

Metro Regional Coalition Meeting
Westbrook Housing Authority
March 3, 2009

Attendees: Bill Whitten, Jerre Bryant, Jim Harnden, Chris Hall, Harvey Rosenfeld, Keith Luke, Erik Carson, Jim Gailey, Mayor Tom Blake, Councilor Paul McKenney, Jim Cohen, Godfrey Wood, Nelle Hanig, Glenn Cummings, Amanda Stearns, Mike McGovern

- I. Approval of Minutes: Jim Cohen, acting as Chair pro tem at the request of Mayor Chuluda, asked that the minutes of the December 9th meeting be approved as presented. The minutes were unanimously accepted by general consent.
- II. Review of Organizational Outline of Authority

Paul McKenney suggested that the language in the mission statement of the Regional Economic Development Authority be broadened to include the participants in the Southern Maine Economic Development District and the CEDS group.

Keith Luke suggested that broadening the group to include communities that would not be contributing to the operating cost of the regional authority would be problematic when soliciting Westbrook Council support.

Harvey Rosenfeld of the Scarborough Economic Development Corporation expressed his opinion that the focus of the group should remain on the original six core communities.

Mike McGovern cautioned that Cape may not end up joining in the Authority, but he thought the Outline reflected a good approach.

Erik Carson also spoke of maintaining the original focus of the group and cited EDA support for sub-regional economic development initiatives.

Jim Cohen expressed the sentiment that the mission statement risked getting too complicated if too much is rolled into it.

Amanda Stearns suggested that a narrower geographic focus would be preferable to start.

Jim Cohen suggested the following language as the revised mission statement and geography:

To grow and develop a sustainable economy in ~~the~~ Greater Portland and the region through the establishment of a regional economic development authority to be organized and managed equally by the communities of the Metro Regional Coalition and the community members of the Portland Regional Chamber. Creation of a new development authority is grounded in the principle that, by working together and leveraging an economy of scale, the communities and businesses of Greater Portland can achieve more with regard to regional economic development than they could alone.

1. Geography - Focus on growing the economies of the six Metro communities who are organizing the economy, ~~but~~ and will partner with broader regional constituencies ~~including Cumberland County, the mid-coast region, the Biddeford-Saco area, and the State of Maine.~~

The Coalition members also asked that the Outline be modified to ensure that the Greater Portland Public Development Corporation was correctly referenced throughout.

Jerre Bryant made a motion to accept the mission statement as amended. Paul McKenney seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

III. Review of the Draft Budget

Harvey Rosenfeld introduced the draft budget for the proposed authority, expressed as a high and low range in a variety of line item categories.

Jim Gailey suggested that the authority may want to proceed with existing staff from participating communities.

Paul McKenney and Mike McGovern suggested that Cape Elizabeth may be willing to extend free office space to house the group for two years.

Godfrey Wood estimated that the business community could raise \$150-\$200K annually to support the regional economic development effort.

Jerre Bryant suggested that the proposed budget was appropriate for discussion purposes, but with the current economic situation he was unable to commit to the project on Westbrook's behalf.

Jim Cohen noted that, given the state of the economy and the status of most municipal budgets, he viewed the project as a 2010 endeavor rather than 2009.

Paul McKenney made a motion to approve the draft budget for "illustrative" purposes. Keith Luke seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Discussion of Pending Legislation

Erik Carson reviewed the progress of the pending Pine Tree Zone legislation in Augusta sponsored by Sen. Bartlett. **Paul McKenney made a motion to support the extension of PTZ benefits to Cumberland County. Tom Blake seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.**

Jim Cohen and Glenn Cummings provided a brief history of the Greater Portland Public Development Corporation and efforts to rededicate funding for that organization for the benefit of the emerging Metro Coalition. **Mike McGovern made a motion to support enabling legislation. Paul McKenney seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**