

MINUTES

Lane Economic Committee

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

March 15 – 11:30 A.M.

PRESENT: Rob Scoggin, Chair; Pat Albright, DeAnn Cherbas, Greg Rikhoff, John Sullivan, John Tamulonis, Lynette Wikstrom, *members*; Jay Bozievich, Deb Schmidt, *ex officio members*; Mike McKenzie-Bahr, Barry Miller, Jack Roberts, Howard Schesser, *alternate members*.

Steve Dignam, George Kloeppel, Milo Mecham (LCOG).

ABSENT: Bill Fleenor, Chuck Forester, Mike Blommé, Mike Galvin, Phillip Hudspeth, Jacque Morgan, Mike Sullivan, Ellen Teninty, *members*; Kari Westlund, *ex officio members*; Warren Weathers, Lawrence Brice, Ric Ingham, *alternate members*.

GUESTS: Jennifer Hood, Ralph Saulsgiver.

Chairperson Rob Scoggin called the meeting of the Lane Economic Committee (LEC) to order at 11:25 a.m. He invited those who were present to introduce themselves. He determined that a quorum was present.

Mr. Scoggin determined that there was no one present wishing to make Public Comment. He said neither he nor Committee Staff Steve Dignam had comments.

1. MINUTES

DeAnn Cherbas moved, seconded by John Tamulonis, to accept the minutes of the January 25, 2010, meeting. The motion was adopted unanimously, 9:0.

2. REGIONAL PROSPERITY SUMMIT STRATEGIES

Lane County Community and Economic Development Coordinator Mike McKenzie-Bahr reviewed creation of Economic Development Strategies by the Joint Elected Officials (JEO) as presented in Agenda support material entitled “Building Our Next Economy – A Regional Prosperity Summit.” He said they had been adapted and endorsed by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC). He explained that they were non-binding recommendations for approval by the LEC, cities, and other agencies. He said the City Councils of Eugene and Springfield had endorsed the strategies and were providing funding to implement specific strategic elements.

John Sullivan observed that creation of economic development strategies had been under discussion since 2007. He said he was supportive of those recommended, but believed they were more “political” than “tactical” and were overly open-ended – “good stuff, but had been previously considered.”

Mr. McKenzie-Bahr said it was his experience that there was “not much new” to discover about economic development and that the strategies were suggestions of what should have been done all along.

Mr. Tamulonis said he appreciated specific suggestions made by the strategies, such as the development of a Regional Prosperity Summit.

Mr. McKenzie-Bahr emphasized that Lane County would emphasize economic development in rural areas with support for specific projects.

3. LANE COUNTY PROJECT

Mr. McKenzie-Bahr referred to a document entitled “Economic Development Specialist – Scope of Work” distributed with Agenda support material. He reported that the BCC had agreed to engage an independent contractor to focus on economic development in rural cities. He said the contractor would use tactics such as project planning, grant writing, and business recruitment to “identify top economic projects” and assist in preparing “land and physical infrastructure” to “support business development and stimulate quality job creation.” He said Glenda Poling had been identified to fill the part-time position.

Members discussed implementation of the project.

4. CLIMATE OF PROSPERITY TASK FORCE

Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) Executive Director George Kloeppel reviewed a process initiated by his Board of Directors to identify issues that affect citizens in the Lane County region. He said the issues were ones on which LCOG could have an effect that were components of a prosperous community. He said they had been “boiled down” to (1) Coordination of Human Services, (2) Communications, and (3) Enhancing Economic Development.

Mr. Kloeppel described the formation of a Climate of Prosperity Taskforce responsible to identify a “handful of reasonable steps” that could be taken to enhance the prosperity of the region. He said the actions were intended to be a change from a former “defensive game” to a collaborative, forward-looking one among concerned partners.

Mr. McKenzie-Bahr said he believed the LCOG effort was well timed because other agencies were evaluating similar actions. He reported that Lane County was in the process of submitting a \$350-600,000 grant application to implement strategies that emerged from the Regional Prosperity Summit. He said a motion by the LEC to approve the strategies would be helpful in supporting the application.

Mr. Sullivan said that he hoped the LCOG plan would not be tied to other regional economic development efforts and that there would be good participation by all member agencies.

Mr. Kloeppel replied that it would not, since it would be looking for county/regional perspectives. He added that smaller, special projects could attract more limited participation.

Mr. Tamulonis said he believed that for the LCOG plan to be effective, “messages” that were conveyed about and from it should be limited, short in duration, communicate community unity, and be consistent.

Members discussed implementation of the described plan.

Mr. Dignam referred to Prosperity Summit Strategy to “Create a Business Assistance Center” and described efforts to develop such an outcome in collaboration with Lane Community College Business Development Center.

Mr. Dignam recommended that the LEC adopt the Prosperity Summit Strategies, including Attachment B, into its scope of priorities. He reviewed the strategies recommended by the JEO:

1. Support the growth and development of existing area businesses to achieve quality job creation.
2. Accelerate the development of entrepreneurial infrastructure.
3. Train, attract and maintain an competitive workforce to meet the region's current and emerging industry needs and stimulate business development.
4. Prepare for land and physical infrastructure, in a timely fashion, that is necessary to support business development and stimulate quality job creation.
5. Promote awareness and advocacy for the region's economic quality of life that continues to support and attract the investment and innovation of entrepreneurial talent and builds on our dynamic and diverse economic community.
6. Continue to support the development of our wealth generating sectors and have built a strong economic foundation for our community and have complemented our region's quality of life.

Greg Rikhoff moved, seconded by DeAnn Cherbas, to adopt the Prosperity Summit Strategies as recommended by the Joint Elected Officials, with the omission of Tactic 2 of Strategy 4.

Members discussed the Strategies – their importance in maintaining current efforts, the need to emphasize sustainability more than identified, a concern that tactics were attached to the Strategies were not fully developed, and the importance of giving the Strategies unified support to get everyone “on the same page.”

The motion was adopted unanimously, 9:0.

University of Oregon Community Relations Director Greg Rikhoff distributed an announcement regarding an Reverse Vendor Trade Fair to be held May 19th and described its value to those interested in learning how to do business with the University.

Mr. Dignam noted that the next meeting would be held on April 19, 2010.

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

(Recorded by Dan Lindstrom)