

MINUTES

Lane Economic Committee

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

March 15, 2004 – 11:30 A.M.

PRESENT: John Tamulonis, Chair; Tim Black, DeAnn Cherbas, Darrell Hames (for Chuck Forster), Anna Morrison, Hal Reed, Rob Scoggin, John Sullivan, Mike Sullivan, Mitch Wilkinson, Lynnette Wikstrom, members; Jay Bozievich, Philip Hudspeth, Deb Schmidt, Kari Westlund, *ex officio* members; Randy Derrick, Mike Galvin, Joshua Greene, Howard Schesser, alternate members.

Steve Dignam, Tom Schwetz (LCOG); Peter Thurston (Lane County); Bob Warren (Oregon Economic & Community Development Department).

ABSENT: Mike Blommé, Chuck Forster, Glenda Poling, Jim Ramseyer, Charles Spencer,

GUEST: Jim Lindley.

The meeting of the Lane Economic Committee (LEC) was called to order at 11:35 a.m. Those who were present were asked to introduce themselves.

1. Public Comment

Mr. Black circulated copies of books prepared for area officials' "United Front" lobbying trip to Washington D.C. He said an unexpected outcome of the trip was to add the possibility of federal funding for a study of improvements to the Glenwood Interstate 5 (I-5) off-ramp.

2. Comments of the Chair and Staff

Mr. Tamulonis said he had no comments to make as chairperson. Mr. Dignam said he would include comments about the Revolving Loan Fund in a later agenda item.

3. Minutes Approval

Ms. Morrison and Ms. Westlund requested that corrections be made to the February 23 meeting minutes, as follows:

- Mike Sullivan be identified as being present only once.
- Tom Schwetz be shown present and as an employee of LCOG, not Lane County.
- Change Sentence 3 in Paragraph 2 on Page 2, as follows:

She noted that the announced closing of the Clarion Hotel would result in an annual loss of ~~8,000 beds~~ **88,000 room nights** being available.

Mr. Tamulonis determined there was no objection to the requests and the minutes were amended.

Mr. Warren moved, seconded by Mr. John Sullivan, to accept the minutes of the February 23, 2004, meeting, as amended. The motion was adopted unanimously, 11:0.

4. Transportation Project Prioritization

LCOG Transportation Specialist Tom Schwetz reported that the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC) had held a public hearing on updating the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and received almost exclusively negative comments on giving prioritization to the West Eugene Parkway. He said the Committee had closed its record of testimony, but had been unable to reach adequate consensus to make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) regarding the STIP. He said it would still be possible for the LEC to submit a recommendation directly to the Board regarding it.

Mr. Tamulonis said LEC had formed a committee to draft comments on STIP projects from the standpoint of economic development. He referred to a draft memorandum from the committee distributed with the agenda of the meeting and noted that it identified five significant proposed transportation projects – improvements to the Beltline/I-5 Interchange, improvements to other sections of Beltline, the West Eugene Parkway, I-5 bridge repairs, and improvements to I-5 Interchanges at Coburg, Glenwood, and the Lane Community College area.

Mr. Scoggin and Mr. Bozievich said the letter reflected agreements reached by members of the committee. Ms. Morrison recommended that comments in the letter be verbally presented by a representative of the LEC. She said the BCC made the final decision about the STIP.

Ms. Westlund asked if the LEC could address the BCC without approval from the LCOG Board of Directors. Mr. Dignam reported that he had determined from LCOG Executive Director George Kloepfel that since the comments were not advocacy as defined by the LCOG Board, it would be acceptable for them to be sent directly to the Commissioners.

Mr. Schwetz said he believed it would be possible for the LEC to report its conclusions in a Public Comment period at any BCC meeting that did not include approval of the STIP on its agenda.

Mr. Tamulonis recommended that a positive comment be added to the memorandum regarding STIP projects on highways east of Springfield. Mr. Hudspeth said there was a potential for early release of federal funds to improve State Highway 58 at its connection to the Oakridge Industrial Park and that having it prioritized in the STIP would be positive.

Ms. Morrison moved, seconded by Mr. Mike Sullivan, (1) to approve the draft memorandum regarding prioritization of Statewide Transportation Improvement Program projects in Lane County, with the addition of appropriate comments regarding projects east of Springfield, especially improvements in Oakridge, and (2) to present the comments to the Board of County Commissioners. The motion was adopted unanimously, 11:0.

5. Sustainable Building Research

It was reported that the presenter had been unable to attend the meeting.

6. Industry Clusters

Mr. Warren reviewed background regarding the decision of the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department (OECDD) to deal with economic development and job creation by grouping businesses by clusters with similar interests, needs, customers, and impediments. He reviewed identified Oregon cluster sectors – high tech, forest products, metals, creative services, biomedical, and nursery interests. He said OECDD Regional Development Officers such as himself had been given the new title of Business Development Officers and assigned responsibilities for the development of statewide clusters.

Mr. Tamulonis said the University of Oregon Business Incubator project had identified additional Oregon industry clusters that might be considered by OECDD as it expanded its concerns.

In response to a question from Ms. Morrison, Mr. Warren explained that consideration was being given to expanding the Harrisburg Enterprise Zone to include Junction City and Coburg. He added, in response to questions from Mr. Mike Sullivan, that other multi-city zones might be considered for development in Oregon and that there were currently openings for designation of zones in two additional locations. He explained that the deadline for application was May 5.

Mr. Mike Sullivan said a task force to study business development established by the Eugene was set to report in August. Mr. Warren explained that special applications could be considered past the submission deadline.

7. Regional Investment Board

Mr. Reed reviewed recent decisions made by the Benton/Lane/Lincoln/Linn Counties Regional Investment Board (BL³ RIB). He reported that funds had been allocated for five projects – Call Center in Albany (\$150,000), LCOG Revolving Loan Fund (\$100,000), Jobs Now fire safety equipment manufacturing firm (\$100,000), a proposed new luxury motor home manufacturing business (\$150,000), and Benton County Micro-Business Loan Fund (\$100,000). He said allocation of additional available resources (c. \$200,000) would be determined as soon as possible, beginning at the March BL³ RIB meeting.

In response to a question from Mr. John Sullivan, Mr. Reed explained that the opportunity for a previously reported aircraft maintenance facility at the Eugene Airport was no longer viable.

8. Lane Community College Business Development Center

Lane Community College (LCC) Business Development Center and Contract Training Director Jim Lindly explained recent reorganization of Community Education at the college. He reviewed the components of the Center and distributed copies of brochures entitled “Business Development Center & Contract Training” and “Project Management Series – Spring 2004.”

Ms. Morrison requested a list of businesses that had been assisted by the Development Center.

9. 2004 Needs and Issues Process Update

Mr. Dignam said the LCOG-administered Small Business Loan Program had created or saved 265 Lane County jobs in 2003. He reviewed a previously announced opportunity to add a \$500,000 Economic Development Agency grant to be used in the Revolving Loan Fund for mid-range business loans. He said operational costs of the loans were covered by interest and fees and that there was a very low loan loss rate. He explained that LCOG and the RIB were each contributing \$100,000 toward the required two-thirds local cash match.

Mr. Dignam reported that he was attempting to secure approval for an additional \$100,000 grant through the Lane County video lottery allocation process but that he was encountering potentially damaging time constraints from procedural requirements.

Members discussed the high value of the program, the importance of securing commitments for as much as possible of the required local cash match, and actions to enhance the chances of receiving the County grant.

Mr. Tamulonis determined there was consensus for the LEC Chairperson and staff to contact the BCC and seek early approval of the grant application.

Mr. Tamulonis announced that the next LEC meeting was scheduled for April 19.

The meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

(Recorded by Dan Lindstrom)