

June 4, 2009

To: LCOG Executive Committee

From: George Kloeppe

Subject: Board of Directors September Planning, Agenda Item 2

The Committee is asked to again discuss the September Board Planning Session and to provide direction to staff. The agency's management team has considered the input received thus far, and can craft a design for the Session that will make constructive use of Board members' time. But, there remain several issues for which the Committee's considered opinion and direction is needed. Examples include: The value and function of an outside facilitator, the amount of time that can be devoted on September 24 to "normal" business of the organization, the question of using sub-groups of Board members or a "committee-of-the-whole" approach, and the issue of how much "breadth of exploration" to encourage—that is, how big a canvas should be provided.

The September 24 Session will be at Willamalane Community Recreation Center. We could kick it off with food and socialization at 5:30 or 6:00 and then get down to the business at hand. There will likely be some regular Board business to conduct. For example, the Bylaws have the Nominating Committee reporting out and an election being held for Chair and Vice Chair at the September meeting. It would also be appropriate to give the Board a report on the State budget vis a vis S&DS. And, that meeting would be the normal time for a summary of the Executive Director Performance Review. None of these things would take long, but I suspect the allocation of 30 minutes or so for a business meeting would make sense.

I believe that our basic model for the Session in February was alright. The problems with it were (1) not enough time to give full exposition to the issues; and (2) lack of clarity about the outcomes—the "be it resolved that we will do such and such" part of the event never really happened.

The February model would have us sticking to the question: *What can the LCOG Board do to improve the well being of the region?* This needs be asked again against the backdrop of the current economic recession. Times are tough; unemployment is high; social service demands are growing; public sector revenue is shrinking—all familiar issues. So the question might be morphed to consider: what aspects of the regional circumstance are most amenable to constructive intervention by the LCOG Board? In February, the Board jumped on Public Safety. That might, or might not, be the issue-of-the-day in September.

It strikes me that there are a lot of regional issues that are impacted by, and made more difficult by, the recession: Joblessness (Are there things that we could do to assist the Workforce Partnership or contribute to achieving Jon Ruiz' goal of increasing the employment base and raising the average salary?); Public Works (Is there more that we can do to bring in external financing to catalyze local public works activity?); Housing (Are there steps that LCOG could take to assist HACSA, ShelterCare, St. Vincent's etc. in providing housing?); Nutrition (Are there regional steps that could be taken to work with FFLC and our own SMP to ease the strain on individuals families?); Safety and Security (Are there things that we could do to bring about improvement in this area?); Business prosperity (Are there more steps that we could take through business finance to buoy existing business?). I'm sure the list could go on.

Remember the insightful listing of strategies from February that summarized what *the Board* might be able to do:

- Communication
- Coordination
- Advocacy
- Planning
- Convener

I would suggest that we begin the Session with some sort of status report. This is consistent with Jim Torrey's February suggestion—which was reiterated at the April meeting. The Board members will be better equipped to talk about regional issues and possible LCOG contributions, if they have a fresh understanding of where we stand on several key issues. Certainly, public safety, since it got all the air time in February, should be addressed. Likewise, our situation as a region with respect to ARRA and the State Budget (not just S&DS, but the Budget overall). Maybe we could even do some local numbers (employment, income, tax revenue,

etc.), which have changed since February, to set the stage. How much time should we devote to “setting the table?”

The Session needs to be designed in such a way as to allow and encourage the Board members’ sharing of feelings and beliefs about priorities. I think that the round-robin should be conservatively managed and held by the Board as a committee-of-the-whole. On the other hand, Don Hampton (perhaps others) was giving some points to “small group discussions.” Given the (still fairly) short time available, I don’t really see folks migrating from one topic group to another, but utilizing sub-groups is certainly possible. However it is done, we need to give an opportunity for the conclusions to be shared. And this time, after the sharing, I would like to have the Board come to a consensus about what can/should be done—either by the organization or by the Board members themselves. Without a conclusion and direction agreed upon, the event falls flat, except for the socialization (another value that has been expressed for the Session).

So, what do you think? Do we need a facilitator? Are there “regular” business items, beyond what I have listed, that need to be tucked into a short agenda? What ideas do you have for setting the stage—status report, summary of February issues, what? How about your wisdom on the best mechanism for getting Board members to think big and express themselves? What kinds of outcomes or deliverables should we highlight at the beginning of the Session as being expected at the end of their time together?

I hope that this memo helps members of the Executive Committee in your consideration of the September Board meeting.