



Central Connecticut Economic Development Alliance Coordinating Committee Meeting Minutes
 Noon; Monday; February 15th, 2010; New Britain City Hall, New Britain, CT

I. Call to order, introductions; determination of quorum (representatives from 4 different municipalities) the meeting was called to order at 12:15pm with the following members in attendance, except as noted:

A. Municipality Representatives

Berlin	Jim Mahoney - Econ. Dev	Plainville	Mark DeVoe - Ec. Dev.
Bristol	Jonathan Rosenthal - Ec. Dev.	Plymouth	Khara Dodds - Ec. Dev.
Burlington	Rich Stocker – Econ. Dev -AB	Southington	Louis Perillo - Ec. Dev. - AB
New Britain	Steven Schiller - Ec. Dev.		

Also present was Timothy Malone (CCRPA).

II. Approval of December 20th, 2010, minutes

MOTION: Jim Mahoney moved approval as presented; seconded by Jack Driscoll

III. Update on Regional Marketing – e.g. Bristol Bio-Tech Zone

Jonathan Rosenthal reported on a meeting between him, Jim Mahoney, Tim Malone, and Dave Driver at Northeast Utilities. Dave Driver mentioned numerous opportunities for the seven towns to begin marketing the region to site selection professionals and corporations. Jonathan reported that the impression from the meeting was that each town going it alone would be not productive or cost effective. Some interesting opportunities are available to participate in marketing efforts that are already being undertaken by Northeast Utilities. The region could buy into these efforts for a few thousand dollars.

Jonathan agreed to send out a short write-up on the meeting.

There was also discussion of the bio-tech zone that currently includes portions of Bristol and New Britain. Mark DeVoe mentioned that a bill has been proposed in the State Senate and Legislature to include portions of Plainville. Senator Bye reported that it has been received.

IV. CEDS

A. Update on progress

Tim Malone provided a brief update on work that has been accomplished thus far on the CEDS. Most of the data collection and analysis is complete. Work is proceeding on stakeholder outreach. Over 100 invites were sent to various stakeholder groups in the region and around the state. An email is also being sent out by the Central Connecticut Chamber of Commerce. Mike Nicastro reported that it would also be sent other chambers of commerce.

V. Initial SWOT analysis

A. Discuss findings from regional profile

Following the presentation of the regional profile, discussion moved to brainstorming region issues. Mark DeVoe asked what implications the state’s policy on EDD formation would have on the work currently being done. He expressed concerns regarding the possibility of the region being reassigned to the Metro Hartford region.

Jonathan Rosenthal reiterated the reasons that the region wants to remain as is. Of specific concern for the region is its potential connection to the New York City area through its proximity to Waterbury.

Ned Moore brought up the fact that before the region can even be considered for EDD status, it needs to have a CEDS in place. The region is currently out of compliance. He stated that “it behooves you to get a CEDS in place.” Timothy Malone added that being out of compliance also affects the region’s ability to pursue EDA funding for projects. It was agreed that it was important to continue work toward the new CEDS, regardless of uncertainty surrounding EDD status.

B. Brainstorm region issues

Mark DeVoe started by saying that he would like to see a discussion in the CEDS relating to Public Act 09-231, which allows towns that are in the same EDD to enter into an agreement to share property tax revenue from new economic development activity. New Britain and Plainville are investigating how this could be done.

Jonathan Rosenthal brought up public transportation and the potential for strengthening the region's ties to New York City, while also improving the region's quality of life. This led into a discussion of the proposed New Britain-Hartford busway. Carl Stephani reiterated CCRPA's support of mass transit projects.

Mike Nicastro brought up other transportation related issues, such as mode share and commuting patterns. It was determined that more data needs to be collected to better understand commuting patterns in the region. This issue is an important part of quality of life and could be perceived as a weak spot by site selectors.

It was also noted that other quality of life issues, such as entertainment venues, are a weak spot for the region.

David Fink's work with the Partnership for Stronger Communities was mentioned. His work has focused in part on the aging work force and supplying housing for future workers. Many agreed that the region was not supplying the kind of housing that young people are looking for. This not only affects younger generations, but also current residents who may see a decrease in the value of their homes.

Open space was brought up as an issue for the region. Jonathan Rosenthal mentioned that Bristol has been acquiring open space, but that it tended to be "left-over" land from new developments. Timothy Malone added that land is being developed at a faster rate than the population is growing, which brought up concerns about sprawl. Ned Moore added that EDA funding priorities favor "green" projects, especially those that provide "new economy" jobs. Responsible growth is also a state priority.

Open space issues lead into a discussion of agriculture in the region. Joan Nichols from the Connecticut Farm Bureau Association gave an overview of the changes affecting farms in Connecticut. She stated that farms are getting smaller and occupying smaller tracts of land. She has seen a growth in hydroponic facilities as well. She stressed that the region may not be well suited to large agricultural operations, but different kinds of smaller agricultural operations may be ideal for the area. She also stressed that while agriculture is often overlooked in the region, it is still present.

C. Formation of coordinating committee

Timothy Malone proposed that a smaller coordinating committee be formed to help advance public outreach and project solicitation efforts. Jonathan Rosenthal suggested that one representative from each town be involved and that economic development personnel made the most sense.

MOTION: Jim Mahoney moved approval of the formation of a coordinating committee with one representative from each town; seconded by Mark DeVoe

VI. Adjournment was declared at approximately 1:51pm.