



## Task Force February 1, 2012

### Topic: Improve Business Regulation

- Restrictive zoning
- Signs – city says they must be taken down. Difficult for retailers.
- ADA requirements and other code requirements (i.e. no plastic pipes) have increased cost of development. Example: daycare needs high and low drinking foundation, not just one. Example: In 1995 a \$50k project now is \$100k.
- Streamline process of approving businesses – keep fees reasonable in comparison to surrounding cities
- More flexibility in zoning would be helpful
- Retail – re-work sign regulation. Keep regulation but make it easier for retailers. Consider temporary signs that have no permit and can be used 2 times per year.
- Signage restrictions – could use review
- Signage – Jeff Johnson received one
- Signage – BP made Galaxy take down sign (no other cities made them take it down). Need to rewrite the sign ordinance. Have 4-5 businesses resolve signage ordinance.
- Bond fees are high in BP. Way higher than Maple Grove. A lot of money for a start-up.
- Sometimes City staff are inflexible or not willing to push the policy
- Process to start a business in BP (zoning, planning commission) takes too long to get Council approval. Need more lenient opens and more timely
- Permits tough to get from City, especially for non-traditional uses/tenants. – For example: the mushroom grower in Welcome Square.
- Met Council slow to respond on SAC/WAC fees
- Signage – temporary signs/restrictions
- Less regulation. Fees for development. Need more urgency to get things done. BP is not the worst.
- City should act like it wants businesses – less regulation and wait periods.
- Consider expedited processes for development if business is ready to go.
- Rather than 180 days process, have process where people have temporary status
- Probationary period rather than complex planning or permitting process. Owner commits to accomplishing rules, then City checks in and ensures compliance. This would be better than delaying businesses in setting up.
- Sign ordinance changes – regulatory changes
- Probationary period for new businesses coming into the community so they can get in and get going without going through long process (20-30 days to get in and get going)
- BP is restrictive. City has campaigned to “make it a better place,” but in reality has driven some business away. Slowed development along 610 (i.e. amphitheater project never built)
- City restrictions (i.e. signs) complicate things greatly – changing codes

- Cities trying to “make things perfect,” but is punishing to businesses
- Some cities lose competitiveness with other cities due to restrictions - BP is more restrictive comparatively.
- BP has more code issues than Eden Prairie
- Businesses having to come up with more financing to cover additional costs from City (in the approval process)
- Businesses not understanding regulations – streamline the City Code (grade its user-friendliness)
- Remove the unexpected surprises – need more transparency up front (i.e. Minneapolis and its new one-stop shop for permitting)
- Nickel and dimed when opening a new building. Biggest challenge is the uncertainty posed by government. Seeing “fees” and “fines.” Don’t know what the government is going to come out with next. Government jumping into business concerns. Have to pay for fire inspections.
- Building a new building was troublesome because of changes required by the building/fire codes. Perception that interpretation of codes is not flexible. Fire code requires businesses to be UL rated.
- Additional costs on small things (renovation project) such as a drinking fountain
- Not being able to advertise (city does not allow banners)
- Wants to keep lights on gas stations but city wants additional requirements to meet this such as cameras, noise regulations, etc. Restrictions too difficult and is not cost-effective as a business owner. Frustrating
- Size of city allows for quality planning department and good customer service but leads to a hindrance by adopting international standards that are too detailed and staff isn’t flexible in interpreting them
- Too many laws/regulations – I want the city (experts) to help me to achieve ways around the regulation while being in compliance with the laws – not be too stringent on the black letter law
- We need more flexibility in zoning for outdoor storage. Limited in office/warehouse use businesses. Outdoor storage needs to be allowed for better use to contractors. More restrictive in BP than surrounding communities. Regulation.
- Establish consistent standards to apply to all businesses...don’t put costs on one and not the others (i.e. the pond at Noble Mobile)
- Streamlining regulations – do an outside analysis of where improvements could be made – encourage a business friendly attitude throughout all of City Hall. Look at why you can build a building in other cities that can’t be built here
- Consistent standards across all cities to provide ease of understanding
- Fix regulation/zoning issues
- Small businesses are nickel and dimed – small businesses don’t know what to ask; do homework head of time
- Regulations not interpreted in a reasonable manner or consistently
- Brooklyn Park makes small business owners jump over many unnecessary hurdles such as getting permit for signs, events, etc. It is very difficult to remain profitable when you have to pay permits for everything. We are already experiencing difficulty attracting customers to our businesses. Any additional signage is critical for business to attract additional customers. City needs to reassess and revamp small business permit requirements. There are way too many fees.