

**MERAMEC REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE/DEVELOPER'S LUNCHEON  
TUESDAY, JUNE 27, 2017  
MEETING MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Selina Taylor (for Rosalind Pride), Mark Boyer, Randy Becht, Linda Hollandsworth, Tabitha Stanfast, Kevin Stadler, Brenda Story, Keith Strassner, Janey Radford, Dr. Sean Siebert, Cyndra Lorey, Krista Snyder, Marcus Maggard, and Ray Walden.

**Members Absent:** Bob Baldwin, Bruce Sassmann, Butch Tucker, Carol Carson, Cheri Tune, Chuck Garner, Dave Dudenhoefter, Donald Claycomb, Duane Doyle, Earl Brown, Eli McDonald, Greg Stratman, Jan Haviland, Janet Walker, Jason Shenefield, Jeff Davis, Jim White, John Casey, Kelly Long, Kelly Miller, Kraig Bone, Lenice Basham, Lyle Thomas, Mark Wallace, Marla Stevenson, Michael Keen, Pat Leaders, Randy Verkamp, Richard Huse, Robert Schaffer, Rosiland Pride, Susan Long, T.R. Dudley, Ted Day, Tony Floyd and Wayne Morgan

**Staff Present:** Bonnie Prigge, Caitlin Jones and Anne Freand

- 1. Welcome and Introductions:** Bonnie Prigge opened the meeting at 12:08 p.m.
- 2. Review of March 28, 2017 Minutes:** Anne Freand presented the minutes to the group and Bonnie Prigge asked if there were any changes recommended. Ray Walden provided a change from 3 to 1 community in Dent County working with CFofO.
- 3. SWOT Analysis:** Staff provided notecards to each of the members in attendance and asked that they use the notecards to write down at least three items for each of the SWOT analysis. Each item listed is based on suggestions and ideas submitted by Committee members and the subsequent discussion.
  - a. **Strengths** – Bonnie Prigge asked the group, “To what does the Meramec Region owe its success over the last five years?” Advisory Committee members provided the following answers:
    - Affordability – cost of living, low taxes, affordable housing, competitive wages
    - Opportunities for housing
    - Human Capital – elected officials, progressive thinkers, strong work ethic
    - Solid Small Businesses
    - Hometown feel but availability of life’s necessities within close proximity
    - Association with MS&T
    - Quality K-12 & VoTech schools (islands of good education)
    - Education of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial mindset – collaborative spirit
    - Economic Development Sales Tax in Washington County
    - Relocation of families to our area – looking for a slower pace of life

- People & Culture – civic events, youth programs, culture of collaboration
- State Technical College
- Youth and the younger generation’s involvement (millennials)
- Finance and Resource availability
- Fort Leonard Wood
- Transportation Access for most of the region
- Geographical locations
- Increase in employees working from home – ability to telecommute
- Strategic use of industry clusters

**b. Weaknesses** – What is holding the Meramec Region back, and what issues are impacting growth in the region?

- Fort Leonard Wood – lack of diversity in economy for areas surrounding FLW
- Workforce issue – lower pay
- Overbuilding – increased cost of construction
- Poverty
- Drug Use – increase of violence associated with drug use
- Lack of access to developable land – generations holding onto land waiting for a big payout
- Broadband access and cost – no state level support or funding
- Lack of public transportation/opportunities
- Lack of access to major highways for parts of the region
- Living wage
- Close minded officials
- Youth Exodus
- Lack of Planning in local communities – lack of codes
- Small labor pool – shortage of quality workers
- Enticement of companies
- Lack of suitable industrial buildings
- Need to 4 lane Hwy 63 to Jefferson City
- Old Timers’ Syndrome – not accepting of change, conflicting generational ideas for quality of life, perception of over education
- Communications in EMS world
- Mental Health Care – medical side
- Aging infrastructure in rural communities – water, sewer, etc.
- Streamlining of certifications for equipment operators

**c. Opportunities** – What are opportunities for growth in the region and how do we capture them?

- Incentives for private sector
- Grant availability
- Need more economic development professionals
- Wealth of people in region – how to create more private investment (angel investors, etc.) to help in growing regional businesses
- Growth of tourism – focus on domestic tourism dollars

- Internet sales tax
- Programs for business owners to train them on how to invest in their people
- Push for apprenticeships and internships (similar to labor union) – incorporate into private businesses
- Technology – telecommute
- Education and on-the-job training (expand)
- Access to capital for loans less than \$5,000
- Chance for graduates to stay in region
- More focus on regional tourism
- Regional culture of innovation – branding of rural innovation
- Partnerships

d. **Threats** – What issues or forces could negatively impact future growth or success in the region?

- Transportation – lack of funding & expansion
- Poverty and drug use – lack of healthcare threatened by inability to pay and local access
- BRAC
- Talent drain – people leaving
- Younger individuals leaving
- Federal and State funding cuts
- Workforce is shrinking/Aging Workforce – loss of institutional knowledge, immigration policy
- Regulations – too many
- Declining State budget for education, infrastructure, etc.
- Declining health of people
- Lack of collaboration/too many politics
- Lack of small town leadership
- Prejudice/stereotypes/lack of diversity
- Inability to attract new companies

**4. Next Meeting:** Staff and the Committee will complete a prioritization of the items identified in the SWOT Analysis and the creation of action items on Tuesday, September 26, 2017 at 12:30 pm.

**5. Adjournment** The meeting adjourned at 1:53 p.m.