

MINUTES

Lane Economic Committee

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

November 15, 2004 – 11:30 A.M.

PRESENT: John Tamulonis, Chair; Mike Blommé, DeAnn Cherbas, Mike Galvin (for Hal Reed), Robin Onaclea (for Chuck Forster), Glenda Poling, Jim Ramseyer, Rob Scoggin, John Sullivan, Mike Sullivan, Ellen Teninty, Mitch Wilkinson, Lynnette Wikstrom, members; Jay Bozievich, Philip Hudspeth, Deb Schmidt, Kari Westlund, *ex officio* members; Randy Derrik, Howard Schesser, alternate members.

Steve Dignam (LCOG); Peter Thurston (Lane County); Bob Warren (Oregon Economic & Community Development Department).

ABSENT: Tim Black, Anna Morrison

Because of the late arrival of Mr. Tamulonis, Mr. Scoggin called the meeting of the Lane Economic Committee (LEC) to order at 11:35 a.m. He invited those who were present to introduce themselves.

Mr. Tamulonis joined the meeting dyspnoeal at 11:37 a.m. He determined there were no requests to change the agenda.

1. Public Comment

Mr. Thurston reported that the Lane Board of County Commissioners had authorized a \$100,000 application to the Environmental Protection Agency for development of a “brown site” located near Lane Community College.

Mr. Thurston presented documentation to Mr. Dignam guaranteeing \$100,000 matching funds from Lane County for the federal Economic Development Agency grant that had recently enabled establishment of a Revolving Small Business Loan Program.

2. Comments from the Chair

Mr. Tamulonis announced that Springfield voters had approved formation of a 620-acre Glenwood Urban Renewal District on November 2. He said infrastructure improvements in the area had begun and that he anticipated full vitalization within 20-years.

3. Minutes Approval

Ms. Westlund requested that the name of Mr. Wilkinson be replaced with that of Mr. Scoggin in Sentence 1 of Paragraph 3 on Page 1 of the minutes of the October 18 meeting.

Mr. John Sullivan requested that Sentence 1 of Paragraph 5 on Page 4 of the minutes be changed, as follows:

Mr. John Sullivan said he believed private business was uninterested in the Region 2050 Project and that ~~without its involvement it was meaningless~~ **the project would have little importance for future planning without its support.**

Mr. Tamulonis determined there were no objections to the requests and the minutes were amended.

Ms. Poling moved, seconded by Mr. Scoggin, to accept the minutes of the October 18, 2004, meeting, as amended. The motion was adopted unanimously, 13:0.

4. New Members and Election of Officers

Ms. Poling stated that she, Mr. Scoggin, and Anna Morrison had served as a Nominations Committee. She reviewed the recommendations of the committee.

Mr. Mike Sullivan moved, seconded by Mr. Blommé, to recommend to the Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) Board of Directors that DeAnn Cherbas, Robert Scoggin, John Sullivan, and Lynette Wikstrom be re-appointed three-year terms on the LEC. The motion was adopted unanimously, 15:0.

Mr. Ramseyer moved, seconded by Ms. Cherbas, to recommend to the LCOG Board of Directors that Ellen Teninty be appointed to fill the unexpired term of Charles Spencer on the LEC. The motion was adopted unanimously, 15:0.

Mr. Ramseyer moved, seconded by Mr. Scoggin, to re-elect John Tamulonis to a one-year term as LEC Chairperson, and to re-elect Hal Reed to a one-year term as LEC Vice Chairperson. The motion was adopted unanimously, 15:0.

5. LEC 2005 Work Plan

Mr. Dignam referred to agenda support material entitled “Lane Economic Committee 2005 Workplan” and received member feedback on proposed LEC tasks, as follows:

A. Coordinate State Needs and Issues process

Mr. John Sullivan said he was concerned that the Oregon Department of Economic & Community Development Department respond to recommendations made about the 2004 Needs and Issues process. Mr. Dignam reported that Mim Swartz had indicated she had received the recommendations from Lane County, but that he was unaware of any action taken to implement them. Mr. Warren suggested that he be asked to follow-up on requests made of the department.

Mr. Tamulonis described his recollection that the Needs and Issues process had originated on the incentive of Lane County to provide regional coordination of project application and approvals. He said he believed there would be value in continuing the process locally, even if it was not developed by the state.

Mr. John Sullivan said he believed it was important for the LEC to be involved in the Needs and Issues process, despite its time-consuming nature. He said a Lane County recommendation to have local elected officials approve project applications might be politically volatile.

Mr. Dignam suggested there was value in coordinating with state Needs and Issues evaluation processes and that its timelines be used, even if they took place less often than once a year.

Mr. Thurston reported that the Board of County Commissioners had questioned the value of the Needs and Issues process because it could not be determined that the listing was always consulted in the awarding of grants and projects and that many project identified on it were unfunded for many years.

Mr. Tamulonis determined there was agreement to include coordinating the State Needs and Issues process on the LEC work plan.

B. Provide review and comment to Lane County regarding potential video lottery allocation projects.

In response to a question from Mr. Mike Sullivan, Mr. Thurston said LEC comments regarding allocation of video lottery funds had been helpful to the Lane County Economic Standing Committee when it had made recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners

Mr. Mike Sullivan asked if Lane County would have video lottery resources to allocate in 2005. Mr. Thurston replied that at least \$200,000 would be available.

C. Provide oversight to LCOG's business loan programs.

Mr. Mike Sullivan asked if LEC oversight added value to the loan programs. Mr. Dignam replied that the LEC was responsible for selection of members of the Loan Committee. He said it had little direct involvement in the programs beyond receiving reports of its activities.

Mr. Tamulonis asked if there were business loan needs that were unfilled by existing programs. Mr. Dignam said the most significant gaps in service would be filled by the new Revolving Small Business Loan Program.

Mr. Warren said he believed LCOG business loan programs were successful because of the effective work of staff.

Mr. Tamulonis suggested that the work task be reworded to state "Provide support and oversight . . ." He said doing so could encourage staff to request assistance of LEC members enlisting the involvement of local bankers in the loan programs.

In response to a question from Ms. Westlund, Mr. Dignam said he did not believe rewording the work task as suggested would contradict LCOG policies prohibiting advocacy by advisory committees.

Mr. John Sullivan said he believed the LCOG Board of Directors should be concerned about the comparatively low number of federal Small Business Administration (SBA) guaranteed loans issued in Lane County.

Mr. Thurston suggested that the LCOG Board be encouraged to work with LEC to increase the interest of local banks in SBA loans. He said strategic action, rather than an action directed to a specific bank would be more appropriate.

Mr. Dignam said he believed additional LEC discussion of SBA loan programs should be held before any position or action was taken.

D. Analyze and provide feedback to Lane County regarding the economic impact of State Transportation Improvement Project (STIP) priorities.

Mr. John Sullivan asked if only metropolitan area projects were included in STIP priority planning. Various members described the involvement of jurisdictions in all areas of the state.

Mr. Dignam suggested that the LEC should get a “primer” on transportation planning to be effective in STIP considerations.

Mr. Thurston said that, in addition to STIP resources, funding from bond sales, federal programs, special state allocations, such as for bridge repair, was used for transportation projects. He suggested that an effort could be made to have at least a portion of the resources spent with local contractors. Members discussed personal understandings and experience with the issue.

Mr. Mike Sullivan suggested that the words “analyze and” be removed from the proposed work plan task.

E. Continue ongoing project to create profiles of area economic development organizations.

Mr. Tamulonis suggested that the word “Complete” be substituted for “Continue” in the task.

Ms. Poling said much good work was being doing on the project and that some refinement continued to need to be done on it.

F. Participate in update to Benton Lane Lincoln Linn (BL3) Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

In response to questions, Mr. Dignam explained that development of regional Economic Strategies was a federal requirement, but that he was unaware if they were reviewed or were influential in state or federal economic development planning. He said he believed the exercise could have benefit for economic development planning in the region.

G. Analyze and provide feedback to LCOG regarding the economic impact of various Region 2050 Project program strategies.

Mr. Dignam reported that further consideration of the Region 2050 Project would be on the agenda of the January LEC meeting. He suggested that it could provide a better understanding of the benefits of the process.

Ms. Cherbas left the meeting at 12:40 p.m.

Mr. Tamulonis asked if there were other tasks that should be included in the LEC 2005 Work Plan.

Mr. Mike Sullivan asked if the LEC could contribute to the Board of County Commissioners analysis of tourism. Ms. Westlund said the committee preparing the analysis would welcome LEC feedback.

Mr. Thurston reported that the Board was scheduled to receive the analysis report on January 23.

Mr. Tamulonis determined there was agreement to re-schedule the next LEC meeting to January 10 and to include consideration of material on tourism to be submitted to the Board of County Commissioners on its agenda. Ms. Westlund agreed to facilitate discussion of the report.

There appeared to be agreement to approve the proposed LEC Work Plan, with suggested changes.

Ms. Poling reported that a 12-year effort to establish Lane County as a center for biotechnical research was about to be successful. She said public announcement would be made in the near future that the combined work of the Lane Metro Partnership, State of Oregon, University of Oregon, and Oregon State University had resulted in Molecular Probes building a \$17 million expansion to its area facility. She said the expansion would enable increasing its research workforce by 100 persons. She said the project was made possible by economic development incentives provided by the State, Regional Investment Board, and Lane County.

Mr. Warren said the facility to be created would be the anchor for promoting additional biotech industry development. He said the laboratories, research facilities, and partnerships with local health and education programs would attract worldwide interest and investment.

Mr. Thurston said a recommendation from the Lane Economic Standing Committee to provide economic development incentives for the project would be acted upon by the Board of County Commissioners at its next meeting.

Mr. Mike Sullivan moved, seconded by Mr. Scoggins, to express LEC support for the recommendation of the Economic Standing Committee to the Board of County Commissioners to provide economic development incentives for Molecular Probes expansion. The motion was adopted unanimously, 14:0, Ms. Cherbas having left the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

(Recorded by Dan Lindstrom)

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