



# North Country Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee Minutes

Friday, April 21, 2023 at 10 AM

Staff: Glenn Copleman, Kaela Tavares, Michelle Moren-Grey

Committee & Guest Attendance: Ben Amsden (NHCF), Benoit Lamontagne (BEA), Jeremy Knowlton (WMSI), Kathleen Kopp (WEDC), Peter Corey (NCIC), Sarah Young-Knox (Town of Albany), Steve Knox (Town of Albany), Annie McLean (NVDA), Jared Reynolds (Do North, NVU)

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

Kaela Tavares opened the meeting at 10:00 am.

Roll call & Introductions- completed as listed above.

## 2. Approval of Minutes: February 17, 2022

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted made by Harrison Kanzler, seconded by Peter Corey. No discussion.

Minutes approved unanimously.

## 3. Forest Product Accelerator Program: Discussion of North Country opportunities for involvement with an upcoming Forest Product Accelerator project being pursued by Northern Vermont Development Association and Do North Co-Working at Northern Vermont University; with guest Annie McLean (NVDA) and Jared Reynolds (Do North, NVU) [Check out Forest Accelerator the website for information here](#)

- A. Due North is a physical co-working space in downtown Lyndonville Vermont that's been open for five years and just recently expanded to skill mill workers. Due North will bring in experts so the community can meet their goals and support local entrepreneurs.
- B. One program is the course streak starter which is a 4-month accelerator program open to any northern American business to help with cross-border connections. Includes a commercialization curriculum which advertises new products or services. It also helps build strong connections between companies like leftover/low-grade wood that can be used by other companies.
- C. One of the tech companies created a price transparency between the logging companies and the sawmills that produce the lumbar. They deal with a diverse array of companies from solar to logging operations.
- D. It helps both start-up companies as well as existing companies that might need assistance/innovations in their company
- E. Targeting existing wood companies like sawmills, wood manufactures, and logging companies might benefit from innovation and gin economically from greener alternatives or new tech with their extra wood/ low-grade wood
- F. A question was raised about how much forest products NH produces per year.
- G. Finding a user that would take a significant amount of wood by-product will allow for a better economy in NH and innovation

- H. Poor infrastructure and investment is limiting the true north program and the launching of innovation from wood by-product
- I. There is currently no significant funding for the company only money that is coming in is from investors or people utilizing the business
- J. U Maine based start-up is looking for a wood by-product market to create their sustainable home-insulation, they are partnered with an international company looking for a U.S based market to sell to
- K. 12 local businesses completed a survey to determine how to engage entrepreneurs and small business in the innovation and how to interact with them best
- L. Finance is the lowest attended meeting/ info session because they have a great idea of their finances and how it will actually do in our area in our economy. They need better financial models in their businesses. Pricing etc...

4. Participant Share-out:

- a. Kaela said NCC is trying to connect with Vermont associations and companies as well as congressional spending project for support for using older downtown buildings and things that need help being developed. Will help allow for more housing and a progression behind thriving downtown areas, were using Kathlin to find which industrial zones and infrastructure is open and ready for housing uses
  - b. Ben at the charitable foundation and reevaluating multi-year operating grants and restructuring them to fit better with projects and people wanting to utilize them. Now they offer a one-year grant versus a three-year grant for projects.
  - c. Some of the funding for the homes are now linked so things that are broken or other inaccurate information is being updated so people have accurate information.
  - d. We invite the new EDA rep to the meeting for more information and add some knowledge to the meetings, the biomass plants purchased them hard tree corp who are involved with renewable energy. They reopened the biomass plant in Whitefield and Springfield NH and will soon be opening the one in Bethlehem.
  - e. Peter said that NCIC's Members voted to authorize it's Board to dissolve the company. The assets will be sold or transferred to an appropriate organization or organizations so that they can continue to be used in NH's North Country and VT's North East Kingdom in accordance with NCIC's mission. The resources are held in the public trust and this action will be overseen by the Charitable Trust Unit of the NH Attorney General's Office.
5. Adjournment: Kaela thanked the members for their attendance and participation. Meeting adjourned at 12:00.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Taylor Roy