



Legislation Text

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**Small Business Recovery Task Force-** For the purpose of establishing a temporary emergency Task Force commissioned to focus on the experiences that Annapolis businesses are facing in the time of the COVID-19 declarations protecting citizen health.

**CITY COUNCIL OF THE  
City of Annapolis**

**Resolution R-25-20**

**Introduced by: Mayor Buckley**

**Co-sponsored by: Alderwoman Pindell Charles and Alderwoman Tierney**

**A RESOLUTION** concerning

**Small Business Recovery Task Force**

**FOR** the purpose of establishing a temporary emergency Task Force commissioned to focus on the experiences that Annapolis businesses are facing in the time of the COVID-19 declarations protecting citizen health.

**WHEREAS,** Governor Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr., pursuant to the Maryland Constitution and Title 14 of the Public Safety Article, proclaimed a state of emergency and a catastrophic health emergency for the entire State of Maryland on March 5, 2020, which was renewed on March 17, 2020, to control and prevent the spread of COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS,** on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak to be a pandemic; and

**WHEREAS,** the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Maryland Department of Health recommend social distancing to reduce the spread of COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS,** Mayor Gavin Buckley declared a local state of emergency on March 12, 2020, to control and prevent the spread of COVID-19 within the City of Annapolis, and the local state of emergency still exists; and

**WHEREAS,** to reduce the spread of COVID-19, Governor Hogan issued an Executive Order on March 16, 2020, closing all restaurants and bars in the State of Maryland to the general public; and

**WHEREAS,** as of March 23, 2020, Governor Hogan ordered closed all non-essential businesses in the State of Maryland; and

**WHEREAS,** Governor Hogan issued guidance recommending that people at higher risk of severe illness should stay home and away from large groups of people as much as possible, including public places; and

**WHEREAS,** this guidance is appropriate for public health reasons, but it has economic impacts on local businesses, nonprofit organizations, and workers in businesses in the City of Annapolis; and

**WHEREAS,** local businesses have recently reported laying off employees, experiencing severe revenue losses, dealing with lost business, and seeing major declines in foot traffic as thousands of employees are being asked to work from home; and

**WHEREAS,** these impacts are being felt across all industry sectors, including retail, restaurant, hospitality, transportation, logistics, arts and culture, and many more; and

**WHEREAS,** it is important to keep the economic impact from having long-term, dynamic and unpredictable local and regional consequences, necessitating that the City act and plan accordingly; and

**WHEREAS,** Mayor Buckley and a number of City departments have convened meetings with partners to strategize immediate interventions for affected local businesses and displaced workers.

**NOW, THEREFORE,**

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL** that the temporary **Small Business Recovery Task Force** commissioned to focus on the experiences that Annapolis businesses are facing in the time of the COVID-19 declarations protecting citizen health is hereby established.

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL** that with the recent passage of the federal Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, local businesses and nonprofit organizations facing economic hardship from COVID-19 will soon be eligible for Economic Injury Disaster Loans administered by the federal Small Business Administration (SBA).

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL** that the **Small Business Recovery Task Force** is convened to advise on long-term policy recommendations and provide technical assistance on future strategies:

- A. The Task Force shall be co-chaired by Stephen Rice, Economic Development Manager, and Dick Franyo, who will report directly to the Mayor.
- B. All members shall be appointed by the Mayor. Membership shall include community members from different Annapolis business organizations and types of businesses including non-profits representing a variety of industries. The initial membership will include up to two representatives from:
  - a. Downtown Annapolis
  - b. Arts District/Inner West Street
  - c. Maryland Ave/State Circle
  - d. Annapolis Design District
  - e. SOFO
  - f. West Annapolis Business Affiliation
  - g. Eastport Business Association
  - h. Anne Arundel Chamber of Commerce

- i. Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation
- C. Alderwoman Finlayson shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Task Force. Coordination with additional councilmembers will be welcome.
- D. The Task Force shall provide the Mayor and City departments:
  - a. real-time updates on the COVID-19 outbreak's impacts to local business and workers;
  - b. support for the City's outreach and education efforts to local businesses; and
  - c. policy recommendations at the local, state, and federal level to assist local businesses and workers, including, but not limited to:
    - i. support for gig economy workers;
    - ii. deferral of various City permit payments;
    - iii. investments in Women and Minority-Owned Business Enterprises;
    - iv. acceleration or delays to construction of different City capital projects;
    - v. interventions for arts and cultural organizations and other non-profits;
    - vi. barriers to participation in existing City benefit programs for impacted workers;
    - vii. rental assistance programs for economically distressed workers;
    - viii. full funding and expanded worker access to federal Unemployment Insurance;
    - ix. state policies related to loss of business income coverage and exclusion under commercial insurance policies;
    - x. state measures related to anti-eviction policies; and
    - xi. disconnect or shut-off policies for non-City utility and cable franchises;
    - xii. assistance in locating Federal and State benefits to help Local Businesses and
    - xiii. deferral of other state taxes impacting local businesses.
- E. Meetings shall be convened weekly, either telephonically or in-person, using appropriate social distancing guidelines. The first meeting shall be held the week of April 16.
- F. The Task Force will also coordinate technical assistance workshops so that local business owners can quickly apply for and access SBA loans.
- G. In order for the City to take full advantage of these SBA loans, the Office of Economic Development is directed to assist Annapolis' local businesses and nonprofit organizations by:
  - a. advocating for SBA resources to be distributed quickly and sufficiently;
  - b. ensuring that the available resources are broadly and clearly communicated to the public;
  - c. providing educational materials/technical assistance for businesses to reduce SBA application process wait times for local businesses; and
  - d. identifying any shortcomings that need to be addressed as the program is implemented.
- H. The Task Force shall be disbanded no earlier than the termination of the COVID-19 Declaration of Emergency, and may continue longer if the economic impacts of COVID-19 endure beyond the public health emergency.
- I. The Mayor's Small Minority Business Liaison shall staff the Task Force, with the assistance of the Economic Development Manager.

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL that:**

- 1. Task Force members shall serve without compensation.
- 2. The Task Force shall have at least one meeting at which the Task Force takes public testimony.

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL that the Small Business Recovery Task Force shall submit its findings and recommendations to the City Council 30 days after the**

termination of the Annapolis State of Emergency.