

Work Session

Agenda Item #	3
Meeting Date	May 5, 2014
Prepared By	Jessie Carpenter City Clerk
Reviewed By	Brian Kenner City Manager

Discussion Item	Request for Sponsorship of the US-Africa Business Link Publication
Background	Mr. Tebabu Assefa has requested that the City Council make a financial contribution of \$5,000 to support the printing and dissemination of <i>US Africa Business Link</i> . The publication is to be distributed at the June 21 US Africa Forum and later at other outlets. The US-Africa Forum will be held at the Takoma Park Community Center.
Policy	
Fiscal Impact	The requested contribution amount is \$5,000. The City is providing free use of the Auditorium and facility/video staff for the event. At the commercial rate, this waiver has a value of \$4,100.
Attachments	Letter dated April 28, 2014 to the City Council from Tebabu Assefa
Recommendation	Discuss the request.
Special Consideration	

Advancing US-African Diaspora Business Development and US-Africa Trade

April 28, 2014

To Mayor B Bruce Williams,
Councilmember Terry J. Seamens,
Councilmember Jarrett Smith,
Councilmember Seth Grimes,
Councilmember Fred Schultz,
Councilmember Tim Male,
Councilmember Kate Stewart

Greetings,

As a follow up on comments I made at the last public hearing, this is to formally introduce you the US-Africa Diaspora Business Development Council (*US-Africa Council*) - www.usadbc.org - developed to promote the US-African Diaspora business economic development in general and help African entrepreneurs duplicate the Blessed Coffee model across Africa and advance US-Africa trade relations.

In addition, we would like to invite you to attend the opening program of the *US-Africa Forum*, at 9:00 am 10:15, on June 21st, 2014. Invited guests include, Senator Ben Cardin, Congressman Chris Van Hollen, Congressman John Delaney, Congresswoman Karen Bass and Governor O'Malley. Also invited are other elected officials and US, State and County economic & business development agencies. We expect over 150 US-Africa Diaspora business and community leaders to attend the *US-Africa Forum*.

To achieve its objectives, the *US-Africa Council* will conduct and promote a yearlong program and campaign including workshops and trade shows. This includes a publication of the **US-Africa Business Link**, a business and trade development resource booklet that will be distributed, free of charge, at the forum and later to our community in Maryland and another 25 cites in the nation. We have reserved three pages in the booklet to introduce and profile the three business corridors in Takoma Park, Old Takoma, Langley Park and Long Branch.

In this regard, we would kindly like to seek a financial contribution from the City Council to support the printing and dissemination of **US-Africa Business Link**. Attached is the budget for the **US-Africa Business Link** and *US-Africa Council*, and highlights of the concept paper and budget for the printing and distribution of the **US-Africa Business Link**.

We have met with City Manger Brian Kenner several times to discuss our objectives and seek the City's leadership and support. We are grateful the City is providing the City Auditorium for the Forum and assigning staff to provide logistic support including videotaping the forum, which will be web-casted live to reach to the larger US-African Diaspora community nationwide and beyond.

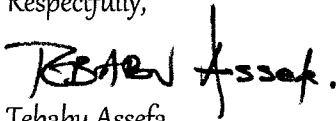
The *US-Africa Forum* is the second African Business Summit we have successfully organized. The first, with the leadership of Governor O'Malley's Commission for the African Affairs, was in Takoma Park on Nov.19, 2011. We are grateful to Mayor Williams for attending the summit and for his inspiring speech to the 150 US-African Diaspora businesses leaders and elected officials who attended the summit, including several African Ambassadors, and MC County Executive Ike Leggett.

We are inspired and motivated to establish the *US-Africa Council* by the conviction we hold dearly that the US-African Diaspora business community, a highly motivated and dynamic economic force currently fast growing and integrating into the US economic mosaic, has a direct relationship and positive impact on US-Africa cultural trade relations and economic growth and development.

As you know, in 2011 we developed and launched Blessed Coffee, a socially responsible business geared towards development to present a model to the US-African community for duplication. Today, Blessed Coffee enjoys massive community support and media coverage and its further growth is poised to be a significant catalytic model. Following this letter are highlights of the recognitions Blessed Coffee has earned since its inauguration.

We are confident that you will appreciate the objectives of the *US-Africa Council* and accept our invitation to attend and for the City to support the *US-Africa Forum* as a sponsor.

Respectfully,



Tebabu Assefa

Blessed Coffee, Co-Founders

US-African Forum, Chief Organizer