

MINUTES

Lane Economic Committee

Lane Council of Governments – 4th Floor Large Conference Room
99 E. Broadway, Suite 400 – Eugene

November 19, 2007 – 11:30 A.M.

PRESENT: Rob Scoggin, Chair; Tim Black, Jay Bozievich, DeAnn Cherbas, Chuck Forster, Mike Galvin, Glenda Poling, John Sullivan, Mike Sullivan (for Denny Braud), John Tamulonis, Ellen Teninty, Jenny Ulum, Lynnette Wikstrom, *members*; Lawrence Brice, Howard Schesser, , *alternate members*.

Steve Dignam, Milo Mecham (LCOG); Mike McKenzie-Bahr (Lane County).

ABSENT: Mike Blommé, Bill Fleenor, *members*; Jim Ramseyer, Deb Schmidt, Kari Westlund, *ex officio members*;

GUESTS: Diane Wiley

Mr. Scoggin called the meeting of the Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) Lane Economic Committee (LEC) to order at 11:35 a.m. He invited those who were present to introduce themselves.

1. Public Comment

Ms. Poling reported that “Project Starship” of Lane Metro Partnership had successfully facilitated the location of an Enterprise Rent-a-Car call center in Eugene. She said its 200 employees would be housed in the downtown facility formerly occupied by Symantec and that the center would begin operation in the Spring of 2008.

Mr. Black reported that University of Oregon representatives were available to make presentations to groups in the community about recently approved plans for the replacement of the McArthur Court Basketball Arena. He said its cost would not exceed \$200 million.

2. Chairperson and Staff Comments

Mr. Scoggin stated that he had no prepared comments.

Mr. Dignam quoted from a 1936 American novel set in the Old South during the American Civil War and Reconstruction to allay ill will he anticipated in reaction to preparatory work he had done on an item to be considered later in the Agenda.

3. Minutes

Ms. Poling moved, seconded by Ms. Cherbas, to accept the minutes of the October 15, 2007, meeting. The motion was adopted unanimously, 12:0, Ms. Ulum having not yet joined the meeting.

4. Infrastructure Inventory Project List

Mr. Dignam referred to Agenda support material about an Infrastructure Inventory listing project being organized by the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department (OECDD). He said the time line for the project included setting November 15 as the deadline for projects to be submitted for consideration. He reported that over 200 projects had been submitted by Lane County incorporated cities and other jurisdictions – every municipality except Junction City which had received special consideration and allowed to submit a project after the deadline.

Ms. Ulum joined the meeting at 11:50 a.m.

Mr. Dignam reviewed the process to be used by the Department in creating a statewide six-year strategy for funding of infrastructure by the Legislature. He explained that each of 13 Regional Investment Boards (RIB) was to identify and prioritize the top ten projects in its area. He said the Benton-Lane-Lincoln-Linn (BL3) RIB effort coordinated by the Cascades West Economic Development District had determined that its priority list would be decided by incorporating the three most important projects identified in each county.

Mr. Dignam stated that the LEC had been designated as the body to prioritize projects submitted by Lane County jurisdictions. He said it was a daunting task because of the large number and great variety of projects submitted, the potential significance of the listing, the limited time and information available for the task, the lack of clarity and completeness in the statewide criteria, the unknown influence that should be given to the Needs and Issues priority listing conducted by the LEC in 2006, and the variety in quality and integrity of project descriptions submitted.

Mr. Mecham said it was generally agreed that the Infrastructure Inventory Project was being driven by semi-political efforts within the Legislature to enhance or withdraw support for the RIBs. He suggested that the BL3 RIB consisted of four diverse counties with foci that could not be reconciled. He said he believed the process was further confused by a lack of clarity about the importance of job creation as a prioritization criteria, the lack of any guarantee that funding for identified infrastructure projects would be available, and the importance placed on immediate economic benefit derived from projects.

Mr. McKenzie-Bahr said Lane County was concerned that federal Community Development Block Grant resources would be distributed using the Infrastructure Inventory process, but its low and moderate income requirements were not included in criteria in place. He said other basic criteria such as the need to meet Statewide Planning Goal 11 preventing the extending of public services to rural was also missing, leading to low ranking for the Row River Valley Water System improvements project.

Mr. M. Sullivan said he believed that the prioritization would be an ongoing process and would be changed when previously unconsidered concerns were raised. He said he was not aware that small city infrastructure would be part of the Inventory Project.

Mr. Mecham said he believed the comments of Mr. McKenzie-Bahr were well informed. He suggested that a main purpose of the Project would be to show the Legislature what infrastructure projects were needful of funding.

Members discussed the Infrastructure Project:

- Although much job creation was based on infrastructure creation, not identifying it as a basic criteria made endorsement of the Project a struggle. (*Poling*)
- It is most important that projects be on the Infrastructure Project list, but top projects will be typical throughout the State. (*Tamulonis*)

- It is difficult to assign priorities based on information provided in the application forms. *(Galvin)*
- LEC discussion of revising infrastructure in July had never considered low and moderate housing issues *(J. Sullivan)*
- A major influence in developing the Project was the stated interest of the co-chairs of the State Legislature Ways and Means Committee in eliminating RIBs. *(Galvin)*
- OECD "slapped together" the Inventory project and the ranking of the top-ten priorities in each RIB had been added at the last minute. *(Galvin)*
- The value of the list is built on "business as usual." The RIBs will be unable to prioritize the top-ten projects. There is no need to agonize over doing the process correctly, including all projects needing funding is most important. *(Galvin)*

Mr. Dignam explained variables that he suggested could be used for prioritization of the submitted projects – Identification of the top project from all government entities (plus the University of Oregon), submitter-rankings of projects as having high priority, prior Needs and Issues rankings, economic and community impact, and requests made for OECD funding.

Mr. Tamulonis suggested that those variables led to the following prioritization:

1. Coburg Wastewater Treatment System
2. Florence Rhododendron Force Main Replacement
3. Lowell Water Treatment Facility Upgrade, Phase 1 (tie)
3. University of Oregon Research Park (tie)

Mr. Tamulonis said his criteria for priority ranking included community impact, state system self-ranking, and economic impact.

Mr. Tamulonis moved, seconded by Mr. Galvin, to present the four projects as the Lane County submission to the BL3 for inclusion it is Top-Ten ranking list of 2007 Infrastructure Inventory, together with a letter of explanation addressed to it and the OECD about concerns raised during the LEC discussion. The motion was adopted, 12:1, with Ms. Ulum voting no.

Mr. Dignam reported that applications for appointment to the LEC were being received. He suggested that Mr. McKenzie Bahr seek appointment as a designated alternate member for Bill Fleenor, who has not yet been able to attend any meetings since his designation as the representative of Board of County Commissioners. He noted that the next scheduled LEC meeting was scheduled on January 28.

The meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

(Recorded by Dan Lindstrom)

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