

Meeting Minutes
Roanoke Valley Allegheny Regional Comprehensive Economic
Development Strategy Committee

September 11, 2008
3:00 PM, Lecture Hall at Greenfield Education and Training Center
57 South Center Drive, Daleville, VA 24083

Committee Members:

Present:

Kevin Boggess, Carl Brinkley, Darlene Burcham, Ione Callender, Consuella Caudill, Rob Erdman, Richard Flora, Byron Foley, Gary Keener, Ken Lanford, David Moorman (representing Gerald Burgess), Steve Mullins, Dan O'Donnell, Courtney Penn, (representing Michael Maxey), Kevin Persinger, Tracey Shiflett, Chuck Simpson, Phil Sparks (representing Beth Doughty), John Strutner, Mark Taylor, David Trinkle, Brenda Walker, Rebecca Walter, Joyce Waugh, Terri Workman, Hunter Young.

Absent:

Don Assaid, Stephanie Brown, Stephanie Clark, Beth Doughty, Allen Dressler, Jennifer Durling, Carolyn Fidler, Jay Foster, Teresa Hammond, Vice Mayor James Houff, Hal Mabe, Joseph McNamara, David Preston, David Price, , Anne Stanley, Mark Stockwell, Doloris Vest.

Others Present:

Diane Akers, President, ComBiz Solutions
David Kleppinger, Alleghany Highlands Economic Development Corporation
Terry Hall, Manager External Affairs, Appalachian Power
Jim Griffith, Verizon
Wayne G. Strickland, Executive Director, RVARC
John Hull, Regional Economic Resources Planner, RVARC
Laura Williams, Economic Development Specialist, RVARC

Proceedings:

-Meeting called to order at 3:07

Welcome and Introductions:

Mr. John Hull welcomed the attending members of the committee and the other interested parties present. Mr. Hull briefly explained that the CEDS project was on schedule and the proceeding meeting would be focused on prioritization for the previously compiled project listing. Mr. Hull also reminded the committee that the ideal CEDS projects would be EDA grant eligible but that did not mean that other projects could not be listed.

Mr. Hull also informed the committee that there would be two Public Information and Comment meetings in the coming months. These meetings will allow the public to give feedback on the project listing and prioritization criteria.

The public meeting information flyer has been attached to these minutes.

Presentations:

Project Listing Discussion:

Ms. Diane Akers gave instructions and asked the committee to take 20 minutes to discuss in groups any missing projects, projects that should be removed, or any questions about the projects.

The complete presentation has been attached to these minutes.

-Ms. Jill Loope asked if there was a point value that EDA scores projects on.

-Mr. Hull responded that the EDA does have their own point value system in scoring grant applications.

-Mr. Terry Hall asked if the EDA had an opinion of private business being involved in CEDS projects and whether that would push the project higher or lower on a priority scale.

-Mr. Hull acknowledged in most cases private investment in a CEDS project is a positive factor and should be encouraged in projects where possible.

-Mr. Dan O'Donnell asked if the committee should focus on economic impact projects and not on quality of life projects. Adding, "Will the EDA even accept quality of life projects?"

-Mr. Hull mentioned that there are a number of projects in the CEDS listing that are not eligible for EDA investment. He noted that inclusion of such projects is appropriate as long as the committee deems those projects as useful and necessary for regional economic development.

-Mr. David Trinkle pointed out that he did not see any projects about passenger rail on the project listing and stated he believed this was an important issue to add to the CEDS project.

-Mr. Wayne Strickland responded that EDA might invest in a short line railroad in a distressed area and rail sidings or rail infrastructure to specific sites but that he did not believe there are any grants available for the development of a new passenger rail service.

-Ms. Akers directed the committee to think about if there were any other projects that were missing.

-Ms. Rebecca Walter noticed that there are not many projects under Goals 6 and 7. She asked if this was a problem for future projects being added to these Goal areas.

-Mr. Hull answered that the committee will revisit the project listing every year and add relevant projects and create new priorities.

-Mr. Trinkle pointed out that Objective 2.1 and 2.2 did not have any projects listed.

-Ms. Akers let Mr. Trinkle and the rest of the committee know that if there was a project that needed to be added that they could send their thoughts to Mr. Hull and he could send them onto the Project Listing Sub-Committee. She noted that, since the project package will be revisited every year, a relevant project may be identified in future years.

-Mr. David Kleppinger reverted back to the earlier subject of passenger rail adding that he would like to see a rail project in the CEDS listing. He also asked if it was necessary to conduct a leakage study at the Roanoke Regional Airport and suggested instead that the region offer incentives for airlines that fly into Roanoke.

-Ms. Burcham and Mr. Trinkle agreed that the Airport leakage study may not be necessary but exploring incentives and expansion of the airport would be worth while. Ms. Burcham added that she would like to see more public transportation projects in general.

-Ms. Burcham noted that there are several stormwater projects in the Roanoke Valley Regional Stormwater Management Plan that are in proximity to lands that have been identified as targets for development or would otherwise benefit regional economic development.

-Mr. Tracey Shiflett suggested that a project could be formed around the current Amtrak station and grow from there. He noted that there is ongoing interest in construction of a new Amtrak station in Clifton Forge.

-Mr. Strickland added that if passenger rail is important to the region it should be on the project listing.

ACTION ITEM: Add a passenger rail project to the project listing. *(Project Listing Sub-Committee)*

ACTION ITEM: Modify the Air Traffic Leakage study description to focus more heavily on studying potential improvements and expansion of air service. *(Project Listing Sub-Committee)*

-Mr. Shiflett asked if the committee is to focus on only regional projects that impact the entire region or if the committee should look at projects that will benefit one locality.

-Mr. Hull responded that both would be acceptable but they would be scored differently based on the prioritization metrics.

-Ms. Burcham asked the committee to think about other public transportation projects.

-Ms. Walter suggested that there be a project for a bus service from New River Valley up to the Alleghany Highlands.

ACTION ITEM: Add local public transportation projects to the project listing. (*Project Listing Sub-Committee*)

Ms. Akers noted the addition of transit projects and asked if there are there any projects the group should consider eliminating.

-The Committee discussed which projects should be eliminated from the project listing.

ACTION ITEM: Remove any projects that have already been funded off of the project listing. (*Project Listing Sub-Committee*)

Discussion of Prioritization Criteria:

-Ms. Diane Akers lead the discussion of the prioritization criteria.

-The committee discussed changing #11 (Investment and degree of economic impact of the project for the region) to incorporate another ranking/scoring threshold for projects with fewer than 50 jobs.

ACTION ITEM: Change #11 on the prioritization criteria wording assign 2 points to projects that will create and/or retain between 10 and 49 jobs. (*Project Listing Sub-Committee*)

- The committee came to a consensus that they would accept the prioritization criteria with the suggested #11 change.

Nominating committee for Chair and Vice-Chair

-Mr. Hull asked for volunteers for the nominating committee.

A Nominating Committee was formed.
(Ms. Brenda Walker, Mr. David Kleppinger, Mr. Terry Hall, and Ms. Rebecca Walter)

Future Meeting Schedule:

Committee tentatively set next meeting for November 20, 2008 and asked staff of RVARC to send a full announcement of the meeting date, location and time.

-Mr. Hull thanked the committee members for attending the meeting.

-Meeting adjourned at 5:10

Minutes submitted by Laura Williams, Economic Development Specialist.

Website: <http://www.regionalstrategy.org>