

Wasatch Front Economic Development District, Strategy Committee

Carlton Christensen, Chair
Shawn Milne, Vice Chair

LaNiece Davenport, Secretary

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, July 30, 2012, 1:00 pm
Wasatch Front Regional Council
Salt Lake City, UT 84116

Board Members Present

Carlton Christensen, Chair, Salt Lake City Council
Shawn Milne, Vice-Chair, Tooele City Council
LaNiece Davenport, Secretary, Wasatch Front Regional Council
Shelly Betz, Morgan City Council
Louenda Downs, Davis County Commissioner
Albert Wilde, Widow Maker LLC
Jan Zogmaister, Weber County Commissioner
Natalie Gochnour, Salt Lake Chamber

Strategy Committee Members Present

Susie Becker, Zion's Bank
Tom Christopoulos, Ogden City Corp
Keith Krugh, Holcim (US), Inc
Scott Parkinson, Bank of Utah
Jeff Gardner, Energy Solutions

Others Present

Andrew Gruber, Wasatch Front Regional Council
Ted Knowlton, Wasatch Front Regional Council
Logan Johnson, Wasatch Front Regional Council

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1. ACTION – Approve June 25, 2012 Meeting Minutes

Carlton Christensen, Chair

Chairman Christenson asked for a motion to approve last meetings minutes, Commissioner Downs motioned to approve and Commissioner Zogmaister seconded. The motion passed.

2. ACTION - Adopt Mission Statement

Carlton Christensen, Chair

Commissioner Downs mentioned that a goal of this District is to support existing economic development plans and to help jurisdictions in the region apply for federal funding for economic development. To address concerns from Councilmember Betz, Natalie Gochnour suggested replacing "receive" federal monies to "attract" federal monies. Vice-Chairman Milne motioned to approve this amendment to the mission statement, Commissioner Downs seconded the motion. The motion to amend and adopt the mission statement passed.

3. ACTION – Approve Terms of Service

Carlton Christensen, Chair

Commissioner Zogmaister motioned to approve the terms of service, Vice-Chairman Milne seconded. Commissioner Downs asked if there were term limits for the WFEDD Board. Mrs. Davenport read the ByLaws which do not place a term limit for Board Members. The motion to approve the Terms of Service passed.

4. Wasatch Front Economic Development District Logo

Carlton Christensen, Chair

Natalie Gochmour suggested that we explore a text based logo or a word mark, in order to keep the logo consistent with the WFRC logo. Having a logo that was similar to WFRC was discussed, but it was also pointed out that WFEDD is a separate entity and should not be considered a formal part of WFRC. WFRC staff agreed to look into additional logo options.

STRATEGY COMMITTEE

1. Welcome and Introductions

Carlton Christensen, Chair

Each member and guest introduced themselves. Ted Knowlton outlined some of the advantages of reducing the frequency of meetings for WFEDD and Strategy Committee members. The suggested meeting schedule is to meet every other month, and have a technical committee meet on the off months. Technical committee meetings could include economic development officials from cities and counties as well as any WFEDD or Strategy Committee members interested in attending. After some discussion in favor of the changes, Commissioner Zogmaister made the motion to accept the revised meeting schedule, Commissioner Downs seconded, and the motion passed.

2. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan, Problems and Opportunities

LaNiece Davenport and Logan Johnson

Mrs. Davenport outlined that a major goal of this group is to produce a CEDS and that part of EDA's requirements on a CEDS is to do a SWOT analysis or look at the regions Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.

Mr. Johnson presented draft regional weaknesses and sought input from the Committee. Natalie Gochmour identified an issue where political lines interfere with effective regional planning. Ms. Gochmour expressed her interest in including Utah County as they are an important component of our regional economy. There was discussion on the economic realities of how trade, commuting, and production ignore political lines and also discussion about the technical requirement to focus on our five counties in order to fulfill designation requirements set forth by the Economic Development Administration (EDA).

Another weakness in our region is the loss of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) graduates to other states to find employment. Much of the problem isn't due solely to low STEM employment opportunities but also a mismatch between training and job availability. It is difficult to align educational institutions with workforce needs due to the rapidly changing requirements of the STEM workforce. Albert Wilde asked how to most effectively help the economy. Should we focus on high skilled labor or low skilled labor? Tom Christopoulos and Ms. Gochmour support focus on high skilled labor because of larger affects and higher wage jobs.

Another weakness presented was the lack of resources for economic development. Chairman Christensen mentioned the Community Reinvestment Act and the incentives that it offers. Tom Christopoulos spoke about the challenges in acquiring needed resources, and how it lies in the archaic and ineffective policies. Mr. Christopoulos suggested that this group consider influencing state tax policy. Andrew Gruber pointed out that some economic development projects, like a marketing campaign to address unfounded negative perceptions of life in the state, may be something we would not receive funding from EDA for. Natalie Gochnour mentioned that those outside perceptions which may hinder economic development in the state include things like perception of our state liquor laws, the perceived homogenous population here, and struggles in our educational system. Ms. Gochnour expressed that one of the best things you can do for the economy is invest in human capital through education. Ms. Gochnour sees the biggest weakness is the education system. There is a mismatch between how education is funded. The question was raised, could WFEDD play a role in lobbying for policy change like the Salt Lake Chamber and EDCUtah? It seemed unlikely that we could get funding to pay for lobbying from EDA. However, EDA does occasionally fund economic studies which could play a role in lobbying for policy change. Commissioner Downs and Zogmaister expressed a desire that the CEDS reflect what projects we can get funded from EDA.

Economic data was another issue that was addressed. Although data is important, it may play a minor role in the effectiveness of this organization. We need to know what projects have potential to be funded in order to set the goals and objectives for this group. Councilmember Betz voiced that Morgan County faces different issues than some of the other counties. For example, they do not have a significant tax base to work with and to build off of. Vice-Chairman Milne echoed these concerns. Retail sales, although not popular in regional economic development, play an important role in the economic viability of rural areas. Mr. Milne also mentioned that we could look at other region's CEDS and the success they have had in receiving EDA funding and use that information to tailor our CEDS to have the most success.

Chairman Christensen and Commissioner Downs both expressed interest in knowing more about project types, amounts, and potential funding from EDA. Natalie Gochnour mentioned that there is a need to have a collective march of economic development efforts by state, county, local and all other economic development organizations in the state. Our efforts can be strengthened by working together.

3. Next Meeting

Carlton Christensen, Chair

Chairman Christensen reminded the Committee that the next meeting would be September 24, 2012 at 1:00 pm.

4. Other Business

Carlton Christensen, Chair

Chairman Christensen asked if there was any other business to discuss. Hearing none, Mr. Christensen adjourned the meeting.