

MINUTES

Lane Economic Committee

Lane Council of Governments – 5th Floor Large Conference Room
859 Willamette, Suite 500 – Eugene

November 17, 2008 – 11:30 A.M.

PRESENT: Rob Scoggin, Chair; DeAnn Cherbas, Chuck Forster, Mike Galvin, Phillip Hudspeth, Faye Stewart, John Tamulonis, Lynette Wikstrom, *members*; Jay Bozievich, Deb Schmidt, Kari Westlund, *ex officio members*; Lawrence Brice, Howard Schesser, Mike Sullivan, *alternate members*.

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

ABSENT: John Sullivan, Vice Chair; Pat Albright, Tim Black, Mike Blommé, Denny Braud, Ric Ingham, Ellen Teninty, Warren Weathers, *members*; Lou Christian *alternate member*.

GUESTS: Alex Cuyler, Jacque Morgan.

Chairperson Rob Scoggin called the meeting of the Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) Lane Economic Committee (LEC) to order at 11:36 a.m. He invited those who were present to introduce themselves.

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

2. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

None

3. COMMENTS FROM STAFF

Steve Dignam announced that LCOG is holding an Open House on Thursday, December 4th from 4 – 6 PM to welcome people to their new offices and invited LEC members to attend. He also said he has decided, after due consideration, that he is not wearing his cowboy hat too much and so will continue to do so at LEC meetings.

4. MINUTES

DeAnn Cherbas moved, seconded by Rob Scoggin, to accept the minutes of the October 20, 2008 meeting as presented. The motion was adopted unanimously.

5. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOLBOX

John Tamulonis distributed a packet of information describing the ongoing “Springfield Urban Growth Boundary Study”. A key component of that study, the Commercial Industrial Buildable Lands (CIBL) inventory, is currently nearing completion. Mr. Tamulonis described some of the methodology and assumptions used in the CIBL inventory and reported that it shows the City of Springfield is short somewhere between 160 – 640 acres of buildable industrial land. The CIBL inventory has been completed in about one year. Springfield is using ECO Northwest as a consultant to produce the Economic Opportunities Analysis, another required component of the study process. All steps in this process, which is mandated by the State of Oregon, must be completed by January 2010 and will result in changes to the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB).

Mike Sullivan inquired about the definition of land Springfield used in its CIBL inventory. He also reported that the City of Eugene is separately following a similar process, though they are not as far along as Springfield.

Jay Bozievich asked how Springfield treated wetlands, the flood plain, and other environmental restrictions in the CIBL inventory. Mr. Tamulonis said those lands were not considered buildable.

6. FRAMEWORK FOR A POSSIBLE 2009 “NEEDS & ISSUES” PROCESS

Mr. Dignam referred to agenda support material titled “Continuation of Economic Development Needs & Issues (N&I) Process” and asked the committee to determine whether LEC should develop a Needs & Issues list for 2009. He explained that LCOG has been coordinating such a process for Lane County since the 1970’s and submitting the list of priority economic development projects to the State of Oregon for review by federal agencies for funding. Over time, the sources of funding have changed along with the State of Oregon’s reliance on these county lists. Mr. Dignam suggested several reasons why LEC might want to continue producing such a list, even though it is no longer required to do so. a) This is not a function that overlaps with the economic development activities of other local agencies. b) No one else locally is producing such a list. c) There is the potential to coordinate with the United Front group and produce a consolidated list for lobbying in Washington, D.C. d) LEC could generate this list at little cost to the county and cities by using interns and LCOG staff. e) The regional managers group supports continued production of a N&I list. f) Having such a list would allow Lane County to respond promptly to the expected increase in local infrastructure spending under the Obama administration.

Faye Stewart said there would likely be difficulties coordinating with the United Front, because not all communities with economic development needs belong to the United Front and because the United Front will already have its priority list together by January. He said he hoped to convince United Front members to consider economic development recommendations from the Lane County Commission as county-wide recommendations, so that individual communities would not have to pay to join the United Front, in order to have their needs considered and prioritized.

In response to an inquiry from Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Dignam confirmed that the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) no longer requires that projects be on a state “Needs & Issues” list before they can receive EDA funding.

Several committee members spoke about the value of having an updated N&I list. Kari Westlund suggested there be a simplified one-page form for communities to use to submit their projects for

consideration. Mike McKenzie-Bahr urged that there be a process for evaluating projects that come up during the year after the initial N&I list has been generated. Mike Galvin mentioned that the Cascades West Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy process is likely to be changed in the upcoming session of the Oregon Legislature, so the value of a N&I list in that venue is uncertain. Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Tamulonis emphasized that access to new infrastructure spending is going to be more dependent on communities having their projects ready to go than on their placement on a prioritized N&I list. Howard Schesser said that Cottage Grove continues to produce its own N&I list each year as part of its budget process. Mr. Sullivan suggested that having a list of projects is more important than prioritizing the projects on the N&I list.

Mr. Bozievich asked what the value would be in LEC developing a N&I list whose utility is uncertain. He also expressed concern about whether communities would devote time to such a project when its value was unknown. Lynette Wikstrom and Ms. Westlund said most communities are already developing lists of potential economic development projects, because they want their needs known. Mr. Dignam mentioned that the regional managers group supported the production of a N&I list. Ms. Wikstrom, Mr. Scoggin, and Mr. Dignam said they believed it would be better to put a N&I list together now and make adjustments later when funding criteria are better defined, rather than delay commencing work on the list.

Committee members directed Mr. Dignam to develop a one- to two-page application form that communities would use to list their proposed economic development projects and distribute it electronically within the next few weeks to the LEC for review. Mr. Dignam was also asked to provide LEC members with a draft letter describing the N&I list project that would accompany the application, as well as a timeline for development of the N&I list. Mr. Dignam indicated that the timeline would likely involve sending out applications to the communities in January, requesting their return by mid-March, and compiling the N&I list in April and May.

7. 2009 LEC Membership

Chairperson Scoggin announced that the terms of current LEC members Mike Blommé, Chuck Forster, Mike Galvin, and John Tamulonis will be expiring at the end of 2008. He noted and Mr. Dignam confirmed that each of these members had expressed an interest in continuing on the committee. Mr. Scoggin also mentioned that no one had responded to a newspaper ad seeking potential new members for the committee. He asked for volunteers to serve as a Nominations Committee to formally produce a list of nominees for these four positions. Ms. Westlund, Ms. Cherbas, Mr. Sullivan, and Mr. Scoggin volunteered to be the Nominations Committee.

LEC members decided not to hold a meeting in December. The next LEC meeting will be in January 2009.

The meeting adjourned at 12:48 p.m.

(Recorded by Kurt Willcox)

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