

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

PANDEMIC RESURGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE, BUSINESS SUBCOMMITTEE

Tuesday, June 30, 2020 – 5:00 PM

Pursuant to the Governor's State of Emergency,
this meeting was conducted solely by videoconference.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Katie Wilkinson, Business Subcommittee Chair
Secretary Jen Cohan, Delaware Department of Transportation
State Senator Nicole Poore
State Representative Bill Bush
State Representative Jeff Spiegelman
Kurt Foreman, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Delaware Prosperity Partnership
Todd Lawson, Sussex County Administrator
Steve Chambliss, General Manager of the Christiana Mall
Taryn Dalmasso, Head of Operations at Edgewell Personal Care
Chris Schell, Chief Executive Officer of Schell Brothers Homebuilding
Judy Diogo, President of Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce
Carrie Leishman, President & CEO of the Delaware Restaurant Association
Dick Willey, President of Perdue Agribusiness LCC

STAFF PRESENT

Damian DeStefano, Division Director, Division of Small Business

CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Wilkinson called the meeting to order at 5:04 PM. A motion to approve the minutes from the June 23rd meeting was made by Representative Bush, seconded by Judy Diogo, and approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Opening Remarks

Chairwoman Wilkinson began the meeting with a discussion of recent events and the state's decision to delay entering Phase 3 of its reopening and also to close bars at the beach over the July 4th weekend. Committee members Carrie Leishman and Judy Diogo offered comments on the matter, expressing their feeling that new communication channels such as industry associations and chambers of commerce could be helpful in driving higher levels of compliance.

Presentation of PRAC Goals

The committee was presented with a recap of the five major goals of the PRAC committee as a whole. These goals are as follows:

- Identify most effective ways of monitoring the pandemic to proactively develop a plan in case a broad resurgence occurs.
- Communicate regularly and effectively to all Delaware residents.
- Ensure readiness and accessibility of the health system.
- Maximize economic opportunity for all Delawareans by supporting businesses and individuals.
- Support individuals and businesses who have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

The committee was asked for comment on these goals and seemed to be aligned on them from a broad perspective. Next, they were shown a breakdown of how the Business Subcommittee's work fits into each one of these goals and a breakdown of the economic impact to date and levers at the disposal for mitigating the outbreak and alleviating harm done to the macroeconomy.

Comments on Subcommittee Goals and Mitigation Strategies

Chris Schell began the discussion by sharing his thoughts for a more effective communications strategy that used new channels in order to drive higher levels of compliance from not just the business community but the public as a whole. Dick Willey followed up those comments by sharing that identifying specific agriculture sector channels would be an important part of any effective strategy.

Representative Spiegelman shared his thoughts that the lack of consistency in mitigation policies to date had been frustrating for small business owners. Judy Diogo agreed with this and shared that clearer definitions of health risks we were trying to avoid would be helpful.

Secretary Cohan offered her observations from behaviors of customers at DMVs in the state, which tend to operate similarly to essential businesses (have to stay open, people have to go even when they might not want to be out). She explained that they had seen an uptick in unruly customers, and also shared that enforcement of compliance with rules was important.

Kurt Foreman added that we should be looking at ways to leverage available technologies to expand our communications and reach more people. Steve Chambliss added that consumer behavior was difficult for business owners to regulate and that as a result more needed to be done to reach them directly with the message of what needs to be done to mitigate the spread of the virus.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no comments from members of the public.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

The next scheduled meeting of the Business Subcommittee of the PRAC was announced for Tuesday, July 7th, at 5:00 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Committee, Kurt Foreman moved, seconded by Judy Diogo, to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:07 PM.