

April 30, 2007

8:30 am

Room 211 State House

Small Business Advocacy Council

Legislative Workgroup Minutes

Attendees:

Senator Josh Miller

Maureen Ewing

Bob Lafond

Jerry Meyer

Gip Cabral

Herb Weiss

Janet Raymond

Jim Hurton

Marty Cooper

Miriam Ross

Mark Deion

Kelly Carello

Paul Caranci

Justin Aina

Jennifer Wood

Eli Zupnick

Chairman Miller called the meeting to order at 8:40 am.

Introduction

Senator Miller opened by saying that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the three issues identified at the first meeting for further development by the Council committee.

SBA Tax Credit

Senator Miller shared a draft letter that the Lt. Governor's office proposed be sent from Lt. Governor Roberts to finance committee chair Representative Costantino. The letter expressed the support of the Small Business Advocacy Council's legislative workgroup for the budget article reinstating the SBA tax credit. The consensus of the group was that this letter represented their views, and should be sent.

Fire Code

Senator Miller shared draft legislation prepared by the Lt. Governor's office. He explained that this legislation would amend the fire code to stipulate that one of the public members of the Fire Safety Code Board of Appeal and Review be a small business owner as defined by the United States Small Business Administration. Jennifer Wood, General Counsel and Chief of Policy for Lt. Governor Roberts, explained that this amendment would give small business a voice in

the room when decisions on interpretations of the code were made.

Jennifer Wood also explained that this amendment is something that the council could realistically advocate be passed this session. She explained that the Lt. Governor's staff would continue researching changes to the fire code that could be introduced next session, focusing on ensuring consistency in interpretation and enforcement of the code. She mentioned that one area that the group could look into is the process through which deputy fire marshals are deputized, and if there were anything that could be changed about that process to help ensure consistency of enforcement and interpretation of the code.

The question was brought up about the possibility of a moratorium being placed on the implementation of the 2003 fire code. Senator Miller responded that this would not be easy to accomplish given the ways the public views this issue. It was also mentioned that the fire code situation affects the ability of small business owners to access capital.

Senator Miller concluded the discussion on the fire code by ascertaining that the consensus of the group was that the committee will recommend to the full Council that the Council press for the

passage of legislation requiring the addition of a small business owner to the appeals board, while also continuing the discussion of other problems regarding consistency of interpretation and enforcement of the code that might be able to be addressed next session.

Regulatory Flexibility

Senator Miller opened up the discussion into the possibility of pushing for changes in the RegFlex laws that would set up mechanisms for communication between the Secretary of State's office and the Economic Development Corporation's Small Business Advocate. Eli Zupnick, policy analyst for Lt. Governor Roberts, explained that the SBA/RISBDC Regulatory subcommittee came out with a piece of legislation that addressed this issue. He went on to explain that the EDC's Small Business Advocate has some concerns with the language of the amendment, and would like some more time to make recommendations and to consult further with the SBA and Secretary of State's office. The group agreed to look into this issue at a later date after the impacted agencies consult further.