

MINUTES

Lane Economic Committee

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

June 20, 2011 – 11:30 A.M.

PRESENT: Rob Scoggin, Chair; Pat Albright, Jacque Betz, DeAnn Cherbas, Chuck Forster, Don Hampton, Ric Ingham, Ben Sappington, Faye Stewart, John Sullivan, John Tamulonis, Kari Westlund, Ron Woods, members; Deb Schmidt, *ex officio* members; Barry Miller, Robin Scott, Howard Schesser, Glenda Poling, alternate members

Steve Dignam (LCOG)

ABSENT: Mike Galvin, Greg Rikhoff, Mike Sullivan, Ellen Teninty

GUESTS: Chuck Spies, Vicki Walker, Chris Wiechert

Chairperson Rob Scoggin called the meeting of the Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) Lane Economic Committee (LEC) to order at 11:00 a.m. He invited those who were present to introduce themselves. He determined that there was no one present wishing to offer public testimony and reported that neither he nor Committee Staff Steve Dignam had pertinent comments.

1. Approval of Minutes

John Tamulonis moved, seconded by Ron Sappington, to accept the minutes of the May 23, 2011, meeting. The motion was adopted unanimously, 12:0.

2. Economic Development Projects in the City of Lowell

City Administrator Chuck Spies reported on issues related to economic development in the City of Lowell. He noted that internal municipal revenue was reduced over previous years, but that State and Federal revenue support, influenced by recent political climates, was stable. He said City officials were currently revising Planning and Land Use policies, especially related to revitalization and urban renewal. He said no progress had been made in attracting business to City urban renewal properties and that vacant U.S. Forest Service properties currently being processed were seen as choice location for health care service providers.

Mr. Spies identified recent economic development successes in Lowell as using U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development funds to upgrade municipal wastewater services and the Lowell Recreation Site. He reported that St. Vincent de Paul would soon begin work on a twenty lot affordable housing project in Lowell, that concerns about Dexter Lane algae bloom affecting Lowell drinking water were being addressed, and that wetland and riparian studies were being conducted that could positively affect future development.

Mr. Spies said future development opportunities included providing residential connections of fiber optic communications lines to be provided to government and school entities, and consideration of the expansion of a rowing events course to enable local sponsorship of Olympic Trials and other important competitive events.

Members discussed the report of economic development in Lowell.

3. USDA Rural Development

USDA Rural Development in Oregon Director Vicki Walker reviewed initiatives and services of the federal program she administered. She said recent harsh economic conditions had had a negative impact on rural Oregon. She distributed copies of publications entitled “Financing Your Business in Oregon,” “USDA Rural Development Annual Report/Oregon Fiscal Year 2010,” and “The Navigator – Rural Oregon’s Guide to Saving Money by Saving Resources.”

Ms. Walker made a presentation entitled “Committed to the Future of Rural Communities in Oregon.” She said economic development in rural Oregon depended on capital investment, new markets, innovation, education, and infrastructure. She emphasized that key strategies for it would be public/private partnerships, leveraged investments, and regional initiatives.

Ms. Walker described the USDA Rural Housing Service, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, and Rural Utility Service as federal agencies serving the needs of rural areas. She reviewed their housing programs, business programs, and other types of available loan and grant programs. She gave examples of business loan guarantees, opportunity grants, enterprise grants, and community services programs. She said considerations for community project approval were community buy-in, technical feasibility, regulatory requirements, ability to leverage funding, and financial considerations.

Members discussed the presentation.

Chairperson Scoggin reported that the next LEC meeting would be rescheduled to September 19 to avoid conflicting with a meeting of the Oregon Economic & Community Development Department.

The meeting adjourned at 12:50.m.

(Recorded by Dan Lindstrom)