

**MERAMEC REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE/DEVELOPER'S LUNCHEON
TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 2017
MEETING MINUTES**

Members Present: Dr. Sean Siebert, Cyndra Lorey, Greg Stratman, Kelly Miller, Krista Snyder, Lyle Thomas, Marcus Maggard, John Petersen and Ray Walden.

Members Absent: Bob Baldwin, Brenda Story, Bruce Sassmann, Butch Tucker, Carol Carson, Cheri Tune, Chuck Garner, Dave Dudenhoeffer, Donald Claycomb, Duane Doyle, Earl Brown, Eli McDonald, Jan Haviland, Janet Walker, Janey Radford, Jason Shenefield, Jeff Davis, Jim Barnett, Jr., Jim White, John Casey, Keith Strassner, Kelly Long, Kevin Stadler, Kraig Bone, Lenice Basham, Linda Hollandsworth, Mark Boyer, Mark Wallace, Marla Stevenson, Michael Keen, Pat Leaders, Randy Verkamp, Richard Huse, Robert Schaffer, Rosiland Pride, Susan Long, T.R. Dudley, Tabitha Stanfast, Ted Day, Tony Floyd and Wayne Morgan

Staff Present: Bonnie Prigge, Kelly Sink-Blair and Anne Freand

- 1. Welcome and Introductions:** Chairman John Petersen opened the meeting at 12:08 p.m.
- 2. Approval of April 8, 2016 Minutes:** John Petersen noted a date typo on the minutes. Lyle Thomas made a motion to approve the amended minutes, seconded by Ray Walden, that the minutes be approved. Motion passed.
- 3. Update of the CEDS:** A complete revision of the CEDS is due to EDA on 12/31/18. Staff will review the following items as it relates to the CEDS
 - a. Purpose of CEDS
 - b. Review of Chapters & Goals/Objectives
 - c. Process for revision
 - d. Role that CEDS Advisory Committee members will play

Anne Freand, MRPC, reviewed the sections from the new CEDS guidelines including the Summary Background, SWOT Analysis, Strategic Direction/Action Plan, Evaluation Framework, and Economic Resilience. It was noted that Economic Resilience should be discussed throughout the plan and data included in the Summary should be related to and reflective of the SWOT Analysis. Over the course of the calendar, staff will ask CEDS Advisory Committee members to participate in a SWOT Analysis, and when reviews of each sector are scheduled Committee members will be called upon to speak for 5 or so minutes on the issues affecting their area of expertise.

- 4. Economic Development Activities Across the Region:** Participants will be asked to answer the following questions for their local jurisdictions/organizations:

- a. Does your jurisdiction offer any financing tools to stimulate private investment?
- b. Are you provided with sufficient information about business/industry financing options? At what level do you feel you are lacking information—federal/state/regional/local? Are the businesses/industries in your jurisdiction well-informed?
- c. What potential/new national and international markets for manufactured and/or agricultural products has your jurisdiction explored?

Bonnie Prigge, MRPC, led the discussion on economic development activities in the region and asked each member to provide some guidance on what is going on in each of their respective counties.

Crawford County: Dr. Sean Siebert noted that the County is experiencing high poverty rates. On a positive note, the County is actively working to create a culture of innovation and while difficult to measure, they are thinking and acting more entrepreneurially.

Dent County: Ray Walden and Marcus Maggard discussed that Community Foundation of the Ozarks is working with 3 communities in Dent County on economic development strategies. They are working towards redefining “How we do E.D.”. They also want to redefine what success is besides just an increase in income. Marcus Maggard notes that the Department of Tourism is working expanding tourism ads about MO in other states. He also stated that since the Highway Patrol and Water Patrol have been merged, they have had greater coordination and cooperation in their efforts.

Phelps County: Cyndra Lorey, Kelly Miller, Lyle Thomas and John Petersen gave input on issues within Phelps County. Cyndra stated there had been a positive past couple of years and appears to be an uptick in housing construction. Additional jobs in manufacturing, construction, retail, etc. have been created in the County. There has also been great coordination between agencies such as the County Commission, local government, hospital, MS&T, etc. Because of the additional businesses coming to the area, the City of Rolla has also had additional business inquiries for several new smaller businesses. One negative identified was that representatives believe the cities of Rolla and St. James are “missing the boat” on all aspects of recreational tourism and that they need to work on joint identification of infrastructure and marketing needs related to tourism. Lyle Thomas touched on recent manufacturing expansions, new restaurants and retail in St. James. He also noted that a new event space is being created and the new senior center has been approved. As a whole, workforce needs a present in every community as there is a shortage of qualified workers. Kelly Miller identified that healthcare insurance and funding remains an important issue. Healthcare groups have also started working together to address all patient needs.

Pulaski County: Greg Stratman provided input on challenges in Richland. They have difficulty in getting people to participate in planning processes and they’ve noticed an exodus of youth from the community. A not-for-profit is working on a business incubator. While they are working on a spec-building, they’ve also had commercial and industrial businesses leaving the area. The area is working to demolish blighted structures and build new housing but demand for new housing is limited. A grant has been received to reseal the airport runways. They also have sufficient utilities but are at a stage where the infrastructure needs to be updated. Thus far, they have received 3 of the 5 million dollars required for an electric upgrade. Richland has also become a refuge in Pulaski County for low-income individuals and has also seen an uptick in drug overdoses. He noted that they are working on an answer to the question “How do we change the attitude?”

Washington County: Krista Snyder provided input on the County and Potosi and noted that they are a Certified Work-Ready community. 220 out of 600+ acres has been developed with additional space proposed. They have fiber capacity and a 30,000 sq. ft. spec building available. New manufacturing is also coming to the area and they are a designated Enhanced Enterprise Zone. They have been working with SEED\$ and have an established economic development ½ cent sales tax that adds approximately \$800,000 a year. She noted they are considering the creation of a grant/forgivable loan program to help businesses develop and stay in Washington County. Details of the program have not been finalized. Last, Washington County's difficulties are mainly a high rate of poverty and unemployment, as well as limited access to major transportation networks. A possible expansion of the airport has been discussed.

Staff also asked the group to provide data and demographics that they would like to see relative to their industry. The following is a list of items identified at the meeting:

Ways to measure wealth including, but not limited to, household income, GDP per capita, etc.)

Unemployment rates

Healthcare funding per county

Average wage per industry

Energy and utility rates/fees

Unionization rates

Cost of Development (how much for permits, etc.)

Number of uninsured

Poverty and income rates

Distance to work

General population numbers and changes with answers to why the numbers may be going down or up (moving out of area, deaths/births, etc.)

Number of employees per business

Sales Tax

Visitors to State and local communities

Numbers on rural tourism (outside of major communities)

State park attendance numbers

Traffic counts

Hotel/motel taxes

4. **Next Meeting:** Staff and the Committee will complete a SWOT Analysis for the region on Tuesday, June 27, 2017 at 12:00 pm.

5. **Adjournment** Chairman John Petersen adjourned the meeting at 1:12 p.m.

Approved by the committee on _____, 2017.

John Petersen, Chairman