

MINUTES

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

Birch Room, Woodside Building
227 Ledges Drive, Taylor Home
Laconia, New Hampshire

May 7, 2008

Committee Members Present:

Bill Beyer, Meredith Village Savings Bank	Henry Lipman, LRGH
Jennifer Boulanger, BCEDC	Rusty McLear, Hampshire Hospitality Holdings
Rick DeMark, North Country RC&D	Linda Normandin, Laconia Savings
Mark Edelstein, NH Community Technical College	Gerry O'Neil, Private Sector representative
Debbie Frawley-Drake, Lakes Region Linen	Chris Williams, Williams Architects
	Dick Waitt, LRPC

Others:

Carol Cantin, NH Department of Employment Security
Thad Guldbrandsen, Plymouth State University Center for Rural Partnerships
Rip Patten, Credere Associates
Pam Szacik, NH Department of Employment Security
Jim Tarr, Credere Associates
Kimon Koulet, LRPC
Adam Hlasny, LRPC
Michael Tardiff, LRPC

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Bill Beyer at 4:10pm. The minutes of the March 26, 2008 CEDS Committee meeting were then unanimously accepted by the committee.

B. Beyer noted that the agenda would be modified slightly to accommodate a presentation by the Energy and Natural Resources subcommittee scheduled for 5:30pm. He also said that he would like to move the Projects Status Report agenda item to later in the meeting as several committee members who would be discussing potential projects would be arriving later.

Defining Regional Expectations

B. Beyer began the discussion of defining regional expectations. He noted that the individual subcommittees had been asked to begin refining their goals, objectives, and action steps for inclusion in the CEDS document, and he understood that at this time several of the committees had done so, but the other subcommittees were not yet done with this process.

Kimon Koulet then reviewed the work that had been done to date regarding the compilation of goals, objectives and action steps, beginning with the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis completed last summer that lead to the initial development of goals and objectives and the organization of the different subcommittees. Among ongoing tasks, the subcommittees had been asked to determine if the previously defined goals, objectives and action steps are germane, or had new goals, objectives and action steps been identified. K. Koulet asked the subcommittees to complete the process and submit their responses to LRPC by May 23, as this is an essential step towards the preparation of the overall CEDS document.

B. Beyer asked the chairpersons of each sub-committee to comment on the status of this process during their subcommittee reports.

CEDS Subcommittee Reports

Linda Normandin gave an update on the work of the *Live Here Work Here, Housing* subcommittee. She said that the subcommittee's draft goals/objectives matrix was complete, and they were now working on the development of an inventory list of affordable housing in the region, including a look at affordable rentals. She also noted that the subcommittee has been looking into the organization of a Lakes Region Housing Coalition, and several committee members had recently attended a meeting of the state's existing regional housing coalitions in Concord. She said the subcommittee was looking to prepare both a short-term and a long-term action plan to advance affordable housing. Key issues are zoning and how towns view affordable housing development.

Jennifer Boulanger asked about quantifiable objectives of the committee. L. Normandin responded that the committee was seeking an increased awareness of affordable housing issues in the region, and to quantify progress the subcommittee could track the number of presentations they make in the region regarding affordable housing, the number of affordable housing proposals in the region, and the number of new units constructed over time.

B. Beyer then described how the subcommittee was seeking to begin working with several communities to change the overall attitude regarding affordable housing through the help of Linda Harvey.

Carol Cantin described the recent activities of the *Building Employees* subcommittee. She said that the subcommittee had been focusing on manufacturing through the formation of an alliance of schools and employers in the area with an initial meeting held on April 16. All members of the subcommittee were in attendance as well as a representative from the NH Department of Education. A second meeting is scheduled for May 29, and the group will be seeking to work

with other similar initiatives in the state. She said the next step would be to bring together a similar group to focus on food service, healthcare and other industries.

B. Beyer asked what the group's actions steps are. C. Cantin responded that the subcommittee is looking at existing educational resources and exploring other resources at the high school and college levels. She described it as bridging the gap between existing education resources and the needs of employers. In response to questions from J. Boulanger and K. Koulet regarding the measurement of the committee's progress and any proposals the committee may have, C. Cantin said that it will be important for the alliance to grow and begin to define what exactly the educational needs are that will benefit manufacturers in the region. She said that it is not enough to simply say that more math programs are necessary, it is important to identify exactly the type of math programs that are necessary to adequately train employees.

Henry Lipman discussed the recent work of the *New Economy* subcommittee. He noted that one of the goals of the subcommittee was to seek to improved bandwidth and network reliability in the region. The subcommittee has identified and met with network end users, and will soon seek to meet with regional providers such as Fairpoint and Metrocast. He said that the group will be seeking to identify "aggregation opportunities" where it makes economic sense to bring together end users to work together to improve bandwidth reliability and redundancy.

B. Beyer noted that the scheduled meetings with Fairpoint and Metrocast are two key action steps. He noted that Fairpoint was interested in meeting with the subcommittee as they too have an interest in economic development, and they are working to develop pilot projects to improve infrastructure.

Debbie Frawley Drake described the recent work of the *Social Capital and Cultural Heritage* subcommittee. The group met twice since the last CEDS meeting, and was focusing on developing a list to highlight what is going on in the region related to social capital. She described how the group keeps coming back to the need to develop a clearinghouse for events that are happening or volunteer opportunities that exist. An idea is the development of a Volunteer Action Center such as the center in Portsmouth. She noted that the group is not yet ready to describe the group's specific goals and action steps, and that a measure of success relative to social capital is voter registration.

K. Koulet noted that that the subcommittees need to continue to identify key committee ideas moving forward. As a requirement for the CEDS report, he said it was essential for the subcommittees to describe goals, objectives and action steps based upon current thinking, understanding that the work of the CEDS committee will continue to evolve.

J. Boulanger described how the *Collaboration and Communication* subcommittee continues to work with each of the other subcommittees as well as each of the communities in the region. She noted how a newsletter had been distributed, and planned to prepare another newsletter for distribution in August. She described how the subcommittee will continue to update the project website and seeks to meet with communities twice a year.

Special Energy and Natural Resources Presentation

Gerry O'Neil said the *Natural Environment and Energy* subcommittee report was actually a presentation by Thad Guldbrandsen of the Center for Rural Partnerships at Plymouth State.

T. Guldbrandsen then presented an overview of the goals and strategies of the Natural Environment and Energy Committee. The presentation is enclosed as *Attachment 1*.

A number of comments followed the presentation. H. Lipman noted the similarity between the need for redundancy in the region's IT infrastructure and the need for power redundancy. K. Koulet noted that there are other emerging new economy areas related to the energy and the environment.

Projects Status Report

K. Koulet introduced the topic of the projects to be included in the CEDS document. He noted that a number of project submission forms had been distributed to the CEDS committee at the beginning of the meeting, with an application deadline two days away. He described the process that the CEDS committee had followed to distribute the project submittal forms to approximately 60 regional contacts, and how the members of the collaboration and communication subcommittee had followed up with local communities to see if they needed any assistance in preparing the project submittal forms.

He then noted that it was not yet the time to review the projects, but that he wanted to know from the CEDS committee if they felt we had enough projects at this time and if we have enough time over the next two meetings to review and prioritize the projects in anticipation of an adoption of the overall CEDS document by July 30. He then asked if the committees could work to identify any additional untested or unknown projects that could be included in the CEDS project list discussion. He specifically noted the possibility of including a project related to the green economy as discussed in the Natural Environment and Energy subcommittee presentation. He said that he was hoping to add to the breadth and depth of projects to be included in the eventual project list.

Accepting and Prioritizing Regional Projects: Intro for June Meeting

B. Beyer noted that the June meeting would be the time for prioritizing the projects that had been submitted to date. L. Normandin asked for a list of projects and the criteria to be distributed to the committee prior to the next meeting so the members could self-evaluate the projects. G. O'Neil asked if we really need to prioritize the projects at all. K. Koulet responded that we will need to identify the region's top project or projects to be competitive as a region. G. O'Neil pointed out that we can create two categories, EDA and non-EDA projects. In response to a question by K. Koulet regarding whether there are enough projects submitted, both J. Boulanger and G. O'Neil said that they expected additional projects to be submitted.

Following a question by Rick DeMark regarding the process to evaluate the projects and how the criteria will be used, B. Beyer asked the LRPC staff to distribute the projects and a cover memo

that further describes the evaluation criteria to the committee for their use in reviewing the projects.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

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Other Discussion

There was no other discussion

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the CEDS Strategy Committee was scheduled for Tuesday, June 3 beginning at 4:00 pm, location to be determined.