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The following are summary minutes for the meeting of the **City of Las Cruces – Economic Development Policy Review Committee** on August 19, 2020. The meeting was held via Zoom.

**Members Present:**

- Kassandra Gandara, Mayor Pro-Tem
- Gil Sorg, Councilor
- Ana Berrun, Member
- Sandra Espiritu, Member
- Kathy Hansen, Member
- Darlene Lopez, Member
- Davin Lopez, Member
- Debbi Moore, Member
- Mary Ulrich, Member

**Members Absent:**

- Yvonne Flores, City Council

**Others Present:**

- David Maestas, Interim City Manager
- Griselda Martinez, Economic Development Director
- Francisco Pallares, Economic Development Deputy Director
- Mandy Guss, Business Development Administrator
- Liz Vega, Event Manager for Visit Las Cruces
- Elizabeth Teeters, Economic Development Coordinator
- Dominic Aragon, Digital Media Coordinator
- Dania Soto, Executive Assistant
- Rochelle Miller-Hernandez, CVB Director

**1. Call to Order:** Councilor Gandara called the meeting to order.

**2. Conflict of Interest:** None.

**3. Acceptance of the Agenda:**

**4. Minutes for Approval:**

- a. Economic Development PRC Meeting of July 15, 2020:** Councilor Sorg motioned to approve the minutes of July 15, 2020; seconded by Councilor Gandara. Motion passed unanimously.

**5. Discussion:**

- a. Local Leaders Toolkit as it Applies to Las Cruces Business Retention and Expansion/Economic Gardening Initiatives:** Mandy Gus explained

1 the local leaders toolkit as a strong towns response to the pandemic which  
2 has three phases on how to respond to the pandemic. The first phase  
3 includes shelters, food, health support which the Council were proactive  
4 supporting non-profits to provide those items; connecting masks to  
5 economic recovery with sending out information regarding masks and  
6 getting back to work; provide people space including eating out and making  
7 protests safe; going easy on enforcement, looking to educate before  
8 enforce; support adaptation including waiving the fee for temporary outdoor  
9 dining; collect data such as sending out a survey regarding COVID-19; and  
10 preserve cash. Las Cruces has implemented all of the items in the first  
11 phase.

12  
13 The second phase involves three to 12 months. These include home  
14 occupancy, working, neighborhood essentials, kickstarting entrepreneurs,  
15 housing adaptations, and walking and biking. Specific for this community  
16 they are looking at launching a Business Retention and Expansion  
17 Program. Ms. Teeters explained that there are multiple ways to assist  
18 businesses proactively to include economic gardening. The Business  
19 Retention and Expansion Program (BRE) as well as economic gardening is  
20 to take a proactive stance to helping businesses during COVID-19; instead  
21 of helping businesses when they're falling apart this is aiding them from the  
22 start to help them grow. BRE is an economic development strategy of  
23 proactively connecting with existing businesses to understand and respond  
24 to local business needs. Economic gardening is an economic development  
25 model that embraces the fundamental idea that entrepreneurs drive  
26 economies. The model seeks to create jobs by supporting existing  
27 companies in a community. Similarities include setting up a framework and  
28 gain information to support the local businesses. Differences include what  
29 type of business is targeted, how the results of gathered information are  
30 analyzed, and the length of engagement. BRE includes any second stage  
31 company using any resources available to help the needs of the business  
32 with long term views including annual check-ins. Economic gardening  
33 includes second stage companies that are growth oriented with external  
34 market potential that has competitor intelligence and market research to  
35 help it grow for short term.

36  
37 The framework for the BRE program is currently in the program setup  
38 phase. Meetings have been happening with the Chambers, SVDC, and  
39 MVEDA while also working to find other partners to assist to make the  
40 program effective. The framework is also being set up in looking at  
41 resources and setting up a portfolio showing next steps for businesses to  
42 aid in pointing businesses in the correct direction and who they need to  
43 contact to help them. Once the framework of the program is set up the next  
44 steps will be continuous. These include gaining support: get information out  
45 there, information gathering: surveys or direct calls and one on one  
46 meetings with businesses, analyze results: determine if there are gaps in  
47 the resources to better assist the businesses, and report findings. The  
48 timeline begins in the West Mesa Industrial Park in order to work out the

1 kinks of the program before going through the entire City. September will  
2 be the launch of meeting with the businesses in the West Mesa Industrial  
3 Park, whether that means surveys or calls.  
4

5 Councilor Sorg commented that he's very impressed with this program.  
6 He's excited to see how it works out and hopes it will do well. Darlene Lopez  
7 agreed that she believes this is an amazing program. She commented that  
8 the small businesses feel ostracized right now and believe the big store  
9 businesses seem to have an upper hand so she's grateful that a program  
10 is being made to invest into small businesses. She asked what resources  
11 they already have in the toolkit for the businesses. For example, a business  
12 wants to move outdoors but are unable to because it's too hot but they can't  
13 afford misters or a canopy, what resources are available to that business?  
14 Ms. Martinez asked if she is referring to specific needs now during COVID-  
15 19 or in general. Board Member Darlene Lopez specified in general. Ms.  
16 Martinez explained that the business development program supports  
17 businesses in general; this includes a business concierge who trouble  
18 shoots issues that businesses have in terms of processes or things that  
19 need follow-up. Economic development is a strategy in partnership within  
20 the community. They have just launched a technical assistance program  
21 with *[inaudible]* to do technical assistance that leads to access to capital. A  
22 business accelerator exclusive for businesses in Las Cruces was launched  
23 with Arrowhead Center. There is also discussion on how to work with  
24 Arrowhead Center and experts to provide support to local businesses to  
25 have online presence and be more active on social media; to create content  
26 and learn the analytics. The Business Retention Expansion Program is  
27 designed to continue to evaluate what gaps there are from the business  
28 perspective and what the role of the Economic Development Department is  
29 moving forward.  
30

31 Davin Lopez commented that MVEDA has always had a BRE program in  
32 place concentrating on economic based employers in the region. Some  
33 expectations are to not be in a position to have all the answers but have an  
34 empathetic ear; to know someone is listening and getting back to them with  
35 an answer. It also helps build future policy. Board Member Darlene Lopez  
36 offered her support. Debbi Moore responded to Darlene Lopez's comments  
37 stating Board Member Moore was interviewed and they discussed the BRE.  
38 She believes the power of this program being concentrated in one area of  
39 the community to start is going to find resources that can be pulled together  
40 building a strong foundation of collaboration that will continue past the  
41 COVID-19 problem; such as the shop local issues with COVID-19 and how  
42 to make the local stores compatible to the shopping online convenience.  
43 One idea is to create a Las Cruces marketplace where vendors can sell  
44 their items online; how to make the marketplace for shipping or delivery,  
45 how to make it work where businesses can sell online. She believes the  
46 BRE takes this to another level in carrying the messaging correctly for  
47 industry sectors. For example restaurants have a different need than child  
48 care centers. Part of Board Member Moore's goal is to begin meeting with

1 industry sectors to find the specific industry needs; what is needed to  
2 expand, retain, keep their doors open, etcetera. Sandra Espiritu  
3 commented that she believes this is very exciting as COVID-19 has  
4 impacted so many small and local businesses and she's happy to see what  
5 the City is doing to make things better for businesses locally. She has also  
6 offered her help in any way.  
7

8 Councilor Sorg asked what small businesses besides restaurants and bars  
9 have been reduced in activity, suffered in economics and business, and  
10 what they have been suffering. Mr. Pallares commented that the next  
11 presentation will deal with that question. Board Member Moore stated that  
12 the answer is everyone; mostly due to the restrictions for the amount of  
13 customers they can have. She is proud of the business community in their  
14 innovation to reach out to the consumers. Councilor Sorg commented that  
15 he spoke with his neighbor and the neighbor mentioned he had more money  
16 now than he would have had if it wasn't for the pandemic. He observed that  
17 perhaps there's pent up spending that may come out when the pandemic  
18 is mostly over. He also observed that there has been a rush on purchasing  
19 cars which shows a shift in economics that he would like to know what it  
20 means. He asked if there is anything they can do to help the downtown as  
21 it is a focused area for economic development. Councilor Gandara  
22 commented that there is a lot happening downtown through the partnership.  
23 Ms. Vega responded that they are working with the downtown partnership  
24 to identify areas to help businesses downtown. Currently they are working  
25 on a marketing campaign to notify the public that the businesses are open  
26 at a limited capacity; working with the Farmers Market to develop COVID-  
27 19 safe practices to expand to 50% in the coming months; working with the  
28 restaurants for ideas on how to do outdoor dining quickly and safely.  
29 Councilor Sorg requested to have some kind of informational note that  
30 would fit on a Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram post for him to post.  
31

32 Councilor Gandara mentioned the funding opportunity to Renovate Las  
33 Cruces. It encourages people to remodel or update their façade perhaps to  
34 incentivize bringing business downtown. Ms. Vega stated that they do have  
35 the Renovate Main Street program which is a dollar for dollar match with  
36 business or property owner to renovate their interior or exterior. They are  
37 able to request up to \$25,000.00 which quite a few have taken advantage  
38 of the incentive to include Beck's, Lucky Dog Billiards, Sugie's Diner, and  
39 Matteo's. Councilor Gandara added that the Arts and Cultural District is  
40 working on making things happen as it relates to art and culture. Ms. Vega  
41 added that the Arts and Cultural District is one of the only state and city  
42 initiated arts and cultural district. There is capital outlay funding from the  
43 state that will be used for infrastructure projects downtown to include  
44 improvements to electrical upgrades in the Plaza area and Main Street;  
45 which should encourage more activity downtown with food trucks, etcetera.  
46 There are quarterly meetings with the Arts and Cultural District to identify  
47 different projects; to include a walking tour of the historic district which is

1 being co-programed with the museums. The Amador Hotel will also be  
2 improved with projects in the coming weeks.

3  
4 Mary Ulrich commented that Doña Ana Community College (DACC) Small  
5 Business Development Center has discovered training gaps that business  
6 owners have; especially in technology and uploading documents which is  
7 impeding them getting assistance they need. She added that DACC is  
8 poised to help with those training needs if the economic gardening reveals  
9 that. Councilor Gandara thanked them for the framework and asked how  
10 do they determine which framework would better suit Las Cruces with the  
11 survey and assessment with relation to BRE and the economic gardening.  
12 She explained that it sounds like there will be a pilot project using the BRE  
13 framework and the focus is specifically on the West Mesa Industrial Park  
14 and what data is leading them to focus in that area. Ms. Teeters responded  
15 that they decided on the Industrial Park because they didn't want to take on  
16 more than they could handle. Also the market street study was done of the  
17 West Mesa Industrial Park with a recommendation to create a BRE program  
18 and use the framework to expand to the City. There has not been a decision  
19 as of yet as whether it will be by area of the City or industry when the  
20 program expands. The reason they are doing BRE rather than economic  
21 gardening is because the former encompasses more businesses where  
22 economic gardening is more about entrepreneurs and growth. With the  
23 current climate there aren't many businesses focusing on growing but rather  
24 staying afloat.

25  
26 Councilor Gandara commented that focusing on the West Mesa is a priority  
27 but she is concerned that during COVID-19 there are businesses within the  
28 City that need help and resources. She would like the data on how many  
29 10 plus 99 businesses there are in the West Mesa. She believes the  
30 immediate priority is about a combination between the BRE and economic  
31 gardening for people who are experiencing hardships and concerns  
32 throughout all the industries; for example, childcare which allow the  
33 essential workers to work. People returning to work without having  
34 childcare is putting additional stress on an already stressful situation. Mr.  
35 Pallares stated that the BRE was originally a suggestion that came out of  
36 the West Mesa Industrial Park study for strategic industries. They took that  
37 suggestion as a pilot program for the West Mesa but they will expand it to  
38 the City. The current stage they are at is to begin in the West Mesa  
39 Industrial Park in order to troubleshoot to find things they can do better and  
40 improve. Once it is ready they will then launch it through the City. However,  
41 this does not mean they are not taking care of the rest of the City; there are  
42 resources for the businesses in the City that are already out there.  
43 Councilor Gandara understands that the BRE came as a recommendation  
44 from a grant received and that is why it's beginning on the West Mesa  
45 Industrial Park. However, while it is a great idea, she doesn't believe the  
46 data supports focusing solely there; she believes the priorities during  
47 COVID-19 should be different.

1 Councilor Gandara suggested sharing the department's monthly report with  
2 the Economic Policy Review Committee as it highlights everything that's  
3 going on. This will give better information that the members can share on  
4 social media. She also reminded people regarding the Las Cruces promise  
5 as it's important to know consumer confidence; they can look at it to take  
6 the promise and then share on the social media. She commented that Mr.  
7 Lopez, MVEDA downtown partnership have done surveys as it relates to  
8 businesses during COVID-19 and restoring consumer confidence. She  
9 asked staff if they have that survey, if they're using it, and if there's any  
10 plans to do further surveys for businesses and consumers. Ms. Martinez  
11 said there are already efforts in the community going to consumers; Board  
12 Member Davin Lopez has led an effort to do that by distributing three rounds  
13 of surveys. She believes the additional information to consider will be in the  
14 next discussion item.

15  
16 Councilor Gandara asked what is needed from the Committee for the next  
17 step in this process. Ms. Martinez responded that it was *inaudible* bringing  
18 the ordinance of the effort to be put in place as well as any final thoughts  
19 before launch. They do not need to go to Council as it is an administrative  
20 function but they can include it as part of the next department update as  
21 well as the monthly updates. They are now able to launch the program and  
22 expand from that. Councilor Gandara commented that before the Members  
23 were approved there was a presentation from Michael Schuman that  
24 reminded her of the economic gardening. Ms. Martinez added that  
25 conversations have continued with him and have drilled down to two  
26 possible options while they continue to evaluate other items that may be  
27 relevant and actionable. Councilor Gandara recommended that if there is  
28 a recording of the presentation that it be sent to the Board to listen to. Ms.  
29 Martinez said she could send the link out to the PRC Members. Councilor  
30 Sorg recommends that this program presented today would also be  
31 presented to the City Council. Councilor Gandara agrees. Ms. Martinez  
32 stated they can request a work session.

33  
34 **b. COVID-19 Impact Analysis on Local Economy:** Mr. Pallares explained  
35 that this presentation is first data collection efforts which mean they  
36 collected the information directly from the sources. Mr. Pallares began with  
37 the labor force; for about two years there have been very low unemployment  
38 rate of 4.8%. Starting in March when the closures began there was an  
39 increase in the unemployment rate with a peak in April of 12%; it has not  
40 yet recovered as it's still roughly 9% unemployment rate. There was also a  
41 major drop in payroll employment when the closures began with a slight  
42 increase happening after April. However, there is still a lot of unemployment  
43 in the City of Las Cruces.

44  
45 In terms of SNAP recipients in Doña Ana County there was a major spike  
46 March through June; it measures poverty on a more month to month basis  
47 while the census has an annual count, most recent available is from 2018.  
48 Instead of waiting for that information SNAP shows the poverty level in Doña

1 Ana County on a more monthly basis; the higher the level of poverty the  
2 more eligibility of individuals for this assistance. The recently released  
3 numbers for June is 29,780 SNAP case recipients; roughly a third of the  
4 population of Las Cruces within the entire Doña Ana County. Despite the  
5 unemployment numbers coming down or slight recovery there is still a  
6 growth in people who need assistance. Fortunately compared to yearly  
7 comparisons January and February of 2020 were less than 2019, but  
8 starting in March it has climbed higher. Business renewals and new  
9 business registrations in Las Cruces followed a similar pattern of  
10 employment. The lowest number of renewals happened in April but by June  
11 there were more business renewals as well as new businesses. Mr.  
12 Pallares believes that some of the businesses were waiting until some of  
13 the pandemic restrictions were lifted to see what would happen before  
14 registering or renewing their licenses.

15  
16 A survey was released in the latter portion of June until the end of July.  
17 There were 95 respondents of the business community which included  
18 barbershops, nail salons, mechanics, retail, food services, health care,  
19 etcetera. Current operating status of the business was mostly operating  
20 between 76% and 100% capacity. However, up to a fourth of the  
21 respondents said they were operating up to 25% or less of capacity; the  
22 temporary closures also add to that amount. In regard to weekly revenue  
23 whether it increased, decreased, or stayed the same since the pandemic  
24 some businesses did have some increase, however the vast majority had a  
25 substantial decrease; roughly 75% of businesses saw their revenues  
26 decrease at least by 25% or more. In regards to the work force cut in hours,  
27 layoffs, etcetera, the majority did not change their workforce meaning the  
28 owners are taking on the losses despite the decrease in revenues. Roughly  
29 55% of the respondents mentioned that the workers were working on site  
30 rather than remotely; possibly because the workers are needed on site.  
31 Roughly 18% of the respondents have all of their staff working remotely but  
32 a very large percent is working on site. The resources needed for a  
33 relaunch or phased restart was mainly payroll capital, grants, and regulatory  
34 relief. Many also mentioned they needed online access to their customers  
35 so the Economic Development Department began to look at how they could  
36 get online access to some of the customers. The Arrowhead Center has a  
37 program that was dedicated to Las Cruces businesses and part of that  
38 program is dedicated to moving businesses online. Relief programs they  
39 have applied for was mostly federal government such as the PPP. Based  
40 on the circumstances roughly 45% of the respondents said they can remain  
41 viable as a business for six months or less.

42  
43 Councilor Sorg asked for clarification when this was asked. Mr. Pallares  
44 explained it was between June and July. Roughly 65% of the respondents  
45 think they can remain viable for less than a year, giving more motivation to  
46 launch programs to help these businesses. The top concerns for the next  
47 12 months for the respondents included a second wave of COVID-19  
48 business closures, low consumer confidence and spending, a U.S. or global

1 recession, and employee stress. The majority of the respondents believe  
2 that it will take a year or more to recover to pre-COVID revenue levels.  
3 Actions from the City of Las Cruces that would be of most value to the  
4 respondents included to maintain health first, making sure the numbers  
5 were low; having concise rules, knowing what is expected; financial relief,  
6 grants for outdoor equipment; easing restrictions, some businesses more  
7 impacted than others; loan and grant assistance; buying local; social media  
8 assistance, there are already actions being taken to help businesses with  
9 this; minimum wages fears; business friendliness from the City and reducing  
10 burdens on businesses.

11  
12 Board Member Davin Lopez asked on pages seven, 12, and 14 are they  
13 able to cross reference the answers with the specific type of entity or  
14 industry that's saying those needs. Mr. Pallares confirmed that. Board  
15 Member Davin Lopez asked if they have any data on how they cross  
16 reference in terms of who are going to recover the quickest, what industries  
17 say they will, or size of the businesses versus who are most hurt by it. Mr.  
18 Pallares said yes and there were more in the other services which include  
19 barbershops, nail salons, etcetera as well as restaurants that were heavily  
20 impacted because of the close human contact. Board Member Davin Lopez  
21 asked what businesses have a better chance at getting back to pre-COVID  
22 revenues. Mr. Pallares responded that they don't have them cross  
23 referenced but he can do that.

24  
25 Councilor Sorg commented that a lady he talked to last night works at the  
26 Memorial Health Clinic which receives all the cases for COVID-19 and she  
27 said there's hardly any patients coming now; recently only one. She told  
28 him she wants the businesses and schools to open as she can't afford to  
29 pay childcare. He also commented that a lot of the businesses problems  
30 are consumer confidence in their health and safety. Mr. Pallares reminded  
31 them that the Las Cruces Economic Recovery Board has that in mind and  
32 was the main reason for launching the Las Cruces Safe Promise campaign.  
33 They are currently making efforts of deploying that for businesses to take  
34 the training to show they are making efforts to the health and safety of their  
35 consumers. Councilor Sorg also commented that the recent numbers are  
36 looking quite good.

37  
38 Board Member Moore asked if Mr. Pallares knows what percentage of the  
39 3,000 business licenses are considered home based businesses. Mr.  
40 Pallares said that they could calculate that but he's unsure at this moment.  
41 Board Member Moore asked to confirm that they had 95 responses to the  
42 survey. Mr. Pallares confirmed. It is not the best percent of example of the  
43 whole population as they would have needed roughly 300 responses but it  
44 is a glimpse of some information. Board Member Moore said that her  
45 concern is that the results are skewed from the survey as it's only roughly  
46 3.5% return for the survey. However, she believes it's important that the  
47 survey is a reflection of what the business community is. She is co-chair on  
48 the Las Cruces Economic Recovery Board and the main focus is the



1 consumer confidence. Once things began opening up everyone wanted to  
2 feel safe both the employees and consumers. She believes that stronger  
3 promotion of the Las Cruces Safe Promise will help overall. Another  
4 program the Chamber is working on with the business community is to go  
5 through the New Mexico Safe Certified program. She recommends  
6 everyone to go to the New Mexico Safe Certified to build the level of  
7 confidence up to reach the next level. She would like to see the survey  
8 redone and sent out again with tighter questions and taking out the home  
9 based businesses. She is going to start having industry specific zoom calls  
10 with different industries to find what they need and can help.

11  
12 Mr. Pallares explained that they could not tell which businesses were home  
13 based because it was released to everyone and that is not a required  
14 question so they can remain anonymous. He pointed out that the last  
15 question had a follow up if they wished to be contacted by the Economic  
16 Development Department to discuss their concerns. There were roughly  
17 28 businesses that took that opportunity and many have been contacted;  
18 most had questions in regards to going online. Board Member Moore asked  
19 if there's not a category for someone to notate they're home based when  
20 they register their business; they could pull them out of the survey and  
21 perhaps create a different one for those businesses. Mr. Pallares confirmed  
22 that can happen but it would be a smaller size of the population if they  
23 resend it; just can't get the information once the information has been  
24 received back. Board Member Moore recommends that they take out the  
25 home based businesses and resend the survey; one to home based and  
26 one to store businesses.

27  
28 Kathy Hansen thanked them for the briefing and looks forward to discussing  
29 and sharing it with the Arrowhead team. She asked if there's any specifics  
30 for what was meant by business friendliness. Mr. Pallares stated that in  
31 general there were responses such as openness to having or receiving  
32 investments, having regulatory relief or reducing rates, etcetera. A large  
33 number of ideas can fit under the business friendliness criteria. Ms. Guss  
34 added that the staff has started to reach out to the respondents who wanted  
35 to be contacted and that question is being asked to help make changes as  
36 needed. The biggest feedback was businesses looking for financial  
37 assistance as well as having someone listen to them.

38  
39 Councilor Sorg asked what the name of the pledge is and where a business  
40 can get the pledge done for the consumer confidence. Board Member  
41 Moore responded it's accessed on the City's website under Las Cruces  
42 Safe Promise as well as on the New Mexico State website for New Mexico  
43 State Certified. Traditionally it was only for tourism but now it's broad-based  
44 businesses. The link on the City's website is [www.las-cruces.org/lcsafepromise](http://www.las-cruces.org/lcsafepromise). Ms. Martinez added that they can send the link  
45 to all Members. Councilor Sorg asked if there was a sticker for businesses  
46 to put on their doors if they do the safe promise. Councilor Gandara  
47 confirmed that. Board Member Moore added that there is a certificate  
48

1 received once the business goes through the New Mexico State  
2 certification; it is not a specific Las Cruces safe sticker. The Las Cruces  
3 Safe Program attached to the state program in order to not duplicate what  
4 the state has. She doesn't believe there is a specific sticker for the Las  
5 Cruces Safe Promise but she thinks it may be a good idea. Ms. Martinez  
6 added when businesses take the Las Cruces Safe Promise they can  
7 download the logo to use in social media; they are working on ordering the  
8 stickers and have reached out to the state for what businesses have signed  
9 up in order to send them the sticker. Councilor Gandara commented that  
10 she believes the City Council did want Las Cruces Safe Promise stickers.

11  
12 Councilor Gandara suggested that comparisons be made on the  
13 information from the survey. For example comparing slide five to what  
14 sectors are having issues or maintaining profit. She asked if nonprofits are  
15 included in the 3,000 businesses that are registered. Mr. Pallares confirmed  
16 that as nonprofits must be registered as businesses in the City of Las  
17 Cruces. That means they could possibly have been a part of the 95  
18 respondents to the survey. Councilor Gandara asked if they didn't request  
19 demographics of type of business on the survey and how they can compare  
20 and contrast industry wise. Mr. Pallares responded that they requested they  
21 identify within their two digit NEX codes as an industry. Councilor Gandara  
22 suggested that the survey be done again in either September/October or  
23 October/November. She would like to share it with her e-mail list. She  
24 asked if there will be a written report and if so where will it be posted to refer  
25 people to. Mr. Pallares stated that this is part of an effort greater than  
26 COVID-19. When he held the economist position he had a discussion with  
27 the Federal Reserve Bank in El Paso because they are in charge of the  
28 economic research of this area; he requested information to be used on a  
29 monthly basis to track the business. They refused as they did not want to  
30 focus on such a small area. However, they provided samples to be used to  
31 implement the research in Las Cruces. This information will be on a monthly  
32 basis and the links will be shared but this is primarily for businesses. This  
33 is why the survey is only sent to registered business owners. Councilor  
34 Gandara appreciates that but would like to send out the survey as she has  
35 many business owners on her e-mail list.

36  
37 Councilor Gandara mentioned slide 15 was interesting looking at the  
38 concerns people had relating to COVID-19 as well as the conversations that  
39 have been had. Knowing what industry sectors they came from will help  
40 with financial assistance grants as there are concerns on how difficult the  
41 applications are; technology is still difficult for some. She believes we need  
42 to not only have a listening ear but also perhaps a case manager to help  
43 the businesses through the application process. She suggested getting  
44 associations such as SCORE to help businesses with technical assistance  
45 as some of the smaller businesses seem to be giving up and not applying  
46 for the recovery funding. She commented that it seems people are taking  
47 advantage of the federal funding but not the state funding. She asked why  
48 they think that is and how do they encourage people to do that. Mr. Pallares

1 responded that he believes the federal funding was more in the news and  
2 the state wasn't. They will improve how to get the information of the state  
3 funding out once the CARES grants are received. Councilor Gandara  
4 suggested people share the campaign with their constituents on getting  
5 more information out about the state funding, availability of the grants, and  
6 Las Cruces Safe Promise. She would also like to discuss what that looks  
7 like moving forward and what platforms are available. If there was a bite  
8 size infomercial that fits on social media it would be helpful to be shared  
9 from the Members and City Council.

10  
11 **6. Future Discussion/Task Listing:**

12 **a. Business Grant Assistance:**

13  
14 Ms. Martinez asked if they'd like for her to request from ex-officio Committee  
15 Members on topics of interest that would be considered for the agenda.  
16 One was received from Board Member Darlene Lopez about business  
17 grants which is recommended to discuss next month. Councilor Gandara  
18 asked if there were any other items Members wished to discuss next  
19 meeting. Ms. Martinez added that she can follow up with an e-mail or call  
20 directly.

21  
22 Ms. Martinez stated that some potential follow-ups include sharing the  
23 monthly report of the department with the Board Members which will be sent  
24 via e-mail with the Las Cruces Safe Promise link. Future surveys sent to  
25 businesses will consider recommendation with sharing the link with other  
26 databases. There were no follow-up action items from this discussion.

27  
28 Councilor Gandara mentioned they may wish to have an update on the  
29 Recovery Board Discussion as Board Member Moore is on the call. Board  
30 Member Moore suggested a follow-up to the survey should happen to  
31 dissect it and make sure other organizations aren't duplicating the work but  
32 rather working together; take the top four or five issues and see what can  
33 be done.

34  
35 Councilor Gandara would like a small presentation on the COVID-19  
36 response. Such as the \$1.8 million the City has given to various  
37 departments to help residents and businesses; highlight the program of  
38 working with Arrowhead; a second request for funding to the City. Ms.  
39 Martinez asked for clarification that it is a presentation on the work the City  
40 has been doing for COVID-19. Councilor Gandara confirmed that.

41  
42 **7. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:00 p.m.** Councilor  
43 Gandara motioned.

1 Garrett M. Stone

2 Chairperson

3

4

5

6 Approved: \_\_\_\_\_