

Minutes - Draft

PECS-Planning, Economic Development & Community Services Committee

Tuesday, April 27, 2021

2:00 PM

This meeting will be conducted via teleconference (Zoom). Simultaneous public access to the meeting will be available

(1) via live stream on DCTV's webpage,

(2) on DCTVChannel23.TV

Meeting Started At: 2:00pm

Present 3 - Member Jeff Rader, Chairperson Larry Johnson, and Member Mereda Davis Johnson

Attendees: Commissioners Johnson, Rader, Davis Johnson, Patrick, Bradshaw, Cochran-Johnson

I. MINUTES

2021-2488 Commission District(s): ALL
Minutes for the April 13, 2021 Planning, Economic Development, and Community Services Committee Meeting

MOTION was made by Mereda Davis Johnson, seconded by Jeff Rader, that this agenda item be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Member Rader, Chairperson Johnson, and Member Davis Johnson

II. STATUS UPDATE

Decide DeKalb IGA

-Z Williams: Mr. DeBarr and team have created the building blocks for a revised IGA with DeKalb County over the last several years

-D DeBarr: our current IGA has expired, and we are looking forward to being empowered to push aggressive economic development plans within the County

-presentation of economic development workplan, enhancements (2019-2023) of a new IGA; document will be circulated to BOC after PECS meeting

-Question MDJ: you are requesting \$6.5M over a 5 year period. This would increase your budget to about \$2M annually, from the around \$750,000 currently. Will you provide a breakdown/itemized budget of how those funds would be utilized? Are the cities in the county inputting funds into the budget? Also, could you provide ideas in what you'd like to do in underserved communities?

D DeBarr: Cities are not inputting funds in the budget; we will have collaboration across the board to ensure no favoritism to cities. Regarding the communities of promise, we have opportunities, for example providing small business loans and revitalization of vacant shopping centers

-Question JR: I am interested in the analysis that creates the assumptions that drive these recommendations. I'd like to understand what has been accomplished regarding the "branding" aspect, and how current conditions of the DeKalb brand has been created, what is the baseline for that, and where will you take this brand. I'd like to see the thought process that drives these projected outcomes in which the budget is structured. Also what deficiencies do you see in the marketing? Secondly, regarding workforce development, we do have WorkSource DeKalb; I'd like to better understand the evidence behind what you see behind DeKalb's deficiencies in the workforce, and your plan to address that. Our school system is a source, I'd like to see what your shared expectations are to move the student body into the productive workforce, so that the school board can see this economic development effort as key to their success also. Thirdly, I'd like to understand what you consider to be deficiencies in work-site locations in DeKalb, and differentiate those on the basis of new basic employment that has a multiplier effect and local serving real-estate development that demands local services that are dependent upon market forces. Fourthly, I would like to know the degree to which you factor in site limitations, and the County's ability to address that infrastructure at sites in underserved communities. What prevents businesses from locating within these places in this regard? Fifthly, in terms of organization, we need strategies that we work out with the school system and incorporated municipalities that may be part of the TADs so that they are effective players in the TAD's. Thus far we have not been able to have the school system be part of any TAD's. We need to provide them representation on Decide DeKalb's board, so that we continue to cultivate relationships between these stakeholders and the Decide DeKalb board. Lastly, I'd be interested in ensuring we have a virtuous incentive structure in place for Decide DeKalb, and remove any adverse incentives out of the picture.

LJ: by June we can have this come back and discuss the commissioners' full list of questions at that time

D DeBarr: Many of your questions are addressed by the currently SEDP; particularly in respect to branding, advertising, and marketing.

-Question SB: what is your overall operating budget? What has changed from the last time you requested increased funding? How do you see us in the future using any funding we provide and generating more?

D DeBarr: overall operating budget of \$3M. \$750,000 is for support staff. We earn about another \$500,000 from the community, with the rest coming from conduits/passthroughs. Without these conduits the budget is about \$1.25M. What has changed is that the SEDP was not finalized when we had the initial asks for funding increasing; the SEDP did call for a phased increase of \$2M in the budget. If you take Invest Atlanta for instance, the budget goes to the economic development team of about 50 employees, which is driven by the TAD.

-Question RP: could you provide comparative analysis of what other counties have for their economic development budget? That way we can say that we have an even playing field with the surrounding counties. Also, how long/expensive will it be to create a brownfield survey?

D DeBarr: we are currently working on that comparative study. Regarding your question on the brownfields, we are looking at a 6-12 month timeline; the fee for this may be \$50,000 or more

-Question LCJ: Does Decide DeKalb have its own comprehensive development plan that is in-house at this time; if so please forward that to me. Secondly, please include job descriptions in the positions increases you are requesting. Thirdly, please inform us of additional conventions across the U.S. in which DeKalb would have a presence to engage potential partner

organizations/companies.

D DeBarr: We do have our annual goals that feed into the 5-year strategic economic development plan. This ties into DeKalb's comprehensive plan as well.

-Question LJ: when looking at your different business entities, one size does not fit all. Make sure that you report back to us on how you will help the micro-enterprise sector get started, so that there is a school-to-work pipeline; also include immigrants/refugees that may have had micro-enterprises in their home country. Also look at incubator spaces to include. Also of your plan is going to be around redevelopment, that will require a special expertise. A revolving loan fund should be included in the proposal, to have seed money to those that may not have all of their startup funds. Also, industrial education programs, in partnership with WorkSource will be beneficial to include. Another component is international business relations, how do we capture the international market? I understand you will need the staff to do this. Please include these facets in your proposal, and put a price on it. First step is to come back in 2 weeks with a budget, and answers to the commissioner questions. Next, we can give the full BOC a recommendation by the middle of June.

-Z Williams: we were intending to manage this like our budget process, where we take commissioner requests, then provide an administration recommendation

-JR: please circulate the SEDP, the existing IGA even though it's obsolete. Did we officially adopt the SEDP? Also, please provide ideas on where the successful entertainment commission needs to go and resources it will need going forward.

Z Williams: there were 2; we adopted the SEDP several years ago, and not the one provided most recently

-LJ: please provide this information before the PECS meeting in two weeks so that commissioners are provided adequate review.

-JR: please also include language addressing affordable housing. How can we upgrade the quality and quality of life of our housing stock?

Meeting Ended At: 3:11pm

MOTION was made by Jeff Rader, seconded by Mereda Davis Johnson, that this agenda item was adjourned meeting. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Member Rader, Chairperson Johnson, and Member Davis Johnson

Barbara H. Sanders-Norwood CCC, CMC