

BOARD OF ALDERMEN SPECIAL MEETING/WORK SESSION
TUESDAY, AUGUST 24, 2021
6:00 P.M.

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Mayor Sullivan called the special meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. on August 24, 2021.

Mayor Sullivan called the roll:

Ward One: Nathan Volkart-absent, Jean Selby-absent

Ward Two: Melissa Old-here, Stephanie Bell-here

Ward Three: Rick Lewis-here, Dorise Slinker-here

Staff Present: Tony St. Romaine, City Administrator, Lelande Rehard, Assistant City Administrator and Darla Sapp, City Clerk.

Tony St. Romaine introduced Chuck Branch, Consultant for Nextsite.

Chuck Branch thanked Lonna Trammel and Ameren partnership with them. He stated he is exited to work with the City. He gave an overview of his company being a commercial advisory firm that specializes in getting market research and analysis to retailers and restaurants. He stated that we need to start the process with research, support ongoing effort of local business owners and entrepreneurs to provide to them information on Ashland. He stated they will be out there marketing the City of Ashland at conferences and hope to connect developers. He presented data they have gathered from Moser's Grocery Store for a 12 month period. He presented data on the amount of shoppers, times of day of customers, zip codes of shoppers. He gave an update on amount of traffic in the downtown area on a daily basis. He stated this information is useful for people starting a business and current business owners. He also presented a data on the regional trade area retail gap. He stated there is no supply for men's, women's clothing, sporting goods and jewelry. Mr. Branch stated the market analysis contacts support outreach to current and future development opportunities. He stated this is supporting existing local business owners, entrepreneurial and organic growth. He stated this is assisting existing property owners and private investment by connecting developers, tenant, reps, retailers, property owners and broker outreach. He stated they provide conference representation with the next one scheduled in Las Vegas on December 5, 2021. He stated they are expecting normal conferences in 2022.

He called for questions or comments.

Mayor Sullivan asked if this information is sent out to local business that request it. Mr. Branch stated that he wants to make sure this goes through the City so they can be part of the process. Mayor Sullivan asked about gathering data for other restaurants currently in the community to help them succeed.

Lonna Trammel commented on the shoppers at Moser's being from California, Mo being 6.2 percent.

Alderwoman Bell stated a huge struggle is day care in this community. She stated dance programs and other businesses that increase the quality of living in Ashland. She also felt there is a need for drive through food services so you don't have to get the children out of the vehicle.

Tony St. Romaine stated we need to get this information out to local developers and entrepreneurs on these gaps and hopefully spawn some interest.

Alderman Bell suggested the downtown people have a half day conference and tour spaces that are vacant.

Tracy Titmus stated she is the 2021 Chamber President and she asked if they could have access to this information to be able to share.

Bill Lloyd stated he likes the work Mr. Branch is doing and he will continue to support the efforts. He asked that they reach out to Silver Tree Realty, Corey Myers and other individual contractors/developers and share this information with them. Tony St. Romaine, City Administrator stated they have already shared this information with Mr. Branch.

Lonna Trammel asked if they could get updates from him.

Bill Lloyd stated we missed the 5,000 thousand population and asked if this would effect much of what you are doing. Mr. Branch stated it would not since the business would be looking at the regional area.

Mayor Sullivan suggested reaching out to Larry Potterfield and Nick Parks. He stated he wants to support the local. He stated we are growing at a fast rate and he does not want to see vacant lots for 10 years.

Mr. Branch stated it normally takes 18 months from the purchase of property, build out and construction. He stated some retailers open in the fall for the Christmas spending. He stated the business dictates what time frame the business would open.

Alderman Slinker made motion and seconded by Alderman Lewis to adjourn the meeting.

Minutes taken by Darla Sapp, City Clerk

Richard Sullivan, Mayor