

MINUTES

Lane Economic Committee
Lane Council of Governments
859 Willamette Street, 5th Floor
Eugene, Oregon

September 20, 2010 – 11:30 A.M.

PRESENT: Rob Scoggin, Chair; Pat Albright, Philip Hudspeth, Jacque Morgan, John Sullivan, Lynnette Wikstrom, members, Ron Woods; Jay Bozievich, Deb Schmidt, *ex officio* members; Barry Miller, Warren Weathers, alternate members.

Steve Dignam, Milo Mecham (LCOG); Mike McKenzie-Bahr, Glenda Polling (Lane County); Bob Warren (Oregon Economic & Community Development Department).

ABSENT: Mike Blommé, DeAnn Cherbas, Bill Fleenor, Chuck Forster, Mike Galvin, Greg Rikhoff, Robin Scott, Mike Sullivan, John Tamulonis, Ellen Teninty, members; Kari Westlund, *ex officio* members; Chuck Forester, Jack Roberts, Howard Schesser), alternate members.

GUESTS: Mark Freeman.

Mr. Scoggin called the meeting of the Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) Lane Economic Committee (LEC) to order at 11:35 a.m. He invited those who were present to introduce themselves. He determined that there was no one present wishing to make a public comment.

1. Comments from the Chair and Staff

Mr. Scoggin said he had no comments.

Mr. Dignam reported on his experience at the Reno Air Show and described positive qualities of an applicant for a small business loan.

2. Minutes

Mr. Scoggin determined that there was agreement to postpone action on the acceptance of the minutes from the June 21 meeting until the draft was distributed for the October 18 meeting.

3. BioEnergy Park

Mr. Mckenzie-Bahr reported that there had only been a few applicants for Lane County small business Video Lottery grants. He said that a meeting was scheduled later in the day to provide application assistance to potential applicants.

Mr. McKenzie-Bahr reviewed the establishment by the Oregon legislature of funding for the development of experimental bioenergy generation projects. He said the program was built on a grass straw burning model initiated in Lane County. He explained that feasibility studies had been completed by Rexius/City of Eugene, Lane Forest Products, Metropolitan Wastewater Management Committee, and a neighborhood/regional program by the City of Eugene. He described programs in Canby, Oregon, California, New Jersey, and New York.

Members discussed the report – the availability of additional federal Stimulus funding for such projects, examples of fuels used, and technical questions such as overcoming a “silica problem” and being able to incorporate excess energy in power distributions.

4. Rural Community Economic Development

Ms. Morgan reported on economic development efforts in Florence. She described preservation and rehabilitation programs to improve the aesthetics of businesses in an Urban Renewal District. She also described activities in the Florence Enterprise Zone – revitalization of the Boardwalk, redesign of a former middle school into a motel/hotel/resort, conversion of a former ball field, and a small business owners education program provided by Lane Community College.

Port of Siuslaw Manager Mark Freeman described and illustrated development efforts by the Port – repair of the wharf, relocation of Port offices, rehabilitation and renewal of the services of an ice production facility, refurbishment of boat docking facilities, using a 40-acre open industrially zoned site, and river dredging.

Members discussed the presentations.

5. Broadband Improvement

Mr. Mecham described “Connecting Oregon,” a project funded by an \$8.3 million federal Stimulus grant received by Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) to improve internet service in Lane, Douglas, and Klamath Counties. He said the program was built on advancements initiated by the Regional Fiber Consortium and would provide connections between health, public safety, education, and government facilities in the region. He said an Interconnection Site (“Piercing Point”) would be created in the LCOG building in Eugene, making possible vastly improved communication and make possible fiber optic residential services by private companies. He said environmental impact studies were being finalized, construction phases could begin in January, and would likely be completed in less than a year.

Members discussed the report.

6. Climate of Prosperity Task Force Initiative

Mr. Dignam reviewed progress made in the intention of the LCOG Board of Directors to increase its participation in and awareness of the efforts of the LEC by providing for representation in its membership by Directors representing Eugene, Springfield, and a rural community. He said bylaw amendments had been prepared and that the change would likely take place in January 2011.

7. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Mr. Dignam reviewed action by the LEC at its June meeting to approve the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CENS) for the Cascades West Economic Development Region. He said a public comment period had been completed, and that approval by the LCOG and Cascades West Council of Governments boards of directors would be considered soon, after which the final review and acceptance by the Cascades West Economic Development District (CWEDD) would take place. He said two LEC representatives to a CWEDD conference call meeting to be held on October 5 were needed to carry the LEC position. Mr. Mckenzie-Bahr and Ms. Morgan were selected to serve.

8. Other

Mr. Warren reported that the impacts of State budget reductions were a major concern of the Oregon Economic & Community Development Department. He explained that 6-7 positions in a 60 person department would likely be cut in the 20 percent mandated decrease.

Mr. Mckenzie-Bahr reported that a \$100,000 video lottery small business development loan had recently been provided by Lane County to Ninkasi Brewing Company in Eugene. Ms. Polling added that another such loan had recently been made to a grain miller. Mr. Hudspeth observed that they were examples of local/federal cooperation.

Mr. Scoggin stated that the next meeting was scheduled for October 18, 2010.

The meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

(Recorded by Dan Lindstrom)