

MINUTES

Lane Economic Committee

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

March 20, 2006 – 11:30 A.M.

PRESENT: John Tamulonis, Chair; Denny Braud, Chuck Forster, Anna Morrison, Glenda Poling, Jim Ramseyer, Hal Reed, Rob Scoggin, John Sullivan, Jenny Ulum, Lynnette Wikstrom, members; Kari Westlund, *ex officio* member; Ric Ingham, Paul Alexander, Mike Galvin, Howard Schesser, alternate members.

Steve Dignam, Collin Applegate, Fiona Gwozdz (LCOG); Peter Thurston (Lane County).

ABSENT: Tim Black, Mike Blommé, DeAnn Cherbas, Ellen Teninty, members; Jay Bozievich, Philip Hudspeth, Deb Schmidt, *ex officio* members.

GUESTS: Casey Hogan, Craig Norris, Bruce Webber.

In the absence of Mr. Tamulonis called the meeting of the Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) Lane Economic Committee (LEC) to order at 11:30 a.m. He invited those who were present to introduce themselves.

1. Public/Chair Comment

None.

2. Staff Comments

Mr. Dignam described in minute detail his contribution to the breaking of the University of Oregon pole vault record. He suggested it was an analogy to the work of the LEC, contributing to the establishment of economic development opportunities creating employment.

Mr. Tamulonis joined the meeting at 11:35 a.m.

3. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Ramseyer suggested that the minutes of the February 27 meeting be changed to record that the meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m. Mr. Tamulonis determined that there was no objection to the suggestion and the minutes were amended.

Ms. Morrison moved, seconded by Ms. Poling, to accept the minutes, as corrected. The motion was adopted unanimously, 11:0.

4. Needs and Issues

Mr. Dignam reviewed consideration given at previous LEC meetings to the Needs and Issues ranking of public infrastructure and redevelopment projects. He introduced Collin Applegate and Fiona Gwozdz, interns from the University of Oregon Department of Planning Public Policy and Management, who would be organizing and supervising the process to be created. He said submissions and reports from it would be conducted as much as possible electronically and that a Web interface was currently being designed. He said a limitation on the number of submissions from an agency would likely be established.

Members discussed the process and appeared to be in agreement about aspects of a new Needs and Issues process – the limited budget available for its development, its potential value to local government agencies seeking funding, its improvement by limiting its use as a wish list for projects of a municipality, the need for flexibility in imposing a requirement for approval by an elected body, and the importance of providing clear proposal submission guidelines.

5. Government Loan Programs

Mr. Dignam introduced Senior Vice Presidents of area banks and said he had asked them to report on the experience of their institutions in the use of federal and state loan guarantee programs.

Bruce Webber stated that Siuslaw Bank loan officers most frequently reported success using programs of the Small Business Administration (SBA) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). He said most programs, including those of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) worked well, once their unique processes were mastered.

Craig Norris said it was the experience of Umpqua Bank that the SBA 504 program was well utilized in rural areas and locations designated as “distressed.” He suggested a similar program designed for redevelopment programs would be of benefit. He said many positive comments were received regarding the assistance proffered by LCOG loan management personnel. He recommended that a public forum to introduce available programs be established.

Casey Hogan reported that Pacific Continental Bank had similar experiences with federal government guaranteed loan programs, but that state sponsored programs have recently appeared to lack needed applicant assistance. He said government guarantees could not “make a bad loan good,” but were a helpful stimulant to economic development.

Members discussed aspects of government loan guarantee programs – use in redevelopment projects and rural enterprise zone programs, the need for a programs designed for multi-family residential development, limitations on loans for redevelopment of property with environmental concerns, the importance of a business plan for applicants, and missed opportunities created by recent difficulties in using State of Oregon guarantee programs.

6. The Roles of Economic Development Planning Committees

Mr. Dignam explained that the LCOG Board of Directors had requested that a report be created regarding the interactive nature of the purpose and work of the LEC, Lane Metro Partnership and Lane County Economic Development Standing Committee. He referred to a document contain-

ing LEC answers to analysis questions prepared by a member of the Board. He said similar responses would be prepared by representatives of the other groups.

Ms. Morrison asked why, in response to a question, consolidating LEC responsibilities with those of the other groups was suggested to be unlikely. Mr. Dignam replied that requirements for consultation, contractual agreements, and approval required from five disjointed government entities suggested that elimination of the LEC would be improbable. He said he believed there was ample room for informed cooperation and improvement of efficiencies, but that each group had a unique function. Mr. Thurston and Ms. Poling reported that responses from the Lane Economic Development Standing Committee and Lane Metro Partnership would be similar.

Members discussed various aspects of the value of continuing the work of the LEC, while improving interaction with other similarly purposed groups. Mr. Tamulonis said there appeared to be agreement that the LEC provided a valuable forum for business and government partnerships.

Mr. Tamulonis announced that the next LEC meeting was scheduled for April 17, 2006.

The meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

(Recorded by Dan Lindstrom)

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