

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD

January 11, 2016

Breadmen's Restaurant
Chapel Hill, NC 27516

MINUTES

Advisory Members Present:

D.R. Bryan, Delores Bailey, Nicholas Thomas, Jim Kitchen, Ron Keizer, Mark O'Neal, James Watts, Nitan Khanna

Orange County Staff:

Steve Brantley, Yvonne Scarlett, Amanda Garner, Mike Ortosky, Tina Love

Call to Order:

Chair D.R. Bryan requested to have time with the members of the Orange County Economic Development Advisory Board members with no staff from the Orange County Economic Development office present. Members met for approximately 25 minutes before staff joined the members and the official meeting began. D.R. Bryan called the meeting to order and thanked Steve for allowing the members to have a discussion prior to the meeting. Introductions were made around the table for the new member, Nitan Khanna.

Approval of Minutes for November 9, 2015 meeting:

MOTION by Delores Bailey to approve minutes; seconded by Mark O'Neal. Minutes were approved by consensus.

New Business:

- **Suggestions for Possible Projects for Orange County Economic Development's Advisory Board – Steve Brantley**
 - Marketing – Direction for Orange County Branding, Collateral Materials
 - State of North Carolina's "Certified Site" program regarding a property in our Buckhorn Economic Development District (EDD)
 - Orange County Economic Development's budget & key focus areas for 2016
 - Other topics of interest to Board members

Steve discussed Site Certification and having members visiting sites to give opinions about what to put on those sites, and, potential obstacles on sites that would prevent it from attracting businesses. These potential obstacles include rural land with housing etc.

D.R. Bryan shared that the Board discussed researching an analysis based upon the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) model.

Ron Keizer feels there should be a competitive strategic analysis completed, to determine what is Orange County good at, what are the weak areas, look at what is going on in the general economy- what is going on in the state, and then develop a strategy about what direction we should pursue based on those issues.

Steve Brantley advised that staff has been coming up with some suggestions similar to this in the past couple of months. With the diversified backgrounds of the Board, its members can focus on special areas and discuss.

D.R. Bryan asked about outside consultants to do that or work with the County. Steve confirmed it could be possible to fund a consultant.

James Watts asked if a corollary benefit for industrial would be learning about other uses for those potential areas within the district.

Nitan Khanna asked to focus on what we can drive the most and the fastest, if it's about development, then it's about the growth of the economy. To paraphrase, "to target something that is really hard to accomplish will take a lot longer. To accomplish something that is close to us is more approachable and should be the first target. We could all then decide if that segment is the right segment to go after from the marketing standpoint, from the SWOT analysis standpoint and zoning based on those priorities. If it's retail, let's focus on retail or industrial."

Jim Kitchen believes that is what the SWOT analysis should determine and then Economic Development can pursue it.

Ron Keizer thinks we first need to do more general work first and then apply it to each of those areas, and any others that may come up to the surface during the analysis.

D.R. Bryan asked staff to come up with concepts they view as strengths, weaknesses and opportunities and then have this Board create a subcommittee to review those issues. Afterwards there will be more information for the committee to possibly recommend if there is a need to bring in an outside consultant.

Ron Keizer feels it would be of real value to have staff do the work beforehand to prepare and then rather than just submitting it via email, we should have a working session of the Board. This includes with either the whole committee or whatever subcommittee we decide and have staff present at every meeting. Maybe with a facilitator but a lot of good things come out of discussion.

Our follow-up meeting will be held on March 21st on the 2nd floor conference room of Economic Development's building from 8 a.m. until 10 a.m.

Director's Report:

- **Update on Agriculture Grant program and upcoming Ag Summit - Mike Ortosky**
Mike Ortosky advised the Board of the upcoming Ag Summit and the current status of the Ag Grants. Also, PFAP has a new Board and the facility renovations for dry storage at the Cedar Grove community center.
- **Update on Prospect Activity & LAUNCH incubator and upcoming public hearing on the County's economic development expenditures - Steve Brantley**
Steve Brantley advised the members that the approval for a new 3 year interlocal agreement has been signed. Also, Jim Kitchen informed the Board that Launch has been designated as the fourth best incubator in the Country.

- **Update on Orange County's new searchable business web guide - Yvonne Scarlett**

The IT department is working on the data.

- **Update on Orange County's Small Business Loan & Grant programs - Yvonne Scarlett**

Yvonne Scarlett let the Board know there has been a dramatic increase in Business Loans and an even bigger interest in the Business Grants. To date, the loan programs has approved and dispersed \$627,000 and exhausted the revolving funds. Therefore, the County's Small Business Loan program will now be using the funds allocated from the ¼ cent sales tax. The grant program currently has 24 applicants requesting a total of \$235,000 and there is \$113,000 available. Since the start of the grant program, 28 loan applications have been awarded totaling \$183,000.

- **Roundtable Discussion on January 22 with Orange County's combined Economic Development agencies - Amanda Garner**

Amanda Garner advised the Board that a roundtable discussion is scheduled for the 22nd and the idea is to gather all the people who work in economic development, the County, towns, the chambers and UNC, to all get together to have a conversation to share and collaborate.

Adjournment