



Staff Report

For City Council Meeting - 8/4/2021

Subject - Visitors - Jenny Frank - Small Business Committee - Survey Results

Synopsis - Jenny Frank is a local real estate agent here in Gearhart, and she has served as President of the Small Business Committee since its inception at the end of 2020. She and Councilor Warren have a presentation (attached) summarizing the Small Business Survey that was conducted back in March. At this juncture, the committee is in need of guidance on where to go from here.

Recommendation: The Small Business Committee is an ad hoc committee appointed by the Mayor (Brown). Mayor Cockrum can choose to excuse the committee if its obligations have been fulfilled and no further service is required. If the Mayor feels the Small Business Committee should remain, the recruitment of members will be vital to its future and success, along with newly defined objective goals.

Legal Analysis: N/A

Financial Analysis: N/A

Respectfully Submitted,



Chad



Small
Business
Committee

2021 BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS

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SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Our Mission:

To educate existing and potential business and commercial property owners on Gearhart commercial zoning, available business resources and Gearhart Comprehensive Plan commercial development goals.

COMMITTEE GOALS



Create a small business resources webpage on our city website where businesses can find the help and resources they need during good and bad economic times.



To work with existing small businesses and potential new businesses in understanding the commercial zoning in Gearhart and how it fits in with our Comprehensive Plan and residential character.



Explore ways to attract businesses that can benefit the community and fit in with the character of Gearhart as defined in our Comprehensive Plan.

2021 SMALL BUSINESS SURVEY

To help fulfill its mission and goals, the committee has surveyed existing Gearhart business via Survey Monkey.

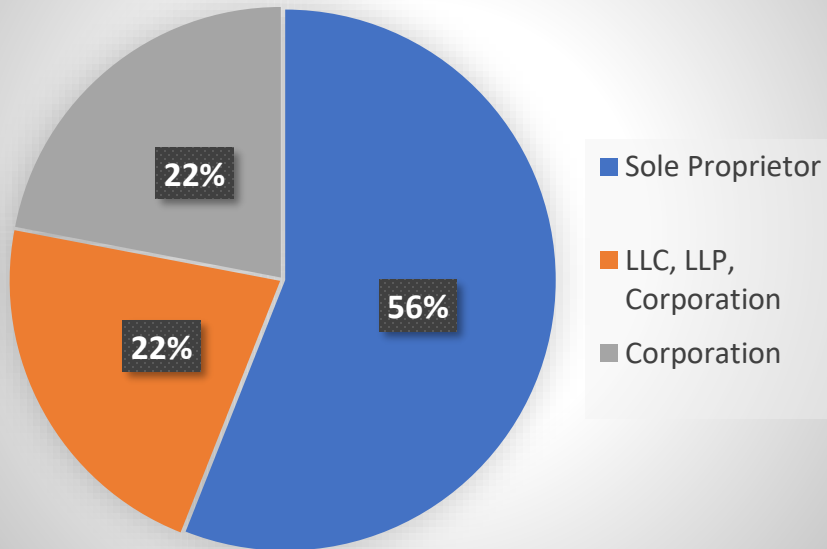
During the 45-day survey period, we received 23 responses to more than 20 questions.

According to business license records, the City has 168 total businesses operating with 21 of those being home-based.

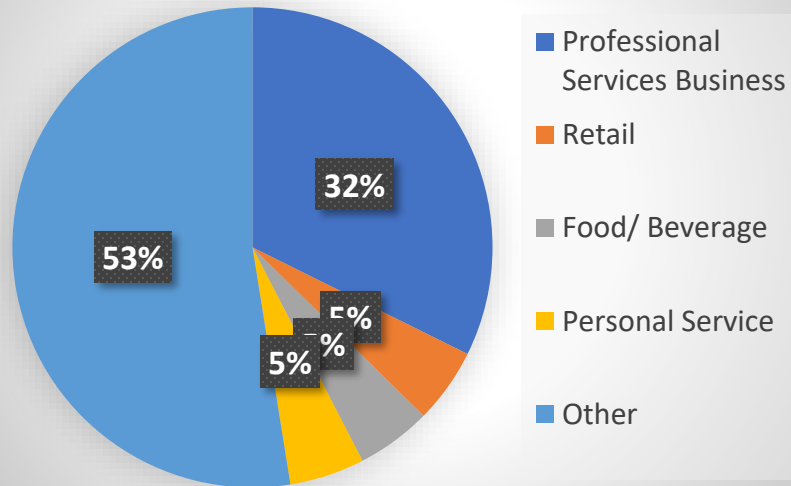
This survey response rate is approximately 14% of businesses

DEMOGRAPHICS

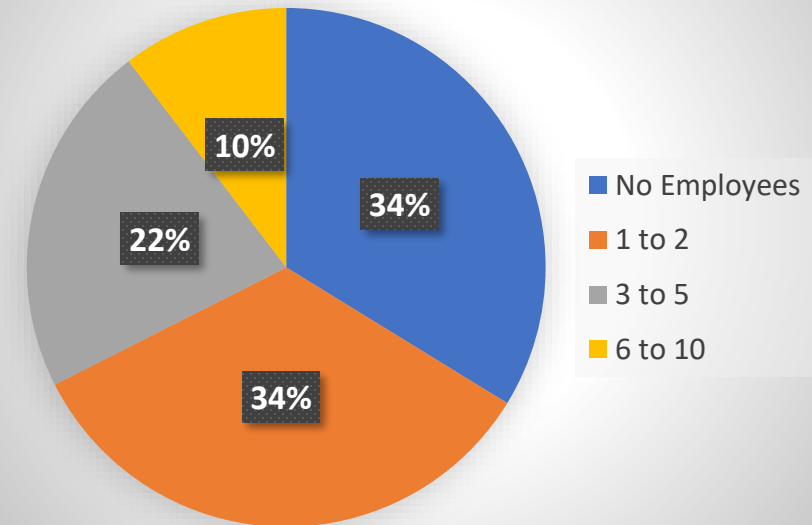
Entity Type



Type of Business



Number of Employees



39% OF RESPONDENTS OPERATED OUT OF THEIR PERSONAL RESIDENCE

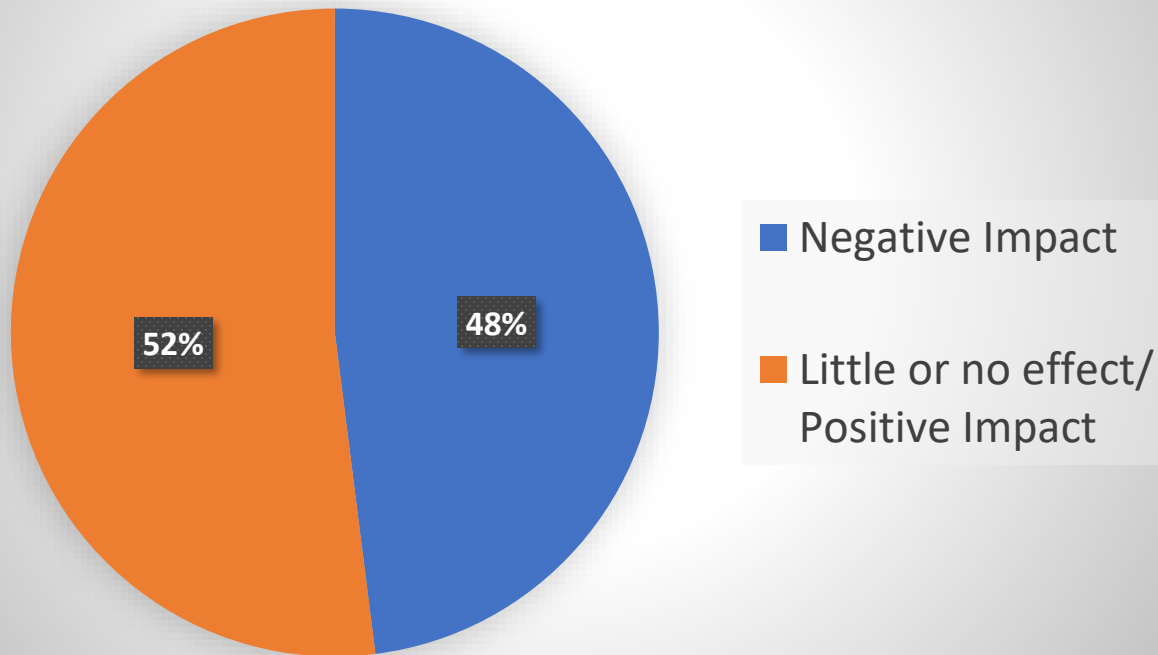
Architectural blueprints are shown in the background, featuring various technical drawings, dimensions, and annotations in black ink on a light blue background. The drawings include floor plans with rooms, corridors, and structural elements, along with numerous numerical measurements and alphanumeric labels.

REAL ESTATE

- **44%** of commercial renters indicated the desire to buy a commercial space
- **33%** indicated their current rental space is too small/ expensive
- **34%** of responders and 66% of those with employees indicated that Lack of Nearby Affordable Housing made attracting / retaining employees “Difficult” or “Very Difficult”

BUSINESS INCOME

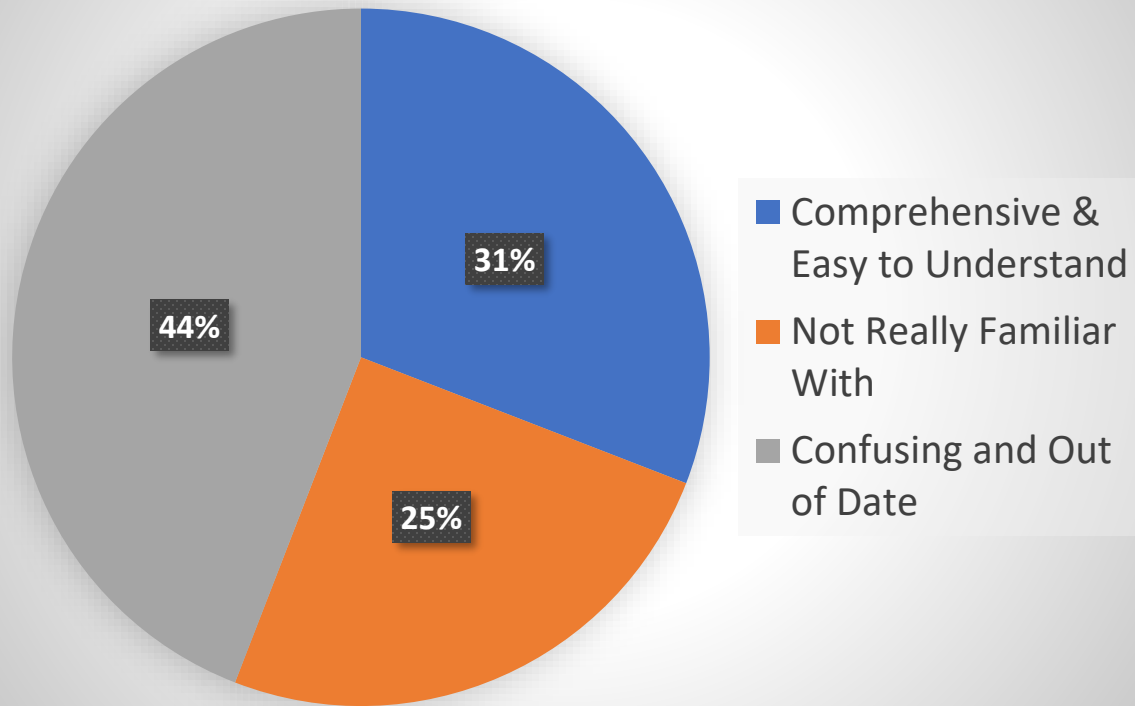
Impact of Pandemic on Revenue/
Income



- **87%** of respondents say business income steady year-round
- **41%** have received government Covid-19 assistance

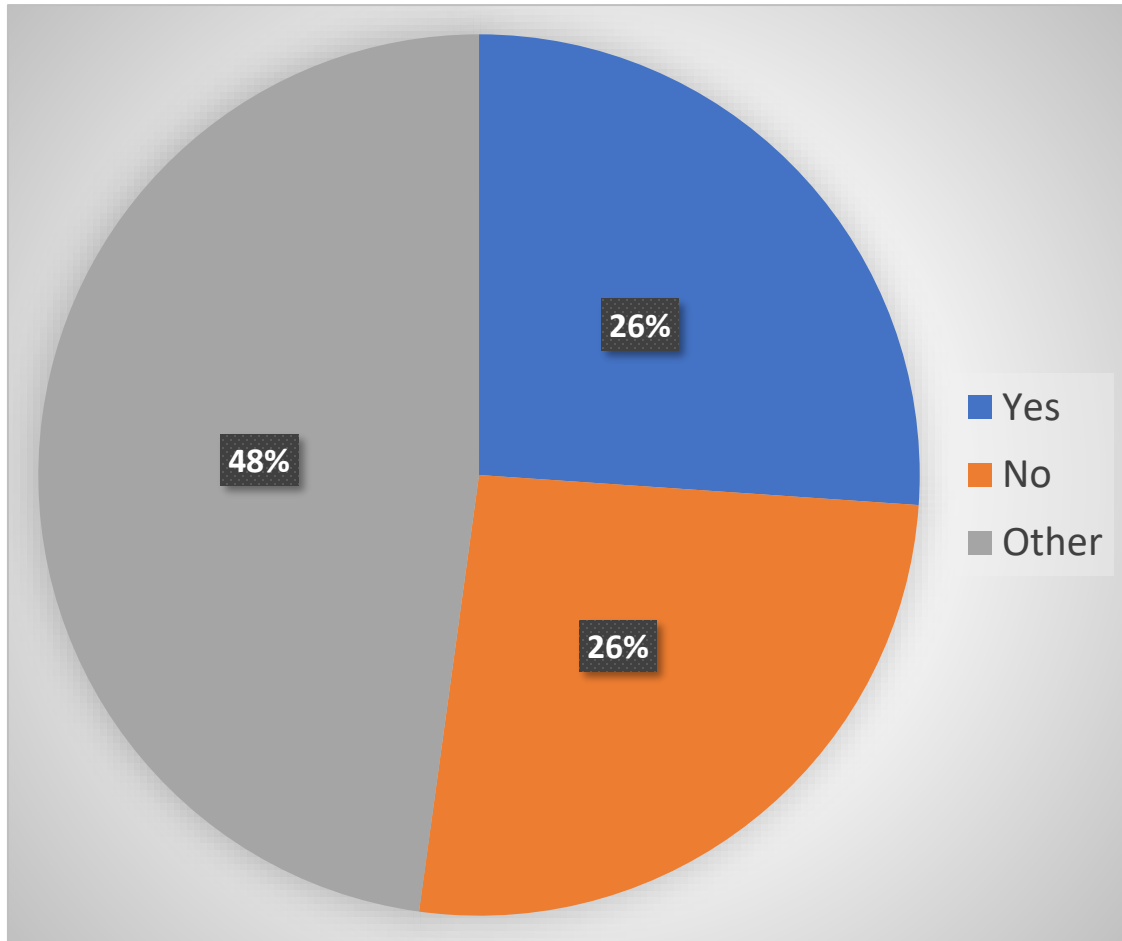
FEEDBACK TO CITY OF GEARHART

Zoning Regulations



- **78%** expressed support for the city to publish a Business Directory on the City's website
- Many commentators indicated the City should do more marketing of Gearhart and its businesses
- Additional comments centered on Gearhart being too restrictive, too reliant upon conditional uses and variances and a desire for more liberal signage regulations
- Other items revealed in the survey such as sewers, shared septic system for downtown, revision of zoning/comprehensive plan are the purview of the Planning Commission and City Council.

FORM A GEARHART BUSINESS OWNERS ASSOCIATION OR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE?



Comments:

- Collaborate with the Seaside Chamber,
- Don't Call it a Chamber of Commerce but the "Gearhart Business Owners Association (GBOA),
- Only do it if the City will listen,
- Put the Business Association leader on the City's Small Business Committee
- Asking business owners for advice is like the "fox guarding the chicken house",
- We did a Gearhart Merchant's Association in 2003 but it only lasted a year,
- Many were in favor but only 20% wanted to be involved in leadership.

WHAT KIND OF NEW/ COMPATIBLE BUSINESS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?

Restaurants/Delicatessen/Café that serves breakfast

Yoga Studio

Full-service Gym – 24 hour?

Grocery/Market

Boutique Spa

Wine Bar, Spirits Bar/Distillery, Brew Pub

Clothing Store

Bookstore

Recreational Supplies

Bike Shop

Merchant owned store with Locally made items

Professional Services

Entertainment

Lodging



WHAT COULD CITY DO TO ENHANCE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT?

Update zoning codes

Don't raise taxes

Put in a shared sewage treatment facility for downtown

More consistent enforcement of regulations

Put sewers in Gearhart

Promote affordable workforce housing

Redo the Comprehensive Plan

Complete the Gearhart Transportation Plan

Relax signage regulations

Use Enterprise Zones to attract new businesses

NEXT STEPS



10 respondents indicated a desire for follow-up from committee/City.

Would the City Council would like any specific questions asked that we did not ask in the survey?

Would individual Council Members like to do follow-up calls?



We would also appreciate guidance on our committee':

- 1) Involvement in facilitating the formation of a Gearhart Business Association.**
- 2) Continuance as an Ad Hoc committee or transition into a standing committee.**



The Small Business Committee feels comfortable with proceeding on working with the City staff to create a Small Business Directory and listing available commercial space on the city's Website, provided this is acceptable from a policy standpoint.