

SBN Hosts Entrepreneurs' Roundtable With Councilman At-Large Derek Green



Councilman at-large Derek Green. Photo: Courtesy of the City of Philadelphia

By Nicole Contosta • Wed, Mar 30, 2016

Councilman at-large Derek Green had a lot to say about how he supports growing small, sustainable businesses in Philadelphia, Wednesday, March 23rd. Green joined members of the Sustainable Business Network (SBN) for a roundtable breakfast and discussion at the Pyramid Club. There, he told members about his background. And Green shared his positions on Philadelphia's small business climate, what sustainable business means to him, procurement, access to capital and tax reform.

"I consider myself a private sector guy in a public sector world," Green said on his experience and background. As Green explained, he started his career as a small business lender for Meridian Bank in Philadelphia. When banks removed lending from many of its branches, Green earned a degree from Temple Law. From there he worked for the Delaware Securities Commission, the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office and the Philadelphia Law Department. Through his work with Law Department, "I really got to know a lot about community development agencies in the city from the Commerce Department to the PIDC," Green explained.

Meanwhile, Councilwoman Tasco started to address the issue of predatory lending. "Because people knew I had a banking background, I worked with her on this issue," Green said, noting that Philadelphia was one of the first cities to pass legislation on predatory lending. When Tasco's legislative aid stepped down, she asked Green to serve, which he did, eventually running and winning her seat when she stepped down last year.

Green's stance on the small Business Community:

"My focus in City Council is poverty," Green explained. "I think that's the number one issue in the city of Philadelphia. I think the best way we address poverty is by increasing successful small businesses."

According to Green, Philadelphia hasn't done a great job at supporting small business growth. Part of that results from the challenges presented when applying for a business privilege license and business privilege tax account. "We need to make it easier for small business to navigate this process," Green said, adding the city should form "a business SWAT team to answer these questions."

In Green's opinion, Philadelphia also fails to promote itself. "I've seen a lot of those New York state of Opportunity commercials...we have a lot of those same programs in Philadelphia, but we don't do a good job of marketing them," Green said, arguing the city needed to do a better job of marketing assets such as its walkability both nationally and internationally.

On what sustainable business means to Green, he tied his response to procurement:

Referring to a recent meeting he had on procurement, Green explained "not enough businesses bid on contracts. Too often, there are two or three respondents to contracts...the problem is when the city puts out an RFP, many might think 'why even bother applying because I'm not going to get the contract?'" According to Green, "a lot of time goes into submitting a bid and business owners might decide they'd like to spend that time going after more business."

One way to correct the above rests in listing the number of applicants for each bid online. "I would need to check with the city solicitor's office about this," Green said. "But if people knew that last year, only two people responded to a [individual] RFP, they would know they'd have a better opportunity."

Increasing procurement would also benefit Philadelphia financially, Green argued. "As a city, if we have the same two or three entities always responding, we don't always get the best prices."

In response to a question, Green explained the city's work with sustainability could also help the environment. "We could take compost from restaurant and food waste," Green said, explaining parks and rec could use the compost. In addition, it would save food proprietors money on garbage collection fees.

In response to a question on sustainable manufacturing, Green agreed that he sees the Navy Yard as a location for additional manufacturing. "We could help manufacturers and office grow there...the Navy Yard has lots of space."

One SBN member explained that small, start up businesses, who haven't had the time to obtain certification, don't get the opportunity to bid in the procurement process. The SBN member asked if Green had any plans to alleviate those barriers.

Green said he would look into how to improve this with subcontracting.

For a healthy dose of convenience,

Choose
Drexel
Medicine.

Now
accepting
new
patients!



Drexel
Medicine

34th & Market Streets / University City

KYL/D
KUN-YANG
LIN/DANCERS
APRIL 14-16 8PM AND APRIL 16 2:30PM

**CURIO
THEATRE
COMPANY** "Great stories
well told."
4740 Baltimore Ave
Philadelphia, PA
215.525.1350

MARVELOUS RECORDS
BUY · SELL · TRADE · CO-SIGN
LPS · CDS · CASSETTES · GEAR · STICKS · STRINGS · STYLII
PROFESSIONAL LP CLEANING
4916 BALTIMORE AVE | 215.72.MUSIC
DISCOGS: MARVELOUSMUSIC EBAY: MARVELOUS-RECORDS

**ALL CITY
SELF STORAGE** Low Rates
Open 7 Days
5500 SANSOM ST (215) 471-1002

**West Philadelphia
Locksmith Co.**
Lock Sales & Services
Security Devices
Personnel Protection
215.386.2929

Let us help you
design
your marketing
materials

Another SBN member suggested that the city should adopt a protégée/mentor model, which would include set asides under the main contractor for minority owned, women owned or sustainable business.

On access to capital for small business:

Green said the city could do a better job of leveraging the banks it uses as depositories. Lending organizations such as the PIDC "have a limited amount of lending they can spend on marketing so businesses might not know there's money to borrow...but in working with our city depositories, we can say, 'you need to work with us in marketing some of the loans we have in Philadelphia.'"

In addition, "We've been working on the idea of creating a small business-lending consortium," Green explained. "We're still working out the details. But the concept would be working with various banking institutions that have lending up to a certain level and then getting some of those same banking depositories to lend the money to the PIDC who work with those various institutions and others to help with loans."

On Tax reform


Green referred to his support of the Jerry Sweeney, Paul Levy tax plan, which calls for reversing Pennsylvania's uniformity clause. Doing so would allow the city to tax commercial properties at higher levels than small businesses, which would then let the city reduce its business taxes. "I think there is a great opportunity to make that change," Green said. "It's going to take a lot of work...we have to get it passed by the [state's] general assembly then put it on the ballot for [Philadelphia] voters."

For more information on the SBN or to become a member: 215-936-1000, <http://www.sbnphiladelphia.org>.

[+ Share](#) [f](#) [t](#) [e](#) [f](#) Like 25

[submit your comments](#)

Brochures • Newsletters • Flyers
Business Cards • Websites • Facebook Pages
PPF Graphic Design Services 215.222.2387

NEWS Local News Education Politics	EVENTS View Events Weekly Almanac	CRIME REPORT Weekly Crime Report	CLASSIFIEDS View Classifieds Place Classifieds Classified Ad Rates	ADVERTISE HERE
ARCHIVES  Previous Issues RSS Feed	ADVERTISE Download Media Kit Download Contract Form	GALLERY Latest Photos City Videos		
Sports Food and Drink Arts and Entertainment Editorial	E-News Subscribe			Follow US f t g+ in v

Weekly Press • 218 South 45th Street • Philadelphia, PA 19104 • Tel: 215.222.2846 • Fax: 215.222.2378

© Copyright Weekly Press - Center City Philadelphia. All rights reserved.

You are visitor: 1,061,537

{ powered by [bulletlink.com](#) }