



December 11, 2018

Re: New Haven MBE/SBI Micro Food Business Ordinance

To: Alder President Tyisha Walker-Myers

CitySeed is a local New Haven nonprofit working to build an equitable, local food system in our city and across our state. CitySeed supports food business incubation and provides services for small-scale food entrepreneurs.

CitySeed's Food Business Incubation programming is designed to help build a more equitable local food system in the New Haven area that supports economic development, community development and sustainable agriculture. We aim to support small food business incubation in New Haven by providing training, resources, and affordable licensed food preparation space for local food entrepreneurs. We work to create economic opportunity for all, increase leadership by people-of-color and immigrant food entrepreneurs, and strengthen our local food system by linking rising food entrepreneurs and farmers.

We currently run an annual Food Business Accelerator for up to 15 small food ventures per year. We have been doing this for two years. This year, we were flooded with interest and received 45 applications from small-scale ventures looking for support to formalize and launch their food businesses. These ventures have similar needs as Mmm Pies did as a start-up. Barriers to entry include high costs and arduous procedures associated with licensing and inspection. Costs associated with licensing and permitting to establish a food businesses in New Haven typically start at around \$800 and can increase when special licensing is needed. This is more severe for people who have historically been shut out of access to capital.

CitySeed can also attest to the fact that the current permitting process is duplicative, and can be a waste of City resources and valuable time. As we currently operate a shared use commercial kitchen, CitySeed has seen first hand the duplicative permitting and inspection process for start-up food businesses using this space. For example, our kitchen in one year saw eight total inspections for four companies using our kitchen, the same inspection four times for the health department and the same inspection four times for the fire department. This will only increase as we expand the number of small-scale businesses using our shared use commercial kitchen.

We are in full support of the "New Haven MBE/SBI Micro-Food Business Ordinance" proposed by Mubarakah Ibrahim. We believe this ordinance will save city time and resources, reduce the financial and bureaucratic burden on small businesses, and increase capacity for economic development opportunities around food in the City of New Haven.

Sincerely,

Amelia Reese Masterson

Ashley Kremser

Executive Director

Director of Operations