



**MINUTES
BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

Monday February 22, 2010

Commission Members: Chair Robert Agee, Vice-Chair Joe Hruban, Greg Phister, Sydney Vergis, Tobin Richardson, Michael Faust, Dave Robert (Alternate), Finance and Budget Commission Liaison, Donald Palm

City Council Liaisons: Ruth Asmundson, Don Saylor (Alternate)

City Staff: Sarah Worley, Economic Development Coordinator
Brian Abbanat, Economic Development Specialist

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1. **Determination of Quorum and Seating of Alternates -*Quorum established @ 7:03 p.m.*** Absent: Councilmember Don Saylor, Commissioner Richardson
 2. **Approval of Agenda - *Agenda approved 7:04 p.m.***
 3. **Public Comment -** No public comment
 4. **Approval of Minutes –** January 25, 2010 *Minutes approved @ 7:05 p.m.*
 5. **Yolo County Visitors Bureau**

Diane Parro provided an overview of the YCVB, it's function and organizational history. The YCVB began as a subsidiary of the Davis Chamber of Commerce. It is in its 10th year of existence and represents all of Yolo County. The organization has scaled back during the recession and recently moved into the Hunt-Boyer Mansion. The Hunt-Boyer is a much nicer place to welcome guests.

Diane Parro stated tourists are an important factor in economic development. She highlighted the economic benefit of tourism on the local economy. She explained how the YCVB markets Yolo County and how electronic media has leveled the playing field for smaller markets. The YCVB has only two full-time staff and several interns, which spend a lot of time marketing the Yolo County through electronic media.

Diane State this year is the year to focus on hotels and make sure they do everything they can to market their products. The YCVB is planning several sessions for hoteliers. Next year her focus will be on restaurants.

A commissioner asked about how to identify people in organization leadership roles who might choose Davis as a location for conferences. Diane responded there is a UC Davis event planner exchange, which is an informal group. There are over 400 people on campus with responsibilities for planning conferences or meetings on campus. At the exchange, she talks to them about planning an event and keeping the event in Davis. She has also used Parents' weekend as an opportunity to promote local tourism. Diane stated if the YCVB did a better job keeping what's happening here locally, that alone would be an economic development benefit.

A commissioner asked what are the top two or three things the YCVB could use help pursue things to increase tourism and making Davis a destination. Diane responded she and a commissioner had talked over coffee about identifying people who live in Davis who represent large organizations that may or may not be located here. The goal is to persuade them to have their events here. She felt organizational heads would respond more affirmatively from a peer contact as opposed to a direct call from the YCVB. If the YCVB got anywhere from one to three new events a year through this means, that would make a huge difference. Even the planting the seed would be a success.

A commissioner asked about Davis's capacity to host events. Diane responded Davis has about 630 rooms, and will have 75 more in a few weeks. Woodland has more Davis can draw upon for events. Davis has the university model –hotels are either full or empty. Medium and small conferences are huge for Davis hoteliers. The Special Olympics was hosted on campus last year and is returning again this year.

A commissioner asked about adequate meeting space in Davis and whether that has been a challenge. Diane responded UC Davis has the lion's share of meeting space. They have three really nice, large rooms. If there is a large event coming in with meeting space needs, the YCVB usually starts with UC Davis. The YCVB also use the Veterans Memorial for smaller events. Davis' largest seated meal venue seats 350 – 380. If the YCVB can attraction one or two more, that kind of event fills up local hotels. There is a need for a meeting room capable of seating 30-50 people. Most hotels don't have that size a room. Going on campus for rooms and off campus for hotels is not ideal.

6. Commission Structure

Consider suggestion for BEDC to include ex-officio DDBA and Chamber representatives

Staff introduced the subject of DDBA comments from the last meeting for a DDBA member to attend BEDC meetings on a regular basis. Similar conversations have occurred at the Chamber of Commerce. City staff and the City Manager are receptive to this idea. It is envisioned that these would be "ex-officio" members would be non-voting and not representing a position of their organization. Staff wanted to make sure the BEDC had an opportunity to think about it and weigh in on the concept.

Discussion followed regarding potential merits and drawback to having two ex-officio BEDC seats including:

- Concern about inadequate representation from businesses outside the DDBA Chamber. Commissioners discussed the BEDC could start with two ex-officio seats designated for those two organizations but are not limited to only those two. Other independent businesses could apply for vacant commission seats. Also, BEDC could expend effort specifically outreaching to underrepresented businesses.
- DDBA and Chamber representatives have always accepted an invitation to speak. They usually raise some issues the commission hasn't considered. It can be an efficient viewpoint and serve as an intermediary.
- BEDC meetings are open and representatives are always welcome. One commissioner wasn't sure what problem it solves although it was noted BEDC allows two ex-officio's then the door should remain open for adding more.
- It does make a difference to be an ex-officio member. BEDC is offering a unique seat at the table. If the organizations want it BEDC can benefit from it and it widens the bandwidth of communication without much cost associated with it.

- Ex-officio member implies an obligation to attend and thus increases communication between BEDC and the business community.
- BEDC can only benefit from their participation.

Motion: Approve but not limit two ex-officio members from DDBA and Chamber

Aye: All

Noe: none

7. Staff Communication/Updates

- Business Park Land Strategy

Staff provided a brief overview of the Business Park Land Strategy. The existing land inventory needed updating to include all vacant commercial land as opposed to only office, industrial, and business park land use designations given employment projections for the study include the entire Davis economy, not just uses appropriate for those land use designations. This resulted in some delay to ensure consistency between land inventory and employment growth projections.

Staff announced City Council adopted the BEDC's recommended list of business awards.

Commissioner commented he attended the awards ceremony last year and recipients were genuinely moved by receiving the award. The award had the intended effect.

Staff shared they attended the SARTA Tech Index luncheon. Linda Katehi stated her intent to make UC Davis one of the premier public research universities in the country. The Los Rios Community College District has received several pieces of economic development stimulus funding.

8. Subcommittee Updates and Organization

- Work Plan Subcommittee

Commissioner Agee stated a desire to develop a work plan consistent with commissioner's interests and available time.

Commissioner Faust stated there is work to be done and has narrowed it down to some broad buckets for activities:

- Streamlined processing utilizing best practices from around the country. A single point of contact is needed to address a sometimes loose, haphazard process. In response to a question regarding who has been successful in the region attracting business, Roseville and Rancho Cordova were mentioned. Rancho Cordova's economic model is based on business attraction.
- MetroPulse/Business Walks
- Alumni Association outreach and collaboration
- UC Davis collaboration, highway marketing program, keep & recruit new businesses (technology transfer).
- West Village/Los Rios partnership
- Complete dataset (Economic Indicators project)
- Create a Downtown "zone" with a preset package of fees, permits. Other similar cities have created a turnkey operation that is very predictable.
- Best Business Award. BEDC needs to make it mean something to the recipients to make people really want it.

- Work on generating more interest from businesses outside downtown.
- Review Redevelopment Area projects to reevaluate some specific projects that might be pertinent to what's going on in the current economy. Staff suggested Ken Hiatt and Katherine Hess give the same presentation they gave for the DDBA. Ken also prepared a matrix list of all the different projects, dollar amounts, and had a question/answer session. The DDBA found that informative. Staff can provide that information to the subcommittee and then decide what to bring forward to the entire group.
- Metro Pulse. Staff stated Davis is part of a countywide grant application for the Yolo County Department of Social Services for layoff aversion and business retention. The only way to get out ahead of this is to do the business outreach. Of \$200,000 total, Davis would receive \$55,000. Davis plans to spend its share of the money to participate in the Metro Pulse program. The remainder would be for support services through the SBDC. A commissioner stated Metro Pulse creates accountability and transparency throughout the entire organization. Can change dynamics of decision-making by providing data.
 - Subcommittee Structure -Tabled until work plan is established.
 - Economic Indicators Update - Commissioner Agee provided a brief update. Stated progress has been made and seven members have agreed to serve on the steering committee.

9. Future Agenda Items - Redevelopment Projects, Metro Pulse

10. Adjourn -*Meeting adjourned 8:59 p.m.*

Future Meetings: March 22, 2010, April 26, 2010