

MINUTES

Lane Economic Committee

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

October 16, 2006 – 11:30 A.M.

PRESENT: John Tamulonis, Chair; Tim Black, DeAnn Cherbas, Anna Morrison, Glenda Poling, Rob Scoggin, John Sullivan, Ellen Teninty, Jenny Ulum, members; Jay Bozievich, Deb Schmidt, Kari Westlund, *ex officio* members.

Steve Dignam (LCOG).

ABSENT: Mike Blommé, Denny Braud, Chuck Forster, Jim Ramseyer, Hal Reed, Lynnette Wikstrom, members; Philip Hudspeth, *ex officio* member.

GUESTS: Bob Doppelt, Heather Edwards, Mike McKenzie-Bahr, Milo Mecham, Kristin Strommen,

Mr. Tamulonis 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 were no requests to change the agenda or to make public comments. He determined that both he and Mr. Dignam had only inconsequential comments.

1. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Morrison requested that one of the repeated "thats" in Sentence 1 of Paragraph 6 on Page 2 of the Minutes of the August 21 meeting be eliminated. Mr. Tamulonis determined that there were no objections to that request and the minutes were amended.

Ms. Morrison moved, seconded by Ms. Poling, to accept the minutes, as amended. The motion was adopted unanimously, 9:0.

2. Lane Community College Economic Impact Study

Mr. Bozievich distributed copies of the Executive Summary of a document entitled "The Economic Contribution of Lane Community College" (LCC) dated June 22, 2006. He said the entire study and backup data were available from the LCC website.

Mr. Bozievich stated that the study had been the second conducted for LCC and that he had carefully evaluated its data and conclusions and found them to be valid and provide an accurate picture of its economic impact in Lane County. He pointed out that the study showed that students

received a return of 17 percent on their investments and taxpayers received a return of 15 percent. He said the College generated \$825 million of economic activity in the community, 10 percent of the entire Lane County economy. He said he believed it showed LCC to be a valuable community asset, worthy of support for the local option instructional levy submitted to voters for the November 2006 election. He distributed copies of a document entitled “The Facts About Funding for Lane Community College – Measure 20-120.”

Members discussed the presentation – the LCC use of secondary state education funds, and a continuing need for LCC budget cuts, even with the passage of the ballot measure.

3. City of Eugene Sustainable Business Initiative

Mr. Doppelt stated that he represented Resource Innovations at the University of Oregon, staff for the City of Eugene Sustainable Business Initiative Task Force. He referred to the Report and Recommendations prepared by the Task Force for the Eugene City Council and Community provided to members with the agenda of the meeting.

Mr. Doppelt reviewed the membership, work process, and recommendations of the Task Force:

Recommendations to the Eugene City Government

- . . . commit to supporting businesses that use sustainable practices . . .
- Establish an Office of Sustainability . . .
- Establish a Sustainability Board . . .
- Adopt the explicit goal of becoming carbon neutral . . . by 2020 . . .
- Purchase and use sustainable practices, products and technologies.
- Provide incentives and recognition for businesses using sustainable practices . . .

Recommendations to the private sector and nonprofits:

- Help all interested local businesses apply or expand sustainability measures.
- Commit to expanding sustainable business clusters.
- Recruit new businesses that can fill niches . . .
- Implement campaigns to educate the public and grow the local market for sustainable products and services . . .
- Improve access to loans, grants, and other forms of business financing . . .

Recommendations for other local governments and educational institutions:

- Support the local consortium on sustainability . . .
- . . . provide sustainability education, training, and technical assistance . . .
- . . . adopt a goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2020 . . .
- . . . adopt a goal of achieving zero waste to landfills . . . by 2020 . . .

Members discussed the presentation:

- The recommendations are a continuation of long-term efforts of Lane Metro Partnership. It will be important to include a “friendly auditing” of existing businesses. (*Poling*)
- The way non-environmental issues (social equity and economy) are addressed is most interesting. (*Ulum*)

- The use of the “triple bottom line” brings in the politically divisive living wage agenda. Why is there no recommendation for Eugene to support the timber industry? (*Bozievich*)
- The recommendations seem to start with high ideals and end with a political agenda. (*Sullivan*)
- It is positive that the City of Eugene wants to encourage some business development. The recommendations are positive seen as one element of economic development. (*Dignam*)
- It will be interesting to learn what business development results from the recommendations in five years. (*Morrison*)
- Programs based on policy developed from the recommendations will be most important. It will be important not to use such policies as a way for government to manipulate business. (*Poling*)

4. Economic Development Planning Coordination

Mr. Dignam referred to a September 12 letter to the LCOG Board of Directors Executive Committee containing findings and recommendations of a committee formed to make a report on the purpose and effectiveness of Lane Metro Partnership, Lane Economic Committee, and Economic Development Standing Committee of the Board of County Commissioners. He said the Board of Directors had requested that LEC review and provide feedback regarding it.

Mr. Tamulonis said he found it difficult to understand the intended outcome of the recommendations of the committee.

Ms. Morrison said that she and the other two members of the committee had found that there was duplication of membership representatives, that LEC work was not “results oriented,” and that the Metro Partnership was unique because of its need to maintain confidentiality. She said it recommended that LEC become an advisory committee to the Economic Development Standing Committee and meet quarterly, that the LCOG Board report to the Standing Committee, and that current LCOG funding for LEC be used to support the reconstituted Committee.

Ms. Poling suggested that the disparate membership of the two groups would make merger difficult. Ms. Morrison said such issues could be solved by changing LEC bylaws.

Ms. Poling said because Metro Partnership approached the Standing Committee for funding from Video Lottery resources and because its members often required pledges of confidentiality regarding planned business activities, it might be impossible to increase the integration of its work with the Standing Committee.

Ms. Morrison said the LEC did not have funding resources to give purpose to its Needs and Issues prioritization process. She said cities could contract with LCOG to provide guidance in their applications for project funding. She said the LCOG loan program was important.

Ms. Morrison said the questions used by the committee in developing its recommendations had been prepared by one of its members and that evaluation of the responses had delayed its report.

Mr. Dignam said he believed partnership among Lane County economic development organizations was important and that a unique benefit of LEC was its independence. He said the lack of LCOG employee membership on LEC differentiated it from the Standing Committee and gave it

a comparatively more objective status. He said the wide diversity of area and interest representation among LEC members was also a positive value.

Mr. Dignam said he agreed with the committee recommendation that LEC should be better utilized because of the high caliber of its members. He suggested that LEC could serve as an advisory body to both the LCOG Board of Directors and the Board of County Commissioners through its Economic Development Standing Committee. He said he was working with LCOG Staff Milo Mecham to develop ways to enhance the use of the Needs and Issues Prioritization.

Mr. Tamulonis said he believed private sector involvement in LEC was important and suggested that the Standing Committee could benefit from similar citizen input. He said the unique perspective of LEC also included giving voice to representatives from non-metro area cities.

Mr. Tamulonis said LEC had participated in evaluating Video Lottery grant proposals in the past and could easily do so again. He said requests to provide input to other state and federal funding agencies had also proven valuable.

Mr. Sullivan said his five-year experience as a LEC member led him to believe that its important functions of providing oversight to the LCOG Business Loan Program and of enriching participants were overlooked in the report of the committee. He said he would like to expand the value of LEC to policy makers and funding agencies.

Mr. Black said he was uncomfortable with the possibility that the recommendations of the committee could be adopted without a full consideration of alternatives. He suggested that staff of the three groups involved be asked to discuss and evaluate the report.

Mr. Dignam said he believed it was helpful to have the discussion engendered by the report of the committee and agreed that it would be important that no action be taken without a full consideration of its ramifications.

Mr. Tamulonis suggested that LEC continue discussion of the topic at its next meeting.

Ms. Morrison said she hoped that LEC would develop a response to the report of the committee by the time of the next scheduled LCOG Board meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

(Recorded by Dan Lindstrom)