help resolve any issues relating to city services.
10. Have access to bilingual staff, and documents available upon request, in understandable terms.
11. Receive timely notice of appointments, construction, or utility work at your location that could disrupt service or impact your business.
12. Comment, without fear of retribution, on the performance or conduct of our employees.
13. Informed of your responsibilities as a business owner within the city of Tulsa.

AS A BUSINESS OWNER, YOU HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO:

1. Comment, without fear of retribution, on the performance or conduct of our employees.
2. Research requirements for your business, facility and operations within the City of Tulsa.
3. Be prepared and reasonable.

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4. Research all licenses and permits that apply to your business – local, state and federal.
5. Be respectful of city employees, laws, ordinances and codes.
6. Utilize qualified professionals for legal, construction, planning, and other business services.
7. Request meetings/consultation with city staff, as needed, for planning and implementation.

Implementation

The BSTF recognizes further discussions and research is needed, before the implementation of said processes, and actionable steps. BSTF believes these steps are attainable, and will lead the City of Tulsa in the right direction with further investment.

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