



## CENTRAL CONNECTICUT REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

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### Central Connecticut Economic Development Alliance Meeting Minutes

Noon; Monday; March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011; CCRPA Offices, Suite 304; 225 North Main Street, Bristol, 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	Bill Millerick – Chamber – AB	
Bristol	Art Ward – Mayor – AB	Steven Schiller - Ec. Dev.	
	Jonathan Rosenthal (Chair) - Ec. Dev.	Plainville	Robert E. Lee – Manager
	Mike Nicastro - Chamber (com. org's.)		Mark DeVoe - Ec. Dev.
Burlington	Rich Stocker – Econ. Dev – AB	Plymouth	Khara Dodds - Ec. Dev.
	Mike Scheidel – Chamber – AB	Southington	Louis Perillo - Ec. Dev.
New Britain	Tim Stewart (V. Chair) – AB		

#### B. Non-municipal Representatives

Julie Geyer - CWP (Un/underemployed)  
Bruce Lydem (Organized Labor) – AB

Peggy Sokol - Bristol Senior Center (aged/women) –AB  
Rosita Forte-Dobson - CT Small Business Center  
(Professionals/women/minorities) – AB

Jack Driscoll (Finance)  
Janet Serra - NW CT CVB (tourism/women) – AB  
John O'Toole - Northeast Utilities (utilities) – AB  
John Tricarico - CCRPA Paratransit (Disabilities) – AB  
Lynn Abrahamson - Bristol/Burlington Public Health  
District (Health) – AB

Tom Lorenzetti - CCSU ITBD – AB  
Victor Mitchell - Tunxis CC – AB  
Agricultural – Vacant  
CERC – N.A.

Also present were Donna Osuch (United Way West Central Connecticut), Brian Jud (United Way West Central Connecticut), Kristin Thomas (CCRPA), Francis Pickering (CCRPA), Timothy Malone (CCRPA)

- II. Approval of February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010, minutes

**MOTION:** Jim Mahoney moved approval as presented; seconded by Mark DeVoe

- III. CEDS

#### A. Discuss results of March 8<sup>th</sup> public meeting

Tim Malone reported on the first regional public meeting which was held on March 8<sup>th</sup> in CCRPA's offices. He reported that 15 people attended the meeting, representing many of the towns and a variety of different sectors. At the meeting the group was introduced to the CEDS process and given a chance to review that demographic and economic data that had already been collected. Attendees were also asked to introduce themselves and tell the group why they were interested in the CEDS.

Following the presentation, the group at the public meeting broke up into two smaller groups. They each discussed the strengths of the region. Following this, they discussed the weaknesses that they see in the region. They then reconvened to share what they came up with. After one hour, when the meeting was scheduled to end, a group of attendees requested that more time be spent brainstorming ideas. CCRPA staff gladly consented and the group continued discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the region for another half hour.

#### B. Discuss project solicitation form

Work that was done on the new project solicitation form by the newly formed working group (composed of the municipal economic developers) was presented. The group briefly discussed some of the project considerations that were included on the form, such as environmental constraints and responsible development principles. Tim stated that if there were no objections, he would circulate the project surveys without any further changes.

**MOTION:** Mark DeVoe moved to approve the project form as presented; seconded by Jim Mahoney.

Tim Malone suggested that, in the interest of time, it may make the most sense for him to meet with the seven economic development professionals in the region to perform an initial evaluation of submitted projects, then present the results to the full Alliance at a later meeting, where a final prioritization of the projects would occur. The group would have no decision making authority but would merely sort through the proposals and determine which projects would advance which regional priorities. Final authority to prioritize projects would rest with the Alliance.

#### C. Brief presentation of new commute pattern data

Tim Malone presented the results of a new analysis he performed on commuting patterns in the region. Using data from the Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employee Household Dynamics Survey, he was able to provide updated statistics on which towns residents of the region are commuting to. He reported that the majority of the region's residents work outside of the region. A great number of people also commute into the region for work. It was also noted that employment in the region is becoming less concentrated. Tim Malone also reported that it appears that strong ties exist with Hartford, as well as Middlesex and New Haven Counties.

#### D. Brief presentation of *Target Industry* findings

Tim Malone presented initial findings from the *Target Industries* research. He reported that data collection has been difficult at the municipal and regional level but was able to provide a few stats regarding the change in the number of companies in each cluster in the region between 2004 and 2009. Metal Trades was still strong, bioscience grew, insurance grew, health services grew considerably, and both tourism and software/IT declined. Aerospace had not moved appreciably.

Data on national growth trends for various clusters was also shown. Every cluster in the Metro Hartford Region, except for Plastics and Clean energy grew between 2004 and 2008. Large nation-wide growth was found in Logistics, Health Services, and Software.

#### E. SWOT analysis/breakout groups

To lead off the discussion, Tim Malone presented to the Alliance the list of strengths and weaknesses brought up at the March 8<sup>th</sup> public meeting. Following this presentation, Tim asked the group whether they agreed with this list, had additions, or had subtractions. Some of the comments regarding strengths included:

- Some strengths do not apply to the whole region
- The transportation situation is improving and the region actually has decent access to many modes (regional airport, good access in some towns)
- Relatively affordable area
- Utility companies are actively involved in economic development
- Large employers, such as GE and ESPN; value-added manufacturing companies
- Great skilled workforce
- Ethnic diversity
- Old factory buildings can be an asset
- Good training programs for workers

Some comments regarding regional weaknesses included:

- Older industrial sites can be a liability (contamination)
- Weak public schools in some areas
- Pockets of urban problems (crime, poverty, etc...)
- Tough access to recreation
- Tourism resources are not well marketed
- Outsourcing of employment to other regions/countries
- Too little knowledge of available training programs
- Employers need to start apprenticeship programs
- We do a disservice to children by pushing them into college without giving them other options, such as learning a trade

#### IV. Other matters

No other matters were brought up.

#### V. Schedule meetings for April and/or May

It was determined that the tight scheduling of the CEDS would require two extra meetings, one in April and one in May. After a brief discussion of vacations and holidays, it was determined that April 25<sup>th</sup> and May 23<sup>rd</sup> would be the best times.

#### VI. Adjournment was declared at approximately 1:24pm.