



North Country Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee Meeting

MINUTES

November 10, 2016

Enterprise Center at Plymouth – Plymouth, NH

- **In attendance:** Doug Arion, Chris Wellington, Amy Bassett, Mike Claflin, Chuck Henderson, Ben Amsden, Bev Mason, Jo Lacallade, Rick DeMark, John Hennessey, Neil McIver
 - **Guest Speaker:** Eric Spieth – Executive Director/Enterprise Center at Plymouth
 - **NCC Staff:** B. Robinson, G. Coppelman, M. Moren-Grey
- **Meeting called to order** at 1:00pm by Chairman, Ben Amsden
- **Roundtable introductions** were made by attendees. Chairman Amsden thanked the Enterprise Center at Plymouth for hosting our meeting.
- **Acceptance of Minutes:** September 9, 2016 Minutes. Motion by Chris Wellington to accept the Minutes as written, seconded by Chuck Henderson. Passed unanimously.
- **CEDS Projects List:** Glenn Coppelman distributed the latest update to the CEDS Projects List. It was noted that 1) The Littleton River District project has put out an RFP for engineering; 2) The Student Entrepreneurship Center application to EDA was not funded, and that the project will move to the Projects in Planning and Development since PSU will pursue other funding avenues; and 3) Friendship House in Bethlehem is moving forward, with construction expected to begin in early 2017. Architectural plans are done, and the project is in the permitting stage. These items will be reflected in the Project List update at the January 13, 2017 meeting.
- **Guest Presentation:** Eric Spieth, Executive Director of the Enterprise Center at Plymouth (ECP) welcomed the CEDS Committee to his facility and expressed his desire to be actively involved with the Committee going forward. Eric reviewed the history of the ECP and indicated his excitement at being its new Director. He outlined the success of the ECP and announced that it is at 90% capacity. The final space is being fitted out with recent funding from the NBRC. Eric also noted that he will be rolling out a new business accelerator program at the ECP in the near future.

- **Annual CEDS Update:** In preparation for the Annual CEDS Update, the Committee reviewed the Goals and Objectives outlined in the current 2013-2017 CEDS. Suggestions were made to several of the Goals. These will be reflected in the pending Update.

- **Committee Roundtable Updates:**
 - John Hennessey discussed commercial development and the critical role it will play in the river district revitalization project in Littleton.
 - Barbara Robinson said that North Country Council will endeavor to be more innovative going forward, and will explore with partners the best way to accomplish this.
 - Amy Bassett reported that SBA's fiscal year ended with over 600 loans being made through more than 60 institutions in NH. She mentioned a business Matchmaker event taking place on December 2nd in Manchester. Also, stay tuned as the Federal Government will be in transition beginning in January.
 - Chris Wellington reported that loan activity is trending upward at GRDC.
 - Chuck Henderson is very encouraged by recent activity at the Groveton Mill site redevelopment. A new business is expected to bring upwards of 50 new jobs to the region.
 - Rick DeMark referred folks to NHwoodenergycouncil.org. He also announced a Statewide Gathering of the NH Food Alliance on November 15th at the Mtn. View Grand in Whitefield. Additional note was made of the North Country Farmer's Coop.
 - Jo Lacallade reported that Haverhill is having a difficult time attracting businesses to the community due to its high property tax rate. None the less, the town is working to attract new business to its Industrial Park.
 - Michelle Moren-Gray reviewed the results of a local products/supply chain survey recently conducted by NCC. 7000+ businesses were contacted, and 233 responded (approximately a 3-4% response rate). Phone calls and interviews are planned next.
 - Mike Claflin updated the group on the Friendship House project in Bethlehem. This 28-unit facility has received all its permits, but may face legal challenges before it can proceed. Mike will be meeting with the Woodstock/Lincoln Board of Selectmen to discuss ways of improving housing options in those communities.
 - Eric Spieth talked about creating an entrepreneurship culture by introducing the ECP to young people.
 - Bev Mason reported that USDA's fiscal year ended last month and that FY2017 is beginning under a "Continuing Resolution" funding scenario. She suggested getting funding applications in early.
 - Niel McIver discussed happenings in Plymouth including a new home for homeless Veterans (by Soldier On); a ski area reopening; a sewer & water upgrade to South Main Street; and an update to Zoning Ordinances.

- Doug Arion talked about how North Country businesses can't find the engineering talent it needs, and that exposing educational faculty members to businesses could be a good step toward resolving this. He also referred the Committee to a new JTOP report.
- Glenn Coppelman reminded the Committee that the next CEDS meeting will take place on January 13, 2017. Location will likely be NCC offices in Littleton.

***Chairman Amsden adjourned the meeting at 3:20pm. Several members availed themselves of the chance to tour the ECP with Eric Spieth.**

*****Next Full Committee meeting date, January 13, 2017
Location: North Country Council – Littleton, NH**

Respectfully submitted, Glenn Coppelman