

Meeting Minutes
Allegheny Highlands Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
Committee

January 19, 2006

12 Noon, Room 509 of the Center for Continuing Education and Workforce Services
Building at Dabney S. Lancaster Community College

Committee Members:

Present: Suzanne Adcock, Annette Anderson, Carolyn Barnette, Stephanie Clark, Allen Dressler, Butch Kemper, Gary Partridge, David Price, George “Chip” Snead, Mark Taylor, Dr. Richard Teaff, Bill Zimmerman

Absent: Glen Anglin, Robert Daniel, Jack Hammond, Tom Harris, W. Ed Mansfield, Phil Sparks, Tim Tobin, Christine Visscher, Alan Williams, William Withrow

Others Present:

Wayne G. Strickland, Executive Director, RVARC

Eddie Wells, Senior Planner, RVARC

John Hull, Regional Economic Resources Planner, RVARC

Proceedings:

· *Meeting called to order* at 12:05 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions:

Presentations:

- Eddie Wells gave a presentation on the CEDS planning process explaining the reasons for writing a CEDS. Mr. Wells discussed elements of the process, reporting requirements, and the US Economic Development Administration’s evaluation of the 2002 Allegheny Highlands CEDS.

- John Hull presented the highlights of his research into the demographic and economic situation of the Allegheny Highlands. Tables on population trends, age distribution, educational attainment, top regional employers, location quotients, and personal income were presented to the committee. Committee members were asked to review the CEDS Demographic and Economic Resource Inventory and to share comments.

ACTION ITEM: Review and comment on CEDS Demographic and Economic Resource Inventory (*Committee Members*)

Discussion of Goals and Projects:

- Example goals and projects from other CEDS documents were distributed by RVARC staff prior to the meeting. Committee members were asked to review the handout and to further refine the list.

- There was discussion on a new brand for the region that might include a larger area including Bath, Highland and Craig Counties. It was explained that Bath and Highland

Counties are covered by a different CEDS and Craig County is in a different impact area; therefore, joint projects may be included in the CEDS, but this CEDS document will cover only the Alleghany Highlands geography.

- Several committee members commented that a new identity/brand might be useful in winning more positive publicity for the region. Many regional news outlets only visit when negative events occur in the region. It was mentioned that the region already enjoys an impressive quality of life in terms of recreation facilities and events (especially collegiate baseball). Pervasive negativity, however, remains an issue even among region residents. It was generally agreed that enhancing the region's identity would be a good goal. Specific strategies mentioned included enhancing the positive identity of the region. developing a regional PR function to promote the Highlands.

- Committee Member Snead suggested that Goal #1 of the example goals should be changed to read, "Enhance region's positive identity, image, and promote regional approaches."

- Committee Member Price suggested that language be included in the tourism goal to reflect that the region's tourism industry needs to be developed. Mr. Price also suggested that Goal #10 should include specific terminology defining what is considered to be infrastructure (broadband, water, sewer, cell phone towers, etc.)

- Committee Member Snead suggested that the previous CEDS had 6 goals that are still valid and should be integrated into a draft list of goals.

- Committee Member Adcock suggested that a comprehensive Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis might be included as a goal.

- There was discussion on the importance of small business development and the possibility of developing a small business development center or incubator in the region.

- Committee Member Taylor suggested that goals should be specific and measurable.

- Committee Member Anderson suggested that several goals could be consolidated and reorganized.

- Committee Member Snead suggested that RVARC staff might synthesize committee comments on goals, reduce the number of goals accordingly by committee comments, and redistribute by email or by way of a website to committee members for comment.

ACTION ITEM: Synthesize committee comments and redistribute list of goals to committee for comments (*RVARC staff*)

- Several committee members commented that they would like to see the goals from the 2002 CEDS for the Alleghany Highlands and requested that copies be provided to them.

ACTION ITEM: Provide committee members with a copy of the goals from the 2002 CEDS for the Alleghany Highlands (*RVARC staff*).

- Committee Member Snead suggested that a report card requirement be included in the plan so that a commitment can be made by the regional institutions involved in economic development to share news of progress towards making economic development goals with the public on an annual basis.

Future Meeting Schedule:

- Meeting times and dates for upcoming meetings were discussed. It was generally agreed that the times and dates were good.

Comments and Questions:

- Committee members requested that minutes be written up for each CEDS committee meeting, that the minutes should reflect committee attendance and absenteeism, and that some mention of the importance of committee attendance be included in the minutes.

ACTION ITEM: Provide committee members with minutes in the requested format (*RVARC staff*).

Mr. Strickland promised to distribute minutes and refined goals to committee members and noted that the next meeting will focus on further refining CEDS goals.

- Meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m.
- Minutes submitted by John M. Hull, Regional Economic Resources Planner.