

Regional Economic Development Advisory Council Meeting

December 13, 2005

Minutes

PRESENT: Mayor Tom Barrett, Mike Bolger, County Supervisor Mark Cronce, Alderman Willie Hines, County Executive Al Kehl, Suzanne Kelley, Gale Klappa, Dennis Kuester, David Lynch, County Executive Bill McReynolds, County Board Chair Ken Miller, Cory Nettles, Joel Quadracci, Pete Sinsky, Carlos Santiago, Carol Schneider, Steve Smith, Dr. Robert Spitzer, Mary Ellen Stanek, John Torinus, County Executive Dan Vrakas, County Board Supervisor Jerry Waelti, and County Executive Scott Walker.

STAFF: Dean Amhaus, Julia Granger, Pat O'Brien, Mary Patzlaff, Tim Sheehy, Julia Taylor, Carrie Davis, and Jim Paetsch.

Call to Order

Mr. Kuester called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Introductions

Mr. Kuester thanked County Executive McReynolds for hosting the meeting and welcomed all those in attendance. He stated that one of the goals of the Council was to do a better job of selling the region through our strength as one group rather than individual counties. He then invited each council member, as well as all others in attendance, to briefly introduce themselves.

Comments

Mayor Tom Barrett of Milwaukee also welcomed all those in attendance and thanked council members for putting aside the parochialism that has bound them in the past and coming together as one on this very important initiative. He noted the importance of being able to compete in a global market and briefly touched upon his experiences during his recent trade mission to China.

Council Expectations

In discussing the expectations of the Council Members, Mr. Kuester stated that their input would be vital in what is considered as part of the overall initiative. In addition to their commitment to participate in the Council meetings, he encouraged Council Members to meet as a "County Committee" to identify issues and focus on local efforts on behalf of the region. He also noted the importance of their assistance in identifying and raising funds from area businesses to further support the work of the Council. Later in the agenda, council members will be asked to approve the brand and raise awareness among local businesses and organizations in their communities.

In summarizing the role of the Executive Partners team he stated that in addition to the administrative responsibilities, one of its key objectives was to ensure ongoing momentum. It also allows the council members to focus on the larger, more important matters at the quarterly meetings.

Campaign Update

In September the Executive Partners approved a 5-year, \$12.2 million campaign budget. Mr. Kuester reviewed the allocation of funds among four key areas of focus and general resources identified as Attraction, Retention, Growth and Regional Identity.

The Goal is to raise \$5.25 million over 5 years to support the regional economic development mission to retain, grow and attract companies and diverse talent. To date, Mr. Kuester reported that 23 "Founding" companies had contributed \$3,453,500 towards that goal. He thanked those that had already contributed and encouraged others to lend their support. Opportunities still exist to become a "Founding" member through March 1, 2006.

In concluding his comments he again thanked all those that had stepped up and contributed in support of the Regional Economic Development Initiative.

Regional Identity Presentation

Mr. Amhaus stated that the idea of a regional identity began 6 months ago when a group of 40 individuals came together for two solid days of discussion to begin design work on a common, inclusive brand for the region. Through the resulting Regional Identity Team's efforts, Mr. Amhaus presented the Milwaukee 7 brand. The Identity Mark intends to unite the seven area counties involved in the effort and forge them into one economic unit that can attract and retain business growth. Mr. Laughlin noted the importance of the brand and the counties involved to collectively think as one region.

Following Mr. Amhaus and Mr. Laughlin's presentation on the Brand, Mr. Kuester called for a motion to approve the brand as presented. On motion duly made and seconded, the Advisory Council unanimously approved the Milwaukee 7 brand for the Regional Economic Development Initiative.

Continuing, Mr. Amhaus outlined the Regional Economic Development Council's relation to the Identity Team, which is comprised of an Executive Committee and four teams, the Evangelists, Collaborators, Researchers and the Guerillas.

Mr. Mitchell then related a conversation in which he was asked to profile the area for a Brookfield business that was attempting to attract a new customer and needed to portray his company on a regional scale to be competitive, further supporting the need and importance of regionalism.

Call Program

Mr. O'Brien reviewed the various components of the call program, which focuses on the 7 county area. The goal is to find, understand and support Regional Exporting Businesses. To date the software has been purchased, a director hired, volunteers recruited and two key sectors have been identified, Manufacturing and Biotechnology. Over the next three months the survey tool will be customized, volunteers trained, identify and make company calls and report the findings. Once completed the results should help to develop initiatives and respond to the issues identified.

Website and Resource Center

Ms. Granger noted that the goal of the website is to create an inviting, easy-to-use, data rich, one-stop shop for business and talent attraction and retention. The website will be the virtual contact while the resource center will provide the physical site where the deals can be closed.

She reviewed the website audience, and provided a progress report on the working group, defined audiences and target markets, identified best practice sites, creation of a preliminary sitemap for content and RFP/Vendor reviews. It is anticipated that the website will be ready for a soft launch in June of 2006.

Council Management

Ms. Taylor referred the Council Members to the meeting packets that were provided for each member. Included was a roster and brief bio of each council member, a 2006 meeting schedule, a copy of the bi-weekly updates and key staff contact information. She requested that communities provide information on current economic efforts for inclusion in the bi-weekly update that is sent to over 250 individuals regionally.

GAP Analysis

Mr. Sheehy provided a detailed report on the GAP Analysis for the region that included a snapshot of the regional economy, population rankings and demographics, Education and college graduate statistics, income levels, employment and export opportunities. Despite some of the area's strengths, Milwaukee fares poorly on several measures linked to economic growth. Following the presentation of the GAP Analysis, Mr. Sheehy outlined the regional strategies, to build on the strengths that exist, recognize that we must be in the game to attract business growth, retain, attract and develop diverse talent, jump start a climate of innovation that transfers technology into jobs and close the gap in minority business development. He concluded by responding to questions posed by the Council.

Other Business

In response to the GAP Analysis, Mr. Kuester asked Council Members for their input in identifying the important issues that need to be addressed. Council Members in return recommended the following, a need to address healthcare workforce needs and healthcare costs, maintaining and attracting new business, the education, training and development of future workforce, and the support for University research and development.

Council members asked for "Talking Points" to assist them in fielding questions and presenting the information to businesses and potential contributors. Ms. Taylor agreed to provide council members with this information and Mr. Kuester suggested that if Council Members had any questions, they should contact Ms. Julia Taylor, Mr. Tim Sheehy or Mr. Dean Amhaus. Their contact information can be found on the Roster information that was distributed with the meeting materials.

The question was also raised on how results of the regional efforts would be measured. Mr. Kuester stated that success would be measured in wins and losses, the number of jobs created and in growth of new businesses as well as retaining existing businesses, all in an effort to improve the quality of life for everyone in the region. More discussion on the metrics and results will be discussed at the next Council meeting.

Mr. Kuester then noted that the next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, March 1st at 8:00 a.m. Joel Quadracci from Quad Graphics in Waukesha has offered to host the meeting. Continuing he noted that over the next 3 months work will continue through the regional work teams on the development of the website and resource center, the call program and fund raising. He asked that council members from each county to form a "County Committee: to meet and identify local area needs, assist in the fund raising efforts and provide ongoing input on the GAP Analysis.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m. The next regularly scheduled meeting is set for Wednesday, March 1st at 8:00 a.m. at Quad Graphics in Waukesha. Further detail will follow.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Patzlaff
GMC Program Officer