



Executive Summary

A committee was formed in May 2015 at the request of City of Murray Mayor Jack Rose to explore and craft recommendations to the City of Murray to accomplish two objectives:

Objective #1 – Explore and recommend a One Stop Shop process for implementation

Objective #2 – Review and recommend updates, additions and changes to current ordinances pertaining to businesses within the City of Murray

The committee was made up of eleven (11) community members, listed below, varying in experience with doing business in the City of Murray. The committee met four (4) times as a group, conducted two (2) community town hall listening sessions, and surveyed all registered businesses in the City of Murray, Kentucky. Over 1,800 surveys were mailed to all holders of a City of Murray business license; a digital survey was also created. There were 137 surveys returned, 100 physical, 37 digital for a response rate of 7%. The committee met for a final time to complete, review and compile the below recommendations to the Mayor's office.

Committee Members

- Aaron Dail – Chamber of Commerce
- Mike Faiht – Board of Zoning Adjustments
- Sara Fineman – Business Owner
- Jim Foster – Planning Commission & Business Owner
- Kathy Kopperud – Realtor
- Mark Manning – Economic Development Corporation
- Mike Pitman – Haverstock, Bell & Pitman Law Offices
- Jason Pittman – City Council Member
- David Roberts – Department of Planning & Engineering
- Butch Seargent – City Council Member
- Chris Wooldridge – Small Business Development Center

Recommendation List from Committee

Summary – The committee explored and discussed the current business process and evaluated feedback from surveyed business owners and community members. Themes emerged and the following recommendations are based on those themes.

Theme #1 – The City Hall experience varied from customer to customer. Many complained of a complicated, not easily understood, and subjectively perceived process to doing business by a business owner through City Hall.

- **Recommendation #1** – City Hall implement a continuous and ongoing feedback process for those using City Hall services can quickly and easily provide feedback on their recent experience. This should be in physical and digital forms. This information should be reviewed by staff monthly to quarterly for potential areas of improvement.
- **Recommendation #2** – The Planning Office implement an improved digital experience for businesses and individuals to obtain information easily. Two examples were highly discussed and agreed upon as useful and replicable:
 - 1) Use of a digital platform, specifically noted was OpenCounter, or a similar online platform. The OpenCounter platform was referenced as a “one stop shop” that could assist with licensing process, zone checking for compliance, and ease of digital access that incorporated licensing, GIS mapping, permitting, ordinance compliance and many other aspects in an online format.
 - Rough cost estimation was \$8,500 annual fee and one-time \$3,000 fee
 - 2) Creation of a “who should I call” list for various needs and issues.
- **Recommendation #3** – Cross train frontline customer service staff to easily answer questions and promote the ultimate customer focused environment to those that enter City Hall for business needs.
- **Recommendation #4** – Increase monthly BZA and Planning Commissions meetings from once a month to twice a month to reduce excess waiting times.
- **Recommendation #5** – Architectural Review Board not be restricted to the 1st Thursday of each month at 4:30 p.m., but schedule the meeting once the 14 day notification is complete to reduce excess waiting.

Theme #2 – The sign ordinance received several areas of complaint as being too stringent and restrictive for businesses. No clearly identifiable fixes were recommended by survey results. Repeated issues were noted in inconsistency of administering the sign ordinance, specifically noted were exceptions more frequently given to large businesses.

- **Recommendation #1** – a more in-depth and thorough review of the sign ordinance to identify outdated and possibly redundant restrictions and ways to change.

Theme #3 – Inconsistency of answers given by City Hall regarding process and next steps for businesses, along with an appropriate understanding of a length of time were noted.

- **Recommendation #1** – The creation of a position within City Hall to serve as a business liaison. This individual(s) would serve as a shepherd for any business wishing to open, relocate, or do business within the City of Murray. Ownership of the applicant’s process, efficient and timely follow up communication, and clarity of next steps were noted as strengths needed for this position to be successful.
- **Recommendation #2** – The City host one meeting of all of the following entities specifically with the goal of creating universal understanding of the required documents, processes, and any other items needed for a business to generally start in the City. The outcome of this meeting would be that each entity knows their place in the process and can easily explain each other’s as well.
 - Murray Electric System
 - WKRECC
 - All cable and internet providers
 - Planning Department
 - MMU
- **Recommendation #3** – The creation of marketing materials, pamphlets, and other physical resources to be used by City Hall, the Small Business Development Center, the Chamber of Commerce and others to assist in communicating with business owners. These documents should communicate “essential information” and be graphically pleasing for the general community member to understand their business process.
- **Recommendation #4** – The City’s Planning Department work with a third party to implement a process called “value stream mapping” whereby an understanding of specific internal and external processes are creating longer approval/wait/startup times.

Theme #4 – The City of Murray should accept online payments. Specifically noted, individuals surveyed requested the ability to pay for all city services, from permitting to utilities, online.

- **Recommendation #1** – Create the option for all City services to be paid online via an online payment system for individuals and businesses. Specifically the following
 - Business licenses
 - City Stickers
 - Utility Payments
 - Taxes
 - Other fee based items and forms that are necessary

Theme #5 – Those surveyed and committee members found ordinances that needed more in-depth study and a commitment for analyzing. The committee recommends the City take the following actions.

- **Recommendation #1** – A more in-depth review using a tiered process of assessment of ordinances is recommended:
 - Ordinances impacting business typically fell into 3 categories
 - Tier 1 – outdated, needs updating, easily changed
 - Tier 2 – complex, further discussion necessary, require legal counsel
 - Tier 3 – unable to change due to KRS and or other factors
 - Tier 1 ordinances should be identified by City planning staff, BZA and Planning legal counsel and updated
 - Tier 2 ordinances require more discussion with City planning staff, BZA and Planning Commission legal counsel and business owners. Ex. (12th street business zoning, planned development process, sign ordinance)
 - Tier 3 ordinances were identified and cannot be edited per KRS