

MINUTES

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

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

October 17, 2007

Committee Members Present:

Bill Beyer, Meredith Village Savings Bank
Jennifer Boulanger, BCEDC
Debbie Frawley-Drake, Lakes Region Linen
John Howe, The Citizen of Laconia
Theresa Lamson, Greater Laconia-Weirs Beach
Chamber of Commerce
Henry Lipman, LRGH

Rusty McLear, Hampshire Hospitality Holdings
Moe Lafreniere, The Common Man
Linda Normandin, Laconia Savings
Gerry O'Neil, Private Sector representative
Carol Pierce, Laconia Human Relations Committee
Don St. Germain, Community Bank
Jack Terrill, Lakes Region United Way
Dick Waitt, LRPC

Others:

Deborah McManus Avery, NH DRED
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 5:05pm. The minutes of the July 26 CEDS Strategy Committee meeting were accepted as written by a unanimous vote of the committee.

CEDS Check-In

Bill Beyer referred to the previous work to prioritize the initiatives of the CEDS committee into six topics, which he noted may now be seven as a committee member had outlined to him the possibility of adding a topic. He said that at the last meeting the individual committees had been asked to organize themselves and possibly seek additional members from outside the CEDS committee, identify stakeholders in the community, and identify resources, objectives and strategies related to their topics. He said he wanted to make sure everyone was in agreement with the expectations of the subcommittee work. Jennifer Boulanger stated that she understood the role to be the identification of strategies and the implementation tools to accomplish specific goals. B. Beyer

noted that he hoped to discuss this topic further later in the meeting following the individual committee presentations.

B. Beyer then moved to the topic of funding, and asked Kim Koulet to share information related to funding with the committee. K. Koulet highlighted the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) role in funding of the CEDS project, along with other local sources of match funding. He noted that the EDA funding is for use in capacity building to assist regions in developing economic development in a comprehensive way. The first year of funding ended in July, and the region has recently received a second year of funding (through July 31, 2008) following an invitation to seek further funding over the summer. He did note that the EDA funding requires a 50/50 match, with \$15,000 being provided by LRPC, \$20,000 estimated to be provided by local in-kind match which comes from accounting for the time of committee members, and \$5,000 provided by the NH Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA), which leaves a need for \$10,000 in local match for the current year. He then noted that the capacity building programs typically extend over three years, with planning activities occurring over that period. In year four, which would hopefully follow a third year of EDA funding, the challenge for the LRPC will be to fund future CEDS maintenance activities. He will be looking for advice and guidance from the CEDS committee regarding this topic. He concluded the discussion of funding by saying that he been discussing the options for funding the final \$10,000 match with B. Beyer and J. Boulanger, that the EDA appears to be committed to funding the CEDS through July 2009, and that he hoped that everyone could continue to fill out the in-kind match logs that he had distributed.

K. Koulet then moved on to the topic of project funding. He noted the discussions and emphasis that the CEDS committee had put on topics and possible projects that would be funded through the private sector, and that EDA encourages that these types of projects be included in the CEDS. He said though that at the same time, the EDA expects that the CEDS include projects that would be eligible for EDA funding, and that there are very specific criteria that the EDA uses to determine if projects qualify for funding. The EDA funds public works projects (infrastructure), technical assistance (or pre-engineering for construction projects), and economic adjustment funding (which can come into play due to layoffs or a natural disaster). He noted that the CEDS committee should begin working on tools to begin filtering these projects in an effort to prepare a project priority list. He stated that he could foresee a project list that goes to EDA in the CEDS document that contains only EDA eligible projects, and there would be another list with projects that are important to the region funded through other sources. K. Koulet then described the completion of the regional sewer interceptor around Lake Winnepesaukee as an example of a possible project that could be included in the EDA eligible projects list.

J. Boulanger commented that her subcommittee (Collaboration) had met twice since the last meeting of the CEDS committee and was working to compile projects from local communities. She observed that in addition to sewer projects, a common issue in a number of communities was water. Debbie Frawley-Drake asked about the typical level of EDA funding provided for a project. K. Koulet responded that he believed that EDA looks at 50% up to a certain figure of which he was not sure, but if you are in a economic development district they will go up to 60%. He did point out that the EDA's funding has decreased over the years, and that other funding sources would be necessary in all instances.

B. Beyer then moved on the topic of establishing an executive committee of the CEDS Strategy Committee. He said that there were a number of issues that the CEDS Strategy Committee

needed to address related to communications with the general public as well as the region's communities, and perhaps some of the work could be accomplished by a smaller group instead of the entire CEDS committee. J. Boulanger stated that one of the goals of the Collaboration subcommittee was to increase the frequency of meetings with town officials. She said that the subcommittee was hoping to revisit the individual communities when the CEDS document was complete to convey its results. John Howe stated that he felt that the committee needs to create better connections with community groups to show that we are working together as a region. Gerry O'Neil noted that it not efficient for each subcommittee to do its own outreach, and there should be a central focus for outreach by the CEDS committee.

B. Beyer asked the committee for direction regarding the formation of an executive committee. Chris Williams suggested that the executive committee's membership consist of the subcommittee chairs. G. O'Neil asked if the Collaboration subcommittee should handle all outreach. J. Boulanger described the two approaches to outreach, including dissemination of information and attracting other participants from outside of the CEDS committee. Pam Szacik noted that she felt it was important for each of the subcommittees to be represented on the executive committee, and it did not necessarily need to be the chair of each subcommittee. Carol Cantin also noted that participation of representatives from each subcommittee in the executive committee could help in avoiding overlap between the work of each of the subcommittees. J. Boulanger asked about the status of the CEDS Strategy Committee once the CEDS document is complete. K. Koulet responded that the LRPC is the planning organization that is recognized by EDA to develop the CEDS. The LRPC appoints an entity to prepare the CEDS, and that entity is the CEDS Strategy Committee. As long as there is a CEDS, there needs to be a Strategy Committee. He noted that it is up to the CEDS Strategy Committee as to how it organizes itself, but it is important to retain the committee as long as there is a viable CEDS.

B. Beyer summarized by saying that the Strategy Committee will be sustained due to CEDS requirements. He then noted that there are currently six subcommittees that have been suggested to have representation on the executive committee (or oversight committee), and further suggested that he should participate as chair of the CEDS Strategy Committee and K. Koulet should also participate. J. Boulanger asked why another group needed to be formed. B. Beyer said that he was simply trying to lessen the number of meetings for the overall committee. Rusty McLear noted his concern that if there is not an oversight committee made up of subcommittee chairs, individual committees could be going down the same path at the same time because they are not communicating.

Henry Lipman described another option where the work at hand at a particular time would necessitate who comes together to meet. He said he would rather not have the larger group break up this early in the process. He said for strategy specific issues the entire group should meet, while for administrative issues or if a policy issue comes up between meetings the smaller oversight committee could meet. John Howe concurred, and stated that he was concerned with too much delegation to the oversight committee that could impact the future acceptance of the recommendations of the CEDS. B. Beyer then suggested that the overall CEDS Strategy Committee meet every other month, but meet as a whole, with the executive committee meeting as necessary to address more administrative issues. He then said that the next meeting would be the entire committee to discuss a specific issue such as communication. H. Lipman suggested that perhaps the executive committee could assist in the preparation for that meeting. Linda

Normandin concurred that the overall strategy committee meet every other month, with the executive committee meeting on an as-needed basis.

Gerry O'Neil asked if the committee chairs were going to meet. B. Beyer said that if the Strategy Committee is meeting every other month, it may not be necessary. L. Normandin noted that a means to communicate better would be for subcommittee chairs to distribute their meeting minutes to the Strategy Committee as a whole. B. Beyer noted that it would be a good practice to follow.

B. Beyer then moved into the topic of the relationship between the CEDS Strategy Committee and other committees throughout the community. J. Howe noted that he felt it was important to reach out to other community groups as they may have ideas that could impact the CEDS. K. Koulet stated that there was a need for a public forum, and pointed out that one possible method to do this would be to advertise public notices of the individual subcommittee meetings. Dick Waitt proposed that the chairs of each subcommittee attend LRPC monthly meetings.

B. Beyer then stated that Chris Williams wished to discuss a potential seventh topic for consideration by the CEDS Strategy Committee. C. Williams noted that the issues of energy and sustainability would have an impact on the future of the region, and he distributed a summary of the Center Harbor Energy Committee's Energy Committee's Mission Statement and Goals. The CEDS Strategy Committee discussed the issue, and it was proposed by K. Koulet that a sensitivity to issues related to energy and sustainability should be built into each subcommittee's work. C. Williams concurred with this approach.

CEDS Subcommittee Reports

B. Beyer then asked representatives of each subcommittee to report on work accomplished by each subcommittee to date.

To begin the presentations he asked L. Normandin to discuss the Breaking the Cycle committee's work. The subcommittee has met twice, and will soon meet a third time. She noted that the committee started out with three members, B. Beyer, Jack Terrill and L. Normandin. The subcommittee has also brought in Bob Curtis from Laconia Savings Bank, Linda Harvey from the Laconia Area Community Land Trust, and Margo Fields who is acting as secretary for the committee. She noted that Don St. Germain had also met with the subcommittee. She then reviewed the progress of the subcommittee over its two previous meetings, noting that during their first meeting much of their time was spent trying to better define the goals of the committee. In their second meeting the group had proposed that the name of the goal be changed from Breaking the Cycle to Encourage Housing Affordability because much of what the group was discussing was related to housing. The group defined one of its objectives as Support private and public workforce housing development activities that provide affordable owner-occupied, renter occupied homes and apartments for workforce housing. A second objective was to create workforce housing. She noted that the committee was working on developing a number of resource lists which would be reviewed at their October 18 meeting. Meeting minutes from the 8/9 and 9/27 Affordable Housing subcommittee meetings are enclosed as *Attachment 1*. K. Koulet stated that the LRPC had several inclusionary zoning and housing reports that he could

provide the subcommittee. L. Normandin concluded by saying that the subcommittee hoped to organize a focus group of builders to discuss the issue with them.

Carol Cantin reported on the Building Employees subcommittee. Members of the committee are C. Cantin (chair), Mark Edelstein, and Pam Szacik. The subcommittee met on September 6, and followed that meeting up with smaller meetings to cover everything. She commented on the understanding by the group that this is a complex issue, but much information exists and is available. At this point the subcommittee is taking an inventory of present conditions and will then work on potential strategies, with a strong emphasis placed on “where and how to best focus.” She then reviewed information on current initiatives, stakeholders, and resources that the subcommittee had already prepared. A meeting summary and synopsis of work to date by this subcommittee is enclosed as *Attachment 2*.

H. Lipman reported for the New Economy subcommittee. He is working with J. Howe and Moe Lafreniere. He noted that the subcommittee had defined the New Economy as “commerce through digitization,” and that enabling digital connectivity is an important issue. He related that the subcommittee felt that the development of a digital infrastructure now was similar to the historical development of mills to make use of natural resources in the region. Regarding suggested action steps, he related that the committee would like to work on a technical infrastructure inventory. The subcommittee needs to know what we have and what are the needs related to technical infrastructure. He commented that the subcommittee would also like to get a better idea of the digital skills of the workforce, possibly by holding a regional summit on the topic. K. Koulet encouraged the subcommittee to refer back to the SWOT analysis that the CEDS Strategy Committee had undertaken over the summer. New Economy subcommittee meeting minutes are enclosed as *Attachment 3*.

The Cultivate Social Capital report was presented by D. Frawley-Drake. Jack Terrill is a member of the subcommittee as well. She reported that the subcommittee had met and prepared a proposal with a goal to “Introduce the concept of social capital as an integral part of the socio-economic development process in the Lakes Region.” She reviewed the proposal (See *Attachment 4*), noting the emphasis is on educating the public regarding Social Capital Impact Assessments and embedding the idea that projects can affect social capital. J. Terrill stated that it is simply a tool to measure the impact of a decision on social capital.

J. Boulanger presented the Collaboration subcommittee report. Other members of the subcommittee are Theresa Lamson, Denise Sharlow, Denise Roy-Palmer and Mark Scarano. At their first meeting the group had elected a chair (J. Boulanger), identified stakeholders such as town planners, state agencies, and Executive Councilor Burton, compiled available resources to foster communication such as newsletters and meetings of other groups, and identified goals, objectives and strategies for the subcommittee. Stated goals of the subcommittee are “Coordination and Collaboration when it comes to infrastructure (roads/bridges), water/sewer, and clean lakes). An objective is to increase the frequency with which stakeholders interact with town officials to build relationship and rapport and to communicate knowledge. The subcommittee’s strategies include meeting with local officials to discuss specific CEDS projects and continuing to follow up those meetings in the future. The committee divided up the communities in the region for each to contact regarding the potential CEDS project. To date the subcommittee has met with approximately 50% of the communities. She commented that major

issues so far discussed by the communities were related to water/sewer and transportation. The next subcommittee meeting is scheduled for November 5, with action steps at the meeting to summarize all potential projects gathered to date. Meeting minutes for the Collaboration subcommittee are enclosed as *Attachment 5*.

Gerry O'Neil presented the Natural Environment and Cultural Heritage subcommittee report. He noted that the subcommittee had met on September 11 and October 15. Other members of the group are C. Williams, Rick DeMark, and Joe LaPlante. He noted that K. Koulet had attended the 10/15 meeting. He referred to the preliminary stakeholder list that was attached to the 10/15 subcommittee meeting minutes, and spoke of how the group was seeking to identify those groups in the region that are concerned about environmental and cultural resources. He reviewed the subcommittee's process including the compilation of a complete list of stakeholders, undertake outreach to those stakeholders, and decide which regional initiatives to partner with in coordination with the CEDS Strategy Committee. Meeting minutes for the Natural Environment and Cultural Heritage subcommittee enclosed as *Attachment 6*.

R. McLear pointed out several groups such as the LCHIP Board and the State Arts Council that could be contacted. T. Lamson noted that as the Collaboration subcommittee has met with local communities there has been much discussion of groups undertaking local initiatives related to issues such as beach erosion or the development of parks. She volunteered to forward those contacts to the subcommittee.

B. Beyer thanked each subcommittee for their reports and commented that each group seemed to be moving along with a similar process. He did note that his only concern was whether some of the groups had narrowed their topics down to specific issues too early in the process. K. Koulet observed that it should be up to the overall CEDS Strategy Committee to prioritize specific projects for the CEDS document. He further noted that work still needed to be done to develop criteria to prioritize projects, and that could be a job for the subcommittees in the future. The CEDS allows for an overall list of projects as well as a prioritized list. He noted a key outcome of the CEDS process is to determine what is actionable.

B. Beyer stated that two meetings from now there must be discussion regarding overall priorities, with the breadth of choices left on the table for now. J. Terrill expressed his concern regarding the overall goal of the CEDS process. He asked that if the overall goal is to qualify for EDA funding for a specific project such as a regional sewer project, then the group is spending a great deal of time discussing issues that would not have a chance of EDA funding. He noted that if the goal of the CEDS is to change the way we are doing business in the Lakes Region then all of the discussion is relevant. J. Boulanger said she felt it was important to both develop an overall strategic plan as well as to qualify for EDA funding.

K. Koulet then asked the subcommittees to include LRPC in all communications and offered staff assistance for preparation for all subcommittee meetings.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Next Meeting

It was then agreed that the next meeting of the CEDS Strategy Committee would be held on Wednesday, December 5 beginning at 4:00 pm. The topic will be communication and the review of the initial three chapters of the CEDS. The meeting location will be announced.

A second meeting was tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, January 30 at 4:00 p.m. at a location to be announced. The tentative agenda will be subcommittee reports.