

MINUTES

Lane Economic Committee

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

September 19, 2005 – 11:30 A.M.

PRESENT: John Tamulonis, Chair; Tim Black, Mike Blommé, DeAnn Cherbas, Chuck Forster, Anna Morrison, Glenda Poling, Rob Scoggin, John Sullivan, Ellen Teninty, Lynnette Wikstrom, members; Howard Schesser, alternate member.

Milo Mecham (LCOG); Peter Thurston (Lane County); Mim Swartz (Oregon Economic & Community Development Department).

ABSENT: Jim Ramseyer, Hal Reed, Mike Sullivan, Mitch Wilkinson, members; Jay Bozievich, Philip Hudspeth, Deb Schmidt, Kari Westlund, *ex officio* members.

Mr. Tamulonis (believe it or not!) 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.

Mr. Tamulonis determined there was no member of the public present wishing to make a comment, but noted that Mr. Sullivan had been featured in a recent article in the Business Section of *The Register Guard*.

Mr. Mecham explained that he was only a humble substitute for Mr. Dignam and could not match his wit or panache in making staff reports. He said a representative of the Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments had learned of the LEC consideration of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy document and had asked that its draft nature be emphasized.

1. Minutes Review

Mr. Sullivan requested that Paragraph 15 on Page 3 of the minutes of the September 6 meeting be changed, as follows:

Mr. Black moved, seconded by Ms. Teninty, to nominate John Sullivan and ~~Mike Sullivan~~ **John Tamulonis** for appointment to the Cascades West Economic Development District Board. The motion was adopted unanimously, 10:0.

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

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

2. Letter to Economic Development Administration

Mr. Mecham referred to agenda support material about proposed policy and programmatic rule changes for Economic Development Districts by the federal Economic Development Administration regarding. He explained that the changes would reduce participation by representatives of local government in the Districts and increase match rate requirements for planning grants and economic adjustment assistance. He said the LEC was being asked to recommend that the LCOG Board of Directors authorize sending a letter similar to the draft sample given.

Mr. Tamulonis said the Cascades West Economic Development District usually had a representative of the private sector serve as Chair and that the current matching rate for grants was 25 percent, paid from LCOG member fees. He explained that higher rates would require that applicants supply matching funds.

In response to a question from Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Mecham speculated that a motivation for the rule changes could be that they would result in less economic development resources being expended. He said it was unlikely that local governments would continue to support the program, if they had a reduced role in determining how the funds were spent.

Mr. Forster moved, seconded by Ms. Teninty, to recommend that the LCOG Board of Directors express concern regarding proposed changes to policy and programmatic rules for Economic Development Districts, using the proposed draft letter to the Economic Development Administration. The motion was adopted unanimously, 11:0.

3. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Mr. Mecham referred to a document regarding Economic Development Strategies considered at the September 6 LEC meeting and a revised version of the same information distributed for the current meeting. He said the revision was presented using a recommended change in format and contained additional suggestions for actions to support strategies discussed at the earlier meeting. He noted that three additional strategies were also included and that the strategies were not numbered, to avoid an implication of their being prioritized.

Participants commented on the revised document, as follows:

- A difference between “bio sciences” and “life science” identified as industry clusters is unlikely. They should be combined. (*Forester*)
- The difference between “identified” and “potential” industry clusters is unimportant and should be removed. (*Mecham*)
- Wood products continues to be a viable industry cluster in Lane County (*Poling*)
- Recycling (“Green Technology”) should be identified as an industry cluster in Lane County (*Scoggins*)
- Specialty Agriculture is an emerging industry cluster in Lane County (*Sullivan*)
- Brackets on actions in the new strategy regarding existing regional economic activities are confusing should be removed (*Mecham*)
- Agriculture should be added to action focus examples in the new strategy regarding existing regional economic activities (*Sullivan*)

- Health Care is an industry cluster in Lane County (*Tamulonis*)
- Software Development activity has waned, but could be included with a technology as an industry cluster (*Poling/Tamulonis*)
- An Economic Strategies document is useful in grant procurement and as a regional promotion tool (*Mecham*)
- Renewable energy technology is increasingly an area industry sector (*Poling*)
- There is an increasing cluster of “back office”/service sector/call centers businesses in the area (*Tamulonis*)
- There might be a tactical advantage to identify strategy actions in line with Regional Investment Board priorities (*Mecham*)
- Addressing the need for large parcels of “shovel-ready” property in connection with the strategy of addressing major challenges would be helpful (*Tamulonis*)
- It is important to develop support for region-wide strategies, in the face of tendencies to emphasize small, local projects (*Morrison*)
- Targeting economic development projects would be enhanced if the Oregon Economic & Community Development Department provided feedback on previous Needs and Issues processes, as requested (*Sullivan*)
- The Lane County request for feedback has been previously noted. Improvements to the next Needs and Issues process include increasing the number of project categories and allowing local jurisdictions to prioritize submissions (*Swartz*)
- It is important that local prioritizations not include “dead issues” (*Sullivan*)
- The action to “provide review and comment to Lane County” in the strategy regarding targeting critical economic development projects should be made more specific to show the evaluation is given to the Board of County Commissioners (*Mecham*)
- The strategy regarding the coordination of infrastructure development projects would be given added accountability by noting it is to be “between County, City, and State” (*Sullivan*)
- There does not appear to be support for developing a priority order to the strategies and they should remain unnumbered (*Mecham*)

Mr. Scoggin moved, seconded by Ms. Poling, to recommend that the 2005-2006 Economic Development Strategies, as amended and revised, be adopted by the LCOG Board of Directors.

Mr. Mecham said that, on adoption, the strategies would be “blended” into the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, which the LEC will consider at its October 17 meeting. He said it would be an opportunity to make additional changes to the strategies.

The motion was adopted unanimously, 11:0.

The meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

(Recorded by Dan Lindstrom)