

MINUTES

Lakes Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) Coordinating Committee Meeting

Meredith Community Center
Meredith, NH
April 28, 2010

Committee Members Present:

Bill Beyer, Meredith Village Savings Bank	Gerry O'Neil, Private Sector Representative
Jennifer Boulanger, BCEDC	Gary Groleau, NH Ball Bearing
Mark Scarano, GCEDC	Carol Cantin, NH Employment Security
Rick DeMark, NCRC&D	Dick Waitt, LRPC
Carol Pierce, Laconia Human Relations Committee	

Others:

Kimon Koulet, Lakes Region Planning Commission (LRPC)
Stephanie Dulac, LRPC
Alan Brigham, EDA Field Representative

Call to Order/Acceptance of the Minutes:

G. O'Neil called the meeting to order at 4:09 pm and began by asking everyone to go around the table and introduce himself or herself. He then turned to the January 2010 meeting minutes, which were emailed to committee members in advance of this meeting. J. Boulanger called for a motion to accept the minutes and D. Waitt seconded. The minutes were accepted as written by a unanimous vote.

Approval of new projects for CEDS Update:

The LRGH HVAC Project and the Barnstead Renewable Energy Plan were evaluated and scored at the January CEDS coordinating committee meeting. The results of that process were compiled and emailed out to committee members in advance of this meeting. Following committee guidelines, the projects and their scores have to be approved by the committee before including them in the CEDS update.

J. Boulanger gave a brief description and update of the Barnstead Project. The major components of the project are the pellet production business and the combined heat and power production facility. The facility is still for sale and currently not producing pellets nor providing energy. There are two potential buyers with one in the process of final negotiations, which could wrap up on Friday. That group is interested in the entire project - cogeneration and pellet production. The cogeneration part of the project is potentially eligible for EDA funding. This project was scored the highest of all CEDS projects by the committee in January with a rating of 25.00. The project was accepted into the CEDS by unanimous approval.

G. O'Neil and J. Boulanger gave a brief description of the LRGH HVAC project. The HVAC system would provide emergency power to the facility and offer an emergency facility for the region should an emergency occur. Originally, the committee thought that the project could potentially

qualify for EDA funding. A. Brigham explains that not all CEDS projects have to qualify for EDA funding. He also described the competitiveness of EDA funding due to funding limitations. He stated that this project probably would not be competitive for a grant, as it does not create jobs. The committee scored this project in January with a rating of 12.75. The project was accepted into the CEDS by unanimous approval.

EDA Funding Opportunities for CEDS Update, District Creation and Projects:

A. Brigham started this discussion by outlining the characteristics of eligible projects. There are three main criteria for project eligibility - high unemployment rate, low per capita income or special needs. He clarified that only units of government and non-profits are eligible for EDA funding. Businesses are not eligible for EDA funding. EDA money can be used to support some private investments as long as it is specifically designated for the publicly owned aspects of the project. There has to be match available for the projects that are being proposed. EDA does not typically fund residential or retail development. There is also the need to show that long-term job creation is occurring through the project. Short-term (construction) jobs are not used in evaluating the project. Proving that job retention will occur through the project can be difficult, but can be done through some documentation - newspaper articles, etc. One question that EDA asks when reviewing an application is whether a project could be funded from another federal department, for instance it may be a more appropriate and efficient use of government dollars if an energy related project were funded by the Dept. of Energy.

There was some discussion about the eligibility of some current CEDS projects. A. Brigham stressed that he is available to discuss the eligibility/competitiveness of any project before going through the application process. He is happy to discuss the details of any project with committee members.

The EDA project application process is broken down into two stages. First, there is the initial application that the applicant submits, and if EDA finds that the project is eligible and competitive, they will ask for then supplementary materials, i.e. environmental or engineering reports. The review committee will look at the nature and merits of the project including: what is the economic distress in the region, what is the economic benefit of the project, who is the applicant, where is the match coming from? It helps to have local support for project, for instance from a congressional representative. Also, EDA funds have to be distributed equitably throughout the region, which is something that the project review committee will consider.

The field rep will go through the draft application with applicant before committee review to strengthen it. There are two options for application submittal - hard copy in the mail to his office or electronically through grants.gov website. A. Brigham prefers grant application to be submitted in paper so that he can have a final look at it before final submittal to the EDA.

Process involves a fair amount of interaction and is the same process the organization would need to update the CEDS. For the Lakes Region, LRPC would be able to use the same information that was used when applying for the first planning grant, which funded the CEDS, however LRPC would need to indicate that organization is seeking Economic Development District (EDD) status. LRPC would apply for the planning grant to get the CEDS updated and also gather information for the EDD application.

There is a new Assistant Secretary at EDA named John Fernandez who is a former mayor in Illinois and lifelong economic developer. He wants the administration to focus on progressive, forward-

thinking projects. Also, one of his major goals is to turn around applications faster. The new secretary highlighted EDA's new funding priorities at the regional conference last month. Current and future applicants have to tell EDA how their project meets the priorities listed below:

Investment Funding Priorities: From March 2010 EDA Philadelphia Regional Office Conference

- Collaborative Regional Innovation
- Public/Private Partnership
- National Strategic Priorities - clean energy, green technologies, sustainable manufacturing, etc.
- Global Competitiveness
- Environmentally-Sustainable Development
- Economically Distressed and Underserved Communities

Guidelines for project review:

Market-based and results driven

Strong Organizational leadership

Does the project advance project innovation and entrepreneurship?

Does the project look beyond immediate economic horizon, anticipate economic changes, and diversify the local and regional economy?

Demonstrates a high degree of local commitment

There were also two new programs added at EDA this year:

Community Trade Adjustment Assistance - money for communities that have been impacted by foreign competition.

Global Climate Change Mitigation Fund - supports projects that create jobs through efforts that limit the nation's dependence on fossil fuels.

Economic Development District:

In an Economic Development District (EDD), at least one part of the region has to meet eligibility criteria. Also, the district organization has to have an approved CEDS in order to apply. A. Brigham passed around a list of documentation that is needed for the EDD application. There is a lot of data that has to be gathered for the application. There has to be proof that the proposed district, along with its boundaries, makes sense economically, environmentally, and geographically in general. The administration likes to see larger districts where there is a lot of collaboration involved. District boundaries are flexible, as long as all the communities in the district are part of the CEDS. Communities can only be part of one CEDS.

The district organization will administer the EDD grant funding, unless they are unable to do so. Once they receive the grant, they will then be a partner of the EDA and will get funding (partnership planning grant) every year. This year a typical partnership planning grant is \$70K. There are two scopes of work involved with the project, the first is to develop and maintain the CEDS, with a major update every five years. The years in between the five-year cycle will just need minor updates. The second scope is the technical assistance that the district organization provides the member communities in the district.

Committee and Project Updates:

Building Employees: C. Cantin gave an update on the Adult Success Program that the committee has been working on in partnership with Southern New Hampshire University. They have obtained a \$5000 grant from the NH Charitable Foundation and are moving forward with the project.

NH Ball Bearing has been working with the Lakes Region Community College to develop an energy audit program. They created the program to educate NH Ball Bearing facility employees on energy auditing and will now be available to other Community College Students. The partnership has been very beneficial for both NH Ball Bearing and the Community College.

New Economy: As part of the NH Broadband Program, the LRPC identified and mapped the location of broadband availability in the Lakes Region which has now been submitted to UNH Complex Systems Research Institute for analysis. Currently information from service providers is also being collected on a statewide level. The New Economy committee will utilize all of the information that has been gathered to identify barriers to deployment of broadband, promote collaboration with service providers, and facilitate information sharing between the private and public sectors. This effort will be ongoing for the next few years.

Sustainability - Energy and the Natural Environment: Next meeting is May 17th, where they will do some status updates to their Performance Measures Table. There are two projects that may be eligible for EDA funding that the committee plans address, which are the Barnstead Project and the Lakes Region Brownfields Project. The committee will also examine work that the North Country CEDS Energy Committee is currently developing called the Alternative and Renewable Energy Reduction Strategies. The project is designed to set the framework for energy efficiency and reduction in the North Country and could be adapted to the Lakes Region. R. DeMark also plans to bring a new project to the group, which is a consumer and producer food co-op in Tamworth.

Other: There was a discussion about the CEDS Coordinating Committee and its process moving forward. R. DeMark discussed his vision of a CEDS Committee process focused more on keeping the already established goals and objectives pertinent in the Lakes Region. He thinks the committee's job should be more focused on reaching out to economic development commissions, nonprofits and municipalities to make them aware of the opportunities that can come with an approved CEDS and Economic Development District. He doesn't want to get too focused on finding more projects and doesn't find that to be realistic at this stage of the process.

There was also a follow-up of the discussion started at the January CEDS Coordinating Committee meeting concerning promoting the CEDS. Since that meeting, B. Beyer spoke with Peter Laufenburg from Plymouth State University who has volunteered to work with the CEDS committee to develop outreach for the group. The individual committees should discuss any projects or ideas that they would like Peter to promote at their upcoming meetings. That way Peter will have tasks ready when he starts. B. Beyer has a follow-up meeting with Peter soon to discuss committee needs and Peter's role in the project.

J. Boulanger received an email concerning NADO's modernization of the CEDS process. They are reviewing the process with EDA in order to make recommendations to improvement. A. Brigham confirmed that there is an internal working group looking to redevelop the process, but he has not

been involved in that effort as of yet. J. Boulanger said that the email was soliciting input from groups that have a CEDS in place.

B. Beyer said that some members may have fallen away because the group is spending too much time on process and not on results. Committee members need to see outcomes in order to keep attending meetings, he thinks that there needs to be both short-term and long-term projects and successes in order to maintain group momentum. G. Groleau concurred, and stated that the committee needs to better identify themselves in order to move forward with full representation. C. Cantin said smaller successes are on the way to achieving longer-term goals, and helps keep committee members engaged, and allows them to keep coming when they have to choose this meeting over another.

J. Boulanger assisted the town of Belmont with an interview process being conducted by Plan New Hampshire as part of the 2010 Charrette Competition. She spoke of the CEDS and gave the newsletter to Plan NH in order to further promote the committee and process and thinks that another project may come out of that effort.

Next Meeting/Adjournment:

The next meeting is scheduled for July 28, 2010. The meeting will be held at NH Ball Bearing in Laconia and will be chaired by G. Groleau.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:28pm.