

North Country Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee Meeting

MINUTES

March 9, 2018

Lincoln Town Hall, Lincoln NH

In attendance: Steve Knox, Chuck Henderson, Mike Clafin, Miguel Moralez, Ben Doyle, Brian Bresnahan, Jo Lacaillade, Catalina Celentano, Anne Duncan Cooley, Beno Lamontagne

NCC Staff: Michelle Moren-Grey

Meeting called to order at 10:05am by Vice Chair, Jo Lacaillade – Welcomed everyone.

Roundtable introductions were made by attendees.

Acceptance of Minutes: January 12, 2017 Minutes. Motion by Steve Knox to accept the Minutes as written, seconded by Beverly Mason. Passed unanimously.

Project Profile Reminder – Michelle Moren-Grey

All was reminded that projects that are seeking funding within the region should consider completing a project profile form and come before the CEDS committee.

Presentation of WMSI – Creation of Emerging Workforce Network Program

Michelle Moren-Grey presented the WMSI STEM Program for Bill Church. This project is outlined in the submitted project profile and is seeking CEDS Committee approval to be listed on the project priority list. This project will ultimately strength and build the connection between STEM Education Providers, School Career Counselors and current STEM businesses in the region.

Motion by Steve Knox to add the project to the project list, seconded by Anne Duncan Cooley. Passes unanimously.

Roundtable and Updates

Michelle Moren-Grey – asked that the group give suggestions regarding topics for the upcoming year although much time maybe spent on the update.

Steve Knox mentioned the increasing recognition of cooperatives and that it may be an opportunity for the region to innovatively solve some of the challenges faced. Ron Brown of Maine is a contact for a future presentation.

Jo Lacaillade – commented that having individuals or topics that can relay stories of towns reinventing themselves is of interest. Seeing how different communities have accomplished this would be of value.

There was discussion regarding the high student debt ratio and the barrier this causes.

Beno Lamontagne – there will be a series of NBRC outreach sessions in the region. Conway, Groveton, and Claremont.

Ben Doyle – USDA 46 grant loan programs the RDBG is due in April.

Commissioner Taylor Caswell, Department of Business & Economic Affairs

Commissioner Caswell updated the committee as to what is occurring at the state level between the two departments. Currently the state is moving forward with a state economic strategy currently and RFP is out with the intention that the plan be completed by 2018. It is the hope that this document will be more useful and

usable. In concerns of workforce development there are 16,000 jobs currently open in the state. Transitions in the economy across the state are more service and technology focused businesses.

Overall thoughts strength though collaboration when looking into the future. How do we build a collaborative future for the economy without limiting the view of industry, tourism, outdoor recreation etc.

There was discussion on the topic of youth and demographics that centered on how to we attract and keep the younger generation here. Comment about that it's not just the activity and "night life" that there needs to be livable wage jobs and housing available.

Commissioner Caswell briefly described the tax overall of opportunity zones and that the state is in the process of identifying these zones to hopefully be designated. These zones assist in attracting development. These zones are being identified via the federal guidelines.

The discussion moved to the topic of energy – NH is a small state and is challenged by the global market when it comes to energy influence this area.

Continuation of Roundtable and Updates

Miguel Moralez – workshop for veterans and spouses starting businesses.

Butch Burbank – Lincoln is seeing potential future activity 3 hotels in the pipeline.

Bev mason – New Director in Concord is out meeting and greeting people.

Brian B past month holding sessions on workforce development throughout district.

Catalina Celenteno – Eversource has community impact funds to assist with community non-profits reach out if there is interest.

Anne – GRDC and NCC opened offices in DRTC. There was a networking event at DRTC that had 60 people in attendance.

Mike – Friendship House is 48% completed date to move over is June.

Chuck Henderson – NBRC is authorized and there are a series of outreach sessions coming up. Some past grantees are NESM, Mt top Music Friendship House.

Adjournment: The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 12:15pm