

## DRIVE, An Economic Development Council of Governments

### Meeting Minutes for February 1, 2017

Attending: Board members Greg Cole, Lance Diehl John DeFinnis, Trevor Finn, Harold Hurst, Teri MacBride, Susan McGarry, Al Neuner, David Soltz Chris Young and Solicitor Karen Hackman

Excused: Matt Prosseda

The meeting was held at 114 Woodbine Lane, Suite 103, Danville and called to order by Chairman John DeFinnis at 8:01 AM. The chair welcomed everyone and recognized the guests in attendance: Karen Blackledge (Danville News & Daily Item), Fred Gaffney (Columbia Montour Partnership), Ken Holdren (Montour County Commissioner) and Bob Snyder (private developer).

#### Minutes:

*The minutes of January 4, 2017 were accepted without correction by motion of Trevor and seconded by Dave. Motion carried.*

#### Treasurer's Reports & Budget:

In Matt's absence, Lance reviewed the Treasurer's and Budget Variance reports through January 31, 2017. The reports show receipts of no income (CCIDA has not paid for 2016), expenses of \$15,600 and assets totaling \$208,070.59.

*A motion to approve the Treasurer's report was made by Al and seconded by Harold. Motion carried.*

#### Transition Volunteers' Report:

Greg reviewed the mail received and Susan described the email traffic including several site searches through Focus Central PA and one direct inquiry which was referred to the Montour County Commissioners and Danville Business Alliance.

John thanked the volunteers.

#### President's Report:

John reported he sent a letter to the Columbia County Planning Commission regarding the importance of maintaining industrial buildings for industrial purposes.

#### Old Business:

Al reported on the "Task Force" meeting saying that the same issues remain to be resolved and it is uncertain whether the BIDA board supports a true collaboration with DRIVE. The current BIDA proposal is to offer staff services on a contractual basis, with BIDA being the employer. Discussion ensued about effective collaboration including organizational structure, hiring decisions and staffing. Karen reminded members how DRIVE came to be a Council of Governments (COG) which was after the organizing taskforce discovered neither a 501c3 nor Municipal Authority setup would allow for DRIVE to be a marketing organization. She stated the two county solicitors were consulted. She said the founding agreements provide for adding partners, paying dues and adding new-partner seats on the DRIVE board,

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and even addresses possible expansion of the membership geography beyond two counties. She added that all parties remain independent, autonomous entities as would any entity that may join DRIVE in the future.

Following discussion, Matt, Trevor, and Ken (as an off-Board member) agreed to meet again with the BIDA representatives and report back before the March board meeting.

Trevor stated there has been a significant volume of economic development work, The county needs staff support and is anxious to move forward with hiring staff to manage projects.

John turned the meeting over to Karen.

#### Annual Meeting:

John turned the meeting over to Karen. Lance reported for the Nominating Committee that the three Class A members (John DeFinnis, Harold Hurst and David Soltz) agree to stand for another term.

*A motion to reappoint the three members was made by Lance and seconded by Harold. Motion carried.*

Karen called attention to Section 5.02 of the Articles of Incorporation, which provides that each county needs to take action on these appointments. Karen agreed to prepare communications from DRIVE to the counties in this regard.

John resumed chairing the meeting and the regular meeting resumed.

#### New Business:

There was discussion of an editorial in the Press Enterprise on January 25<sup>th</sup>. The writer highlighted the importance of vocational schools to career options, developing workforce skills and the good work of the Columbia-Montour Area Vocational Technology School.

*A motion to send a letter to the Berwick Area School District was made by Teri and seconded by Susan. Motion carried.*

There was discussion of a confidential Montour County site location project and the importance of DRIVE support for the project.

*A motion to authorize the chair to send a letter at his discretion for the purpose of stating DRIVE's support for the project was made by Trevor and seconded by Al. Motion carried.*

An Executive Session to interview a candidate for the vacant executive director position was called at 8:50 AM and ended at 9:45 AM. Karen departed at 9:30.

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The Regular Meeting resumed at 9:45 AM.

John announced that no decision on hiring professional staff will be made at this time. While DRIVE will continue to pursue staffing options with BIDA, DRIVE will concurrently pursue professional staff on a direct-hire basis. The board desires to resolve this matter quickly.

An Engagement Letter from Brewer and Company to prepare annual financial statements was presented by Lance. Adoption is recommended by Matt.

*A motion to engage Brewer as auditor was made by Lance and seconded by Greg. Motion carried.*

Adjournment:

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 1<sup>st</sup> at 8 AM, at the same location.

*A motion to adjourn was made by Susan and seconded by Harold. Motion carried.*

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 AM.

Submitted by Teri MacBride, Secretary