

LANE ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, February 26, 2018
TIME: 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Lane Council of Governments
859 Willamette Street, Suite 500
Eugene, Oregon 97401

CONTACT: Steve Dignam, 541-682-7450
sdignam@lcog.org

Lunch will be ordered for LEC Members unless you notify us of your inability to attend

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1. Agenda And Minutes

Documents:

[LEC 180122.PDF](#)
[FEBRUARY 26 AGENDA.PDF](#)

MINUTES

Lane Economic Committee

Lane Council of Governments (LCOG), Fifth Floor Conference Room

859 Willamette Street -- Eugene

January 22, 2018

11:30 a.m.

PRESENT: Robert Scoggin, Chair; Steve Dignam, Jessica McCormick, Paul Berger, John Milandin, Larry Brice, Mark Bodie, Mike Galvin, Jacob Clifton, Susie Johnston, Courtney Griesel, Julie Fischer, Ric Ingham, Anne Fifield

GUESTS: Micah Elconin, Maia Hardy, Dan Betschart, Denise Walters

1. Welcome/Introductions/Changes to the Agenda

Robert Scoggin convened the Lane Economic Committee (LEC) at 11:34 a.m. He announced a quorum was present.

Those present introduced themselves.

2. Public Comment

No public comment was made.

3. Comments from the Members, Chair & Staff

Mr. Berger requested a presentation at a future meeting from UO about the impacts on both the University and the economy of the decrease of foreign student attendance and the loss of grant funding through NIH and other agencies. Mr. Dignam proposed asking Karen Hyatt, LEC's UO representative, if she has any ideas about who could speak to these matters.

Mr. Dignam announced his retirement as of April 1, 2018.

Julie Fischer arrived at 11:38 a.m.

4. Update from Lane County Food and Beverage Sector

Micah Elconin, Lane Food and Beverage Sector (LFBS) Strategist, gave a slide presentation. Mr. Elconin gave a brief overview on the background of LFBS, which is a project of the Lane County Sector Strategy Team. He explained that the goal of the project is to solidify Lane County's position as a hub for diverse food and beverage companies by coordinating collaborative development projects, promoting its products and values, and creating opportunities to share knowledge and resources.

Mr. Betschart arrived at 11:47 a.m.

Mr. Elconin presented the following as the main strategies employed by LFBS to attain its goal:

(1) Develop shared resources to attract, retain, and grow local businesses. Most have needs surrounding product development, and those specific needs varied depending on the size of the

company. He has written a grant to Business Oregon for a feasibility study on forming a cooperative food product development center; (2) Create positive awareness and recognition through coordinated branded effort. Mr. Elconin said he is going about this by activating the community and getting them excited about food and beverage manufacturing, and he hopes that an organized industry association will develop.

Mr. Berger asked to what degree LFBS is seeking to do Lane County specific work, versus statewide, regional, or international work. Mr. Elconin responded that the focus of the companies in the area is on branding Eugene as a place to work, live, and do business, which will help with recruitment of upper level management.

(3) Build a stronger workforce. Mr. Elconin stated that LFBS is trying to create better connections between local education centers and the industry by helping to align the curriculum with food and beverage careers, running certain tours, career days, and other events; (4) Smooth utility costs. Mr. Elconin explained the need to increase awareness of utility assistance programs and utility costs, and he emphasized the need for better communication about these programs to mid-sized companies; (5) Streamline regulations and permitting. Mr. Elconin spoke about the Food Safety Modification Act (FSMA). Industry members will have a round table where they can share their best practices with regard to handling FSMA, network, and continue improving in this area; (6) Increase collaboration across the industry. Mr. Elconin reported that the companies find it important to create opportunities to connect and collaborate together.

Ms. Walters arrived at 12:05 p.m.

Mr. Elconin showed a slide of the various companies represented on his board, all of which started in the Eugene/Springfield area.

Ms. Fischer asked what the goal is regarding supporting companies in staying here and growing rather than selling, using Emerald Valley as an example.

Mr. Ingham arrived at 12:07 p.m.

Mr. Elconin responded that they are trying to help companies already here want to stay, make this area more attractive for other companies who might move here, and support growth from the ground up of new companies.

Ms. Fischer pointed out that in some cases, an owner would sell the company to its employees, but the employees do not have access to the capital to buy it out and remain in the community.

Mr. Elconin recognized that capital access is a big issue. He spoke about building connections with local lenders to increase opportunities for financing growth of companies and making them more lendable.

Mr. Berger mentioned the trend of food trucks and posited that this might be a path for underserved and undereducated people to enter the business and develop skills without much capital needed.

Ms. Fifield arrived at 12:15.

Mr. Brice asked whether wineries work with LFBS. Mr. Elconin replied that wineries have their own industry organization, and LFBS can collaborate with that organization.

Mr. Milandin asked a question about healthy foods in vending machines, and Mr. Elconin responded that his job does not involve specifically addressing health per se, although most companies here are natural food companies. He added that LFBS could facilitate a connection between companies and the School Garden Project.

Mr. Scoggin wondered what percentage of the LFBS companies have 10 employees or fewer, and 5 employees or fewer, but Mr. Elconin did not have those numbers on hand.

Mr. Ingham asked what economic development partners could do in the next five years to support the initiatives of LFBS. Mr. Elconin responded that they need to focus some time on the food and beverage industry and continue to be excited about the industry. Ms. Griesel pointed out that hiring Mr. Elconin provided a means to define the industry, and now the industry needs to show up and provide influence.

Mr. Dignam remarked that LCOG had helped some of the LFBS companies get access to capital, and he asserted that with the help of the banking community and some government loan programs, other companies should be able to do so as well. Mr. Elconin agreed and added that the companies that have the hardest time are the ones who have gotten a small loan but need another, bigger loan. It is his intent to educate food entrepreneurs to build their companies and make them as lendable as possible.

Mr. Berger asked about a laboratory sending products to Chicago for food testing, wondering if there is a business opportunity for that to happen locally. Mr. Elconin responded that if a product development center can be formed as a result of the feasibility study, that entity could address that.

5. Nomination for LCOG Regional Award of Merit for Economic Enhancement

Mr. Dignam explained this award, which is given out at LCOG's regional dinner.

Mr. Elconin left at 12:31 p.m.

Ms. Griesel stated that the subcommittee recommended Alko Investments as the recipient of the reward. Alko, owned by Al Patel, has developed hotel properties by utilizing programs in a tiered approach. Ms. Griesel also mentioned that there may be a need to draft proposed criteria for nominations and selections in future years.

Mr. Dignam and Mr. Scoggin agreed that more specific criteria should be set for future years, and that they would set up a subcommittee to work on that.

Mr. Dignam added that LCOG has helped Alko Investments with SBA financing for two hotels, and usually there is an attempt to tie this award to something with which LCOG has assisted.

Ms. Griesel moved that Alko Investments be recommended to the LCOG board for approval as the recipient of the award. Mr. Berger seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

6. Review minutes from November 13, 2017

Action item: Approve minutes

Mr. Galvin moved, seconded by Ms. Johnston, to approve the November 13, 2017 minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

7. Membership Update and Officer Election

Mr. Dignam reported that the terms of three LEC members - Barry Miller, Kelli Weese, and Ric Ingham - had expired, but that their terms are recommended for renewal. Mr. Scoggin added that Jessica McCormick from Lane Workforce had been the alternate to Kristina Payne, but that will be reversed, and Ms. McCormick will now be the member. Additionally, Gary Collins of First Interstate Bank will become an alternate for Mark Bodie.

Mr. Galvin moved to recommend the membership appointments and reappointments to the LCOG Board, seconded by Ms. Johnston. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Galvin moved, seconded by Mr. Milandin, that Mr. Scoggin be reappointed Chair and Mr. Ingham be reappointed Vice Chair. The motion carried unanimously.

8. Nomination for LCOG Loan Administration Committee

Mr. Dignam explained that due to the retirement of a member of the LAC, a replacement needed to be nominated for the LCOG Board's approval. Jamie Louie Smith of Columbia Bank was recommended by the LAC to fill that spot.

Mr. Berger moved, seconded by Ms. Johnston, to accept the LAC's recommendation of Jamie Louie Smith as the new member, and move this recommendation forward to the LCOG Board. The motion carried unanimously.

9. Set next meeting date: February 26, 2018

Mr. Scoggin said the next LEC meeting would be on February 26, 2018.

Ms. Hardy asked about Seth Sherry leaving Oregon Cascades West COG, and Mr. Dignam responded that hopefully a representative of that COG will be at the February meeting to provide an update. Mr. Dignam also mentioned that it's likely that Denise Walters and Dan Betschart will be involved in LEC after his retirement.

Mr. Scoggins adjourned the meeting at 12:47 p.m.

(Recorded by Rachel Burstein)

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All individuals are expected to observe respectful behavior and decorum during this public meeting. Anyone acting in a disruptive, disorderly or threatening manner will be asked to leave, and may be precluded from participating in future opportunities for public comment. Please be courteous and respectful. Please turn off or mute all cell phones and pagers.

1. Welcome / Introductions / Changes to the Agenda (5 minutes) Rob Scoggin
2. Public comment (5 minutes) Rob Scoggin
3. Comments from the Members, Chair & Staff (2 minutes) Rob Scoggin
4. Review minutes from January 22, 2017 (2 minutes) Rob Scoggin
Action item: Approve minutes
5. Update from Oregon RAIN (30 minutes) Marc Manley/
Caroline Cummings
6. The Economic Impact of Lane Community College (30 minutes) Brett Rowlett
7. CEDS Update (10 minutes) Phil Warnock
8. Strategic Direction for LEC (10 minutes) Howard Schussler
9. Set next meeting date: March 19, 2018 Rob Scoggin

Adjourn