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Executive Director

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee

Tuesday, October 26, 2010, 12:30 PM

2nd Floor Conference Room, BRPC Office, 1 Fenn Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201

Committee Members

Kristine Hazzard <u>X</u>	Roger Bolton <u>X</u>	Heather Boulger <u>AB</u>	David Rooney <u>AB</u>
Kevin O'Donnell <u>X</u>	Keith Girouard <u>X</u>	Mike Nuvalle <u>AB</u>	Laury Epstein <u>X</u>
Mike Supranowicz <u>AB</u>	Lauri Klefos <u>X</u>	Michael Hoffmann <u>AB</u>	Christine Ludwiszewski <u>X</u>
Eleanore Velez <u>X</u>	Deanna Ruffer <u>X</u>	Ann Dobrowolski (Alt) <u>X</u>	Helena Fruscio <u>X</u>
Tim Geller <u>X</u>	Robert Wilson <u>X</u>	Brenda Burdick <u>X</u>	Mark Berman <u>X</u>

BRPC Staff

Nathaniel Karns X Thomas Matuszko X Daniel Sexton X Mark Maloy X

Public

Allison Johnson X

Meeting Minutes

The first CEDS Strategy Committee meeting of the 2011 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy process was convened at 12:40pm on October 26th, 2010 in the large conference room of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC), located at 1 Fenn Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201.

Mr. Matuszko, BRPC Assistant Director, introduced himself and then briefly explained why everyone was asked to the meeting. The meeting was convened to establish a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Strategy Committee, whom will oversee the development of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Berkshire Region.

1. Introductions

Mr. Matuszko introduced the members of the BRPC team that will be facilitating the CEDS process and developing the final document. He explained that the members of Committee that had acknowledged their ability to attend were present and that there were a number of members arriving late, due to prior engagement. Mr. Matuszko asked all the Committee members to introduce themselves and their organization affiliation.

Mr. Matuszko then explained that the CEDS Strategy Committee is a sub-committee of BRPC; therefore, is considered a public body is subject to the Open Meeting law and that the meeting is being recorded. Further discussion of the Open Meeting law and other laws that the Committee is bound by will be discussed later in the meeting. Mr. Matuszko invited others to record the meeting if they wished. He explained that minutes of the meeting will be developed and available for review at the following meeting. As a regional entity, BRPC is required to post this meeting at all municipalities throughout the region.

2. Background

Mr. Matuszko then provided the Committee with a brief background of the CEDS planning process and its origins from the Economic Development Administration (EDA). A CEDS is primarily used by a region to access the various EDA funding and grant programs. The CEDS process is an on-going participatory economic planning process that requires periodic updates. The last CEDS accepted by the EDA for the Berkshire Region was completed in 2001. In 2004, an effort was undertaken to update the Berkshire CEDS, but was never finalized or approved of by the EDA. In 2009, BRPC approached the EDA with the intent of securing funding for an update to the 2001 CEDS. Due to some logistical and approval issues, this CEDS process hasn't been able to begin until now.

Subsequently, Mr. Matuszko explained why and how the individuals present today were selected to participate on the CEDS Strategy Committee. The make-up of the Committee was based on EDA requirements which stipulated that the committee must represent a broad and diverse background of individuals and organizations. While the EDA requirements are important, Staff strived to select a group of individuals that encompassed and embodied the interests, a wealth of experiences and knowledge of the region's economic situation. A Committee member's role is primarily to provide BRPC staff with guidance and advice throughout the process and the documents development, while ensuring the process is collaborative and cooperative in nature. In certain instances, the Committee may be called upon to advocate for the process and document. It is envisioned, however, that BRPC staff would handle most of the work of preparing the document.

Following this explanation, the Committee was solicited for additional questions. Seeing none, Mr. Matuszko turned over the floor to Mr. Sexton to discuss the "Project Scope."

3. Project Scope

a. Timeline

Mr. Sexton began by explaining the draft timeline for the CEDS process and CEDS Strategy Committee involvement. This document laid out key roles or components of the CEDS document that the Committee would be asked to review and comment on during the ambitious schedule for this CEDS process. A number of highlights from this discussion included:

- Staff is anticipating a 6 meeting schedule for the Committee;
- Due to availability of members, meetings will be strategically scheduled on Tuesdays;
- There will not be a meeting during the month of December, due to the holiday season;
- Due to the short project timeframe and the large number of aspects to be reviewed and included in the document, it is anticipated that each meeting will be heavily loaded;
- The 30-day Public Comment Period, as required by the EDA, has been accounted for in the proposed project timeline; and
- The deadline for completion of this CEDS process is April 30, 2011.

Mr. Sexton asked the Committee if there were any questions or problems with the proposed draft timeline, specifically in terms of the proposed Tuesday meeting dates. Seeing none, Mr. Sexton moved onto the next agenda item.

b. CEDS Document Outline

Mr. Sexton then discussed the proposed CEDS document outline, by explaining the origin of the documents language. He then explained that the development of this document was based on previous CEDS planning efforts undertaken in Berkshire County; the review of CEDS completed for other regions throughout Massachusetts, New York and Vermont; by examining the EDA requirements; and by reviewing the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' CEDS. He then discussed the outlines structure and briefly explained each chapter of the outline.

Following staff's overview of the proposed outline for the CEDS document, the Committee engaged in a brief discussion. Key points or questions that stemmed from this discussion, chapter specific, included:

What Are the Berkshires?

- Will 2010 Census data be available for this CEDS process?
- What is the origin of the different characteristics and components of the *Berkshires Regional Analysis and Influence* section of the document? Why is it organized or structured the way it is?
- There were a couple topics or components in the *Berkshires Regional Analysis and Influence* section that Committee members felt were missing, not given enough emphasis and/or should be discuss in multiple characteristics (i.e. historic/cultural component, housing starts, entrepreneurs, agricultural industry and economy, health status, tourism, innovation and job training)

- What is the methodology or plan for the presentation of job loss in the region? If data from the 2000 Census is to be used to present this information we're going to be inhibiting our efforts from the start, since much of the region's job loss happened post 2000.

What is the Action Plan for the Berkshires?

- In addition to the goals and adjectives extracted from the 2004 Berkshire CEDS and Berkshire Blueprint, a Committee member felt that some, if not all, of the goals and objectives from the Berkshire Creative Economy report should be added to the list of goals and objectives for this CEDS process.

Methodology for State Cooperation, Consistency and Integration

- What is the status of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts CEDS planning efforts?
- What level of cooperation between the state and region for this process is required by EDA and who at the Commonwealth is the point of contact for CEDS processes?

Based on the comments and questions that were raised, staff will be providing information on a couple items to the Committee at the following meeting, which included:

1. A breakdown of all the potential EDA funding sources, emphasis and programs that this document may facilitate access/application too; and
2. A follow-up conversation on the EDA requirements, specifically how they apply to the structure or outline of the CEDS document.

Staff was also tasked to incorporate or re-organize the components of the Berkshires Regional Analysis and Influences section of the document.

Mr. Sexton then asked the Committee if there were any further questions. Seeing none, Mr. Sexton turned the floor over to Mr. Karns to discuss Logistics.

4. Logistics

a. Conflict of Interest Laws/ Open Meeting Laws

Mr. Karns explained that this is an official committee of the BRPC and with last year's changes to the Open Meeting and Ethic laws all the members of the CEDS Strategy Committee are classified as municipal employees by virtue of your membership. Therefore, each member must comply with the requirements for each of those laws. To document each Committee member's receipt of the Open Meeting law documents, three enclosures, Committee members must complete the Certification of Receipt form (blue) by signing, dating and returned it to BRPC staff. Then to comply with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics laws, each Committee member must complete the Certificate of Receipt form (Yellow or Gold) by signing, dating and returning it to BRPC staff.

Mr. Sexton added that each Committee member is required to complete an on-line Conflict of Interest and Ethics quiz and return the Certificate of Completion to BRPC staff. Mr. Sexton explained that he would be sending all the Committee members the webpage address for the Conflict of Interest and Ethics quiz via e-mail later in the week.

b. Committee Role (Level of structure, formality, Chair, schedule) ----- Action Item

Mr. Matuszko then began discussing the Committee's role within the greater CEDS process and the logistical aspects of the Committee (i.e. function, structure and schedule). As was stated earlier, Staff envisioned the Committee as guiding and overseeing the development of the CEDS document and process. The EDA requires that the Committee be composed with a diverse structure of individuals, specifically those from the private sector and a diverse background of stakeholder groups. This is a change from past CEDS requirements, in which the composition of the Committee was geared more towards municipalities.

He then asked, "What the wish of the Committee was in terms of formal structure?" He explained that the Committee could be an "ad-hoc" committee that follows Report's Rules of Order or a more formal committee that had established bylaws. Consideration should also be given to whether a Chair is needed and/or wanted. He did caution that a Chair should not be a member of BRPC staff. A few brief comments were made by Committee members, following which it was determined that the Committee should be "ad-hoc" in nature and follow Robert's Rules of Order. The decision to establish a Chair required much more discussion. One member of the Committee was concerned that if a Committee member could potentially submit a project idea, but then would be asked to objectively rank other projects that this may creates a conflict. Another Committee member asked, "Why the 2004 CEDS planning effort failed?" Mr. Karns and a number of previous CEDS Committee members explained why the 2004 CEDS planning effort failed. Following that discussion and the raised concern, it was suggested that a moderator be established to officiate the Committee's meetings.

Roger Bolton made a motion, which stated: BRPC shall designate a member of its staff to be a moderator for the meetings of the CEDS Strategy Committee. This motion was seconded by Lauri Klefos. A vote on the motion was requested by Mr. Matuszko. All Committee members voted in favor of the motion, thus the motion passed

A Committee member then asked, "What lines of communication have been opened or what efforts have been made to ensure that the issues of the 2004 CEDS process would not happen again?" It was suggested that the Committee be briefed on the EDA approval process and the list or required signatures at the next meeting. Mr. Matuszko identified that information surrounding the approval process will be provided to the Committee at the next meeting.

Mr. Karns also mentioned the importance of opening a line of communication between the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development or their designee to discuss the 2011 Berkshire CEDS. This communication or contact will help develop the collaboration component of this CEDS and will ensure the Committees efforts and plans mesh with Commonwealth's CEDS process or economic development plans. A Committee member requested that staff briefly discuss the status of the State's CEDS process and economic planning efforts at the next meeting.

A Committee member then raised the issue of schedules, specifically concerning the inconsistencies of the next meeting date as presented on the meeting agenda and the project timeline. Staff clarified that the next proposed CEDS Strategy Committee meeting was slated for November 30, 2010. All the present Committee members agreed this date was acceptable. That being said, Mr. Matuszko initiated a broader discussion of the CEDS Strategy Committee meeting schedule. He explained that staff has proposed all meetings of the Committee to be held on Tuesdays at 12:30 pm once a month, except for December. Mr. Matuszko inquired whether there were issues with this date and time. Seeing none, it was decided that all meetings of the Committee will be held as identified, unless a conflict arose.

A follow-up question pertaining to the status of the Commonwealths CEDS process, specifically in terms of its focus and structure on the regional perspective, was asked by a Committee member. Mr. Matuszko explained where he understood the Commonwealth's economic planning efforts to be. He again offered to provide the Committee with additional information on this matter at the next meeting.

Additionally, a Committee member raised questions concerning: 1) Is it appropriate or possible to have an alternate attend on behalf of a Committee member? 2) Does that alternate have the voting power of the Committee member? Following some discussion, it was determined that alternatives were okay. It was determined though that BRPC must be notified in advance of an alternate's attendance. Staff explained that all alternates attending CEDS Strategy Committee meetings must be apprised of current topics and discuss, since there would be no time allotted to bring people up-to-speed. Mr. Matuszko also mentioned that the upfront notification of alternates was to ensure there would a quorum and so BRPC could accurately order food. Notification of an alternate's attendances should be submitted to BRPC following the posting of the meeting agenda and be no later than one week before the meeting.

Mr. Matuszko then asked the Committee if there were any further questions. Seeing none, Mr. Matuszko turned the floor over to Mr. Sexton to discuss the Vision Statement.

5. 2011 CEDS Vision Statement ----- Action Item

a. Vision Statement Examples and Information

Mr. Sexton began by explaining and reading the vision statement examples (the 2001 CEDS, the draft 2004 CEDS and the Berkshire Blueprint's – Long-Term Economic Strategy) that were used to develop the draft 2011 CEDS Vision Statement. He noted that because it was still considered relevant and appropriate to the economic situation of the region, Staff selected the draft 2004 CEDS Vision Statement as the proposed language for the 2011 CEDS document. Staff emphasized that the CEDS process is evolving; therefore, the Committee should consider holding off any final decision on the vision statement until the review and development of the "*What Are the Berkshires?*" chapter of the CEDS document is complete.

b. 2011 CEDS Vision Statement (Draft)

Following staff's explanation of the proposed vision statement, the Committee engaged in a discussion of what elements, language and structure the vision statement should include. There was a question posed by Staff pertaining to the Committee's anticipated intent for the CEDS document. More specifically, Staff asked whether the hope was to create a document that would solely be used to pursue just EDA funds or if there a wish to broaden

the intent of the document so it could be used for other economic funding sources. Many of those alternative funding sources are pursued by other organizations, many of which Committee members represent. Some key points generated during this discussion also included:

- Keeping the statement brief (maybe 2 sentence maximum), modern tone and simple.
- Include language or terms like collaboration, creativity, equity or equitable, innovation, hotbed and all encompassing.
- The structure of the statement should incorporate sense of tense, primarily future.
- The statement should be inspirational, yet be balanced and relevant.
- It is important to stress the cultural richness.

To help guide staff's development of a revised vision statement, Committee members began developing revised language and/or directed staff to other organization's vision statement, such as Berkshire 1 or the Berkshire Visitors Bureau, to use as references.

In the interest of time, Mr. Matuszko indicated that staff would take into consideration all of the Committee's comments discussed today and develop a revised vision statement. That being said, Mr. Matuszko shifted the discussion to the next agenda item. Mr. Matuszko turned the floor over to Mr. Sexton to discuss the Outreach Plan.

6. Outreach Plan ----- Action Item

a. Community/EDO Project Solicitation/Meetings/Focus Groups

Mr. Sexton started by explaining to the Committee the importance of have a clear and open outreach process, so that issues of the past were not repeated. He then explained how BRPC had distributed mailings to all 32 municipalities within the region (i.e. Town Board of Selectmen, Town Administrators/Managers and/or their designee) on October 1, 2010 and that another mailing had been sent to a handful of economic development organizations (EDO) on October 15, 2010. Specific to the list of EDO's, staff indicated that they didn't feel the list of solicited EDOs was all-inclusive and hoped that Committee members would suggest additional groups or organizations to solicit. Staff explained how they had hoped Committee members would also be able to help spread the word or initiate conversations on the CEDS process with their constituencies and professional networks. Staff then mentioned to the Committee that 4 communities had responded to the mailer and that 17 projects were currently being proposed. To allow enough time for communities, individuals and organizations to response to the solicitations, Staff explained that the public solicitation process would continue until the end of the year. Mr. Sexton explained that project ideas would be presented to the Committee sometime in January or February. A member of the Committee asked staff to clarify what exactly had been included in the initial project solicitations. Mr. Sexton then explained that with each mailer the following had been included: a CEDS introduction letter, a County Snapshot and a Project Solicitation form.

Following staff's overview of the mailers, the Committee engaged in a brief discussion. Key points or questions that stemmed from this discussion included:

- Are the project solicitations just limited to municipalities or can the organizations, such as those that the Committee is comprised of, submit project proposals?
- What types of project proposals can be submitted?
- What organizations were included in the EDO mailer?

As a follow-up to the questions above, Staff explained that the submission of project proposals was open to everyone. Additionally, Staff explained that project ideas could cover a broad range of topics, which could be potentially funded from other sources, and that the EDA's regulations did not restrict the incorporation of project ideas that potentially would be funded through other sources. Mr. Matuszko explained further that BRPC had planned to conduct meetings with the core communities (i.e. North Adams, Adam, Pittsfield, Great Barrington, Lanesborough, Lenox, Lee, etc.) within the valley corridor as needed, but didn't intend to omit the outlying smaller communities. Upon request, those smaller communities could schedule meetings of their own or attend the meetings within the larger communities. Since there were concerns regarding the completeness of the EDO solicitation list, the Committee asked that the initial distribution list be provided to the Committee for review. Staff asked the Committee to provide suggestions of other organizations or individuals that should be solicited.

A follow-up line of questions from the Committee included:

- Are we ignoring the private sector?
- How can the Committee help in the solicitation of project proposals to ensure that the outreach process is transparent?

Staff explained that the project solicitations are open to everyone. To ensure a transparent outreach process, Staff

was considering the idea of utilizing focus/working groups. Mr. Sexton explained that after reviewing other CEDS planning efforts, each region utilized focus/working groups differently. Possible focus/work group configurations could be: 1) A sub-committee focusing on a broad solicitation for project ideas throughout the region; or 2) A number of sub-committees that focused their outreach on special interest groups or sectors.

To better understand and help staff in their development of a broader outreach plan, Committee members asked again for clarification of the EDA requirements, they wanted an element of education added to outreach efforts and most of all they wanted to be involved. Committee members acknowledge that to have a broad component of outreach, they needed to provide cooperation and collaborate to those outreach efforts.

Additionally, a Committee member asked, "Has there been an official press release or public notice published on the CEDS processes in the regional news outlets?" Staff said, "No, but indicated it will approach a number of the regional news outlets."

7. What Are the Berkshires?

- a. **A Snapshot of the Berkshire Region (Draft)**
- b. **Berkshires Regional Analysis and Influences**
 - i. **Demographic Characteristics**
 - ii. **Economic Characteristics**

Due to a lack of time this item was not discuss at this meeting.

8. Schedule Next Meeting (Tuesday, November 30, 2010 at 12:30pm)

Committee members agreed to hold the next CEDS Strategy Committee meeting on Tuesday, November 30th, 2010 at 12:30pm

9. Other Items?

No items were raised.

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:40pm.

Documents distributed at the meeting included:

Meeting Agenda

A list of the CEDS Strategy Committee members and their affiliations

A U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, CEDS Flyer

A copy of the Interim Final Rule on 13 CFR Chapter III, specifically parts 300 and 303

A timeline of the CEDS Process

A draft outline of the 2011 CEDS Document

A copy of 940 CMR 29.00: Open Meeting Law Regulations

A copy of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts: Open meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18-25

A copy of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts: Open Meeting Law Guide

A Certification of Receipt of the Open Meeting Law Materials

A copy of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts: Conflict of Interest Law for Municipal Employees

A Certification of Receipt of the Conflict of Interest Law for Municipal Employees

A Berkshire County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Flyer

A draft of the "Introduction to CEDS Program" section

A copy of the 2001 CEDS Vision Statement

A copy of the draft 2004 CEDS Vision Statement

A copy of the 2006 Berkshire Blueprint Berkshire County Long-Term Economic Strategy

A draft of the "A Vision Statement for the Berkshires" section

A draft of the "Berkshire CEDS Process" section

A copy of the public outreach/project solicitation materials

A draft of the "What are the Berkshires" section

A copy of the proposed 2011 CEDS Data Sets

Examples of data to be included in the 2011 CEDS