

## **MINUTES**

### **Lakes Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) Strategy Committee Meeting**

Southern NH University  
Large SNHU Conference Room  
2 Airport Road  
Gilford, New Hampshire

December 5, 2007

#### **Committee Members Present:**

Bill Beyer, Meredith Village Savings Bank	Moe Lafreniere, The Common Man
Jennifer Boulanger, BCEDC	Linda Normandin, Laconia Savings
Rick DeMark, North Country RC&D	Gerry O'Neil, Private Sector representative
Mark Edelstein, NH Community Technical College	Carol Pierce, Laconia Human Relations Committee
Debbie Frawley-Drake, Lakes Region Linen	Don St. Germain, Community Bank
Gary Groleau, NH Ball Bearing	Mark Scarano, GCEDC
John Howe, The Citizen of Laconia	Denise Sharlow, Franklin Business & Industrial Development
Theresa Lamson, Greater Laconia-Weirs Beach Chamber of Commerce	Jack Terrill, Lakes Region United Way
Henry Lipman, LRGH	Dick Waitt, LRPC
Rusty McLear, Hampshire Hospitality Holdings	

#### **Others:**

Carol Cantin, NH Department of Employment Security  
Pam Szacik, NH Department of Employment Security  
Adam Hlasny, LRPC  
Kimon Koulet, LRPC  
Michael Tardiff, LRPC

#### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Bill Beyer at 4:00pm. He began by summarizing several key points included in the minutes of the October 17 CEDS Strategy Committee meeting. He noted that it had been decided that the subcommittees would identify resources, objectives and stakeholders in the community as part of their work, and pointed out the next meeting of the overall CEDS committee was scheduled for Wednesday, January 30, with the main topic of discussion a report from each of the six subcommittees. The minutes of the October 17 CEDS

Strategy Committee meeting were then accepted as written by a unanimous vote of the committee.

B. Beyer stated that he had asked Kim Koulet to review the overall CEDS budget with the committee. K. Koulet noted that the overall budget includes a \$50,000 grant that requires a \$50,000 local match. He reviewed the budget through 7/31/07, outlining that \$50,000 had been received from the EDA, \$10,000 received from CDFA, the LRPC had added \$18,000 in funding, and the estimated in-kind match was \$23,000. The new budget year began on August 1, 2007.

### **CEDS Chapters**

Kim Koulet then reviewed the status of the initial three sections of the CEDS, specifically the demographics, infrastructure, and environment chapters. Jennifer Boulanger noted that she had written comments that she had submitted to LRPC staff. K. Koulet asked for any additional comments that the committee may have, and then described how the three chapters form the background for the overall CEDS document. Upon a short discussion it was decided that any edits could be incorporated by LRPC and the individual chapters could be finalized. The CEDS committee then unanimously adopted the three chapters.

B. Beyer then described how he had continued to discuss the inclusion of the topic of energy in the overall CEDS process with Chris Williams. He noted that he had asked him to present his ideas regarding the topic at the next CEDS committee meeting.

### **Communication: Getting The Word Out About CEDS**

B. Beyer stated that the primary topic of the meeting was communication. J. Boulanger stated that the Collaboration subcommittee (specifically Denise Sharlow) had developed a draft newsletter, and copies were available for review. B. Beyer then opened the discussion by asking what the desired outcomes of the committee's communications effort were. Linda Normandin stated that the 30 communities of the Lakes Region should be more aware of the CEDS effort. J. Boulanger noted that it was important to identify the CEDS goals and for people to better understand what the CEDS involves and the direction that the CEDS committee is taking. D. Sharlow stated that it was important for town officials to understand how the CEDS can impact them early on in the process. B. Beyer asked if it was also important at this time to reach out the community through the communications process to seek additional volunteer help for the individual subcommittees. Support for the idea of expanding the subcommittees was expressed by Carol Cantin. B. Beyer then followed that comment by noting that we must do a better job of making the CEDS process appealing to the general public. He used the example of affordable housing, and portraying the topic in a different way by asking people if they feel it is important for their children to be able to someday afford to live in their town.

J. Boulanger noted that the Collaboration subcommittee had included a month-to-month timeline of what had been accomplished so far in the draft newsletter. K. Koulet noted that LRPC staff had done some work on a two page newsletter format that left much of the CEDS background information on a project web site. He noted that an important outcome of the communications process and a core part of the overall CEDS was to work to get local officials involved in the process in a proactive way and not have them be surprised once outreach from the CEDS

committee to the local community occurs. He also noted it was also important to reach out to members of the public who may be interested in the CEDS.

K. Koulet then complemented the Collaboration subcommittee on the work that had been done on the draft newsletter, noting that at four pages it included a great deal of information. He said that possibly some of the information could be consolidated into a two-page newsletter format with much of the detailed information included on the project web page. He noted that he hoped to hear from the overall CEDS committee regarding the content and message that should be transmitted via the newsletter and web site. Rusty McLear asked if the region's professional planners were receiving information regarding the CEDS. Theresa Lamson stated that the Collaboration subcommittee has been reaching out to the region's planners as part of their process. R. McLear said that he felt it was important to formally meet with the region's planners to discuss the CEDS. J. Boulanger described how the Collaboration subcommittee had reached out to all of the communities through letters, calls, and visits for those willing. Not all communities have been reached to date, and the specific contact varies by town including planners, community development coordinators, or town managers. She said this was part of the Collaboration subcommittee's work to begin preparing project list for inclusion in the CEDS. She said that the Collaboration subcommittee felt it was important to get the newsletter distributed because of the feedback they were getting from the local officials they had contacted regarding when the CEDS was regarding when the CEDS would be completed and what the likelihood that potential projects could receive funding. She said the Collaboration subcommittee felt it was important to begin communication now and continue in the future.

Rick Demark then noted that the term "economic development" does not resonate with everyone, but if the CEDS is described in terms of community improvement projects you can perhaps gain more attention. He also stated that the opportunity to get a project on the list of CEDS projects is an important goal that needs criteria to be developed. This is a good resource for communities without planning staff. B. Beyer stated that the CEDS is not just about getting a project on the CEDS project list that could be funded by EDA funding, but also relates to other topics such as affordable housing related programs. L. Normandin mentioned that the Affordable Housing subcommittee has scheduled a forum with local contractors on December 12 to discuss issues related to barriers to building affordable housing. She also noted that she had met with the Eastern Lakes Region Housing Coalition that has been working to educate communities about affordable housing.

R. McLear then discussed the need to educate local communities regarding how the impact on schools from new housing was actually less than commonly thought, and there was a concern that the region would turn into a broad-based retirement community – which is not a good thing when you look at long term economics. Mark Scarano asked if it was time to take these issues out on the road to discuss with communities. B. Beyer said that it may be a good time for a forum for local planners.

Henry Lipman offered that one approach could be to initially work with one or two communities on affordable housing instead of all 30 communities to develop a success story. K. Koulet noted that Wolfeboro has been looking at affordable housing for some time and would possibly be interested in some additional assistance. M. Scarano followed up by noting that in all of Grafton

County there is a lack of staff capacity as there is only one person working in a municipality on community development projects.

B. Beyer then asked who is accountable for preparing communications. K. Koulet said the LRPC staff could work with the Collaboration subcommittee on both the newsletter and a project website. He also said that when additional input is necessary, LRPC staff can assist in the development of public forums on those issues. R. McLear commented that the CEDS committee should also be looking for examples of successful projects already underway and then communicating to the public about those successes.

B. Beyer asked if the other subcommittees had looked at other groups that were interested in similar goals. Debbie Frawley-Drake said that the Cultivate Social Capital subcommittee was hoping that representatives of a social capital group in Massachusetts could make a short presentation at the next CEDS committee meeting. Carol Cantin stated that the Building Employees subcommittee is working to determine what is actionable in the short term, looking for early successes. K. Koulet noted that it would be important for LRPC staff to hear the strategic ideas being generated by the subcommittee chairs as the development of the CEDS continues.

B. Beyer then asked for the action items regarding CEDS communication. Jack Terrill said that we should begin by engaging local planners early on. C. Cantin said that she felt the scheduling of forums and availability of a project website were very important. On the website, a link for the submittal of comments would be helpful. J. Terrill noted that the website and newsletter were tools, and no replacement for face-to-face meetings. Dick Waitt commented on how local politics played such a large role in the issue of affordable housing, with projects often coming down to zoning changes.

After a discussion regarding the option of attending a Laconia Citizen editorial board meeting to further the communication of CEDS issues, J. Terrill again pointed out that key stakeholders such as local planners should be engaged early. K. Koulet said that he felt that the local planners were supportive of the individual issues such as building better communities, economic sustainability, and improved transportation that the CEDS is addressing; and planners, town administrators and local officials will need to weigh in regarding their points of view and project priorities.

B. Beyer then pointed out that the discussion emphasized the need to work through the communication of the CEDS issues slowly, understanding that the CEDS committee needs to have as many answers in hand as possible and be aware of the politics surrounding the issues.

Gary Groleau then stated that there is a gap, with economics being global and politics being local. The CEDS committee is trying to work between the two through the collaboration of a variety of disciplines. He commented on the discussion of local politics, noting that it was important to be pragmatic regarding issues in the region.

B. Beyer then summarized the next steps to communicate, which include (1) meetings with local planners, (2) the preparation of a newsletter, and (3) the initiation of a project web site.

R. McLear noted that he felt it was important to ask for input in the newsletter, not just discuss what we have already done or plan to accomplish. A discussion ensued regarding the preparation of a newsletter, and it was decided that at the next Collaboration subcommittee meeting a stakeholder list developed from the EDC, RPC and Chamber of Commerce mailing lists would be prepared. K. Koulet pointed out that dynamic information could be included on the website, not a newsletter. J. Boulanger pointed out that the Collaboration subcommittee had initiated work on the newsletter, and would be happy to continue leading the effort. The Collaboration subcommittee will make a report to the CEDS committee on 1/30.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

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### **Other Discussion**

K. Koulet asked the CEDS committee if they wanted additional analysis undertaken regarding the industry cluster analysis completed in 2007. He reminded the group that the cluster analysis had looked at the region's four counties on an overall basis, but late in the process we had received more detailed information on a community basis, and asked if there was interest in performing a more detailed cluster analysis at this time with the community specific data. The CEDS committee opted to leave the option to undertake a more detailed analysis to a later date.

### **Next Meeting**

It was then agreed that the next meeting of the CEDS Strategy Committee would be held on Wednesday, January 30 beginning at 4:00 pm. The meeting location will be announced.