

## DRIVE, An Economic Development Council of Governments

### Meeting Minutes for January 4, 2017

Attending: Board members Greg Cole, John DeFinnis, Trevor Finn, Harold Hurst, Teri MacBride, Susan McGarry, Matt Prosseda, Chris Young

Excused: Lance Diehl, Al Neuner, David Soltz and Solicitor Karen Hackman

The meeting was held at 114 Woodbine Lane, Suite 103, Danville and called to order by Chairman John DeFinnis at 8:02 AM. The chair welcomed everyone and recognized the guests in attendance, Karen Blackledge (Danville News & Daily Item), Fred Gaffney (Columbia Montour Partnership), Rich Ridgeway (Columbia County Commissioner) and Bob Snyder (private developer).

#### Minutes:

*The minutes of December 7, 2016 were accepted without correction by motion of Harold and seconded by Greg. Motion carried.*

#### Treasurer's Reports & Budget:

Matt reviewed the Treasurer's and budget variance reports through December 31, 2016. The reports show receipts of \$24,422.21, expenses of \$2,500.00 and assets totaling \$223,670.59. The CCIDA contribution for 2016 is anticipated in January. It was noted that for the 2017 budget, non-committed donations are dependent on having staff in place. There was discussion of clarifying the expense description presently attributed to Focus Central PA to reflect it as PREP-related. All Montour PREP income comes to DRIVE and we comply with a separate service agreement between Danville Business Alliance and the Montour County board of commissioners that stipulates \$2500 goes to DBA. Matt will revise and address in the next report.

*A motion to approve the Treasurer's report with the clarification about the \$2,500 PREP (not Focus) expense was made by Trevor and seconded by Susan. Motion carried.*

Two invoices were presented for payment: \$15,000 Focus Central PA dues (\$7500 for each county) and \$600 PinPoint Strategies (half of website contracted work with balance on hold until staff is on board).

*A motion to pay the two invoices presented was made by Teri and seconded by Trevor. Motion carried.*

#### Transition Volunteers' Report:

Greg reviewed the mail received. Susan asked for clarification on what to do with the site searches that come via email. It was agreed she'll forward the search information to all board members who should then reply to Harold or Teri who both sit on the Focus Central PA Board. Until DRIVE hires staff, Lauren Bryson at Focus will remain our primary staff support for business expansion and attraction. Teri will try to attend some meetings on behalf of DRIVE. John noted the PREP Next Generation Sector Partnership initiative meeting summary is interesting. John thanked the volunteers.

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#### President's Report:

John stated a lot has been accomplished in the first year including development of many strategic contacts, establishment of policies and procedures, the progress on the website build out, gathering of contacts and databases of resources, and an open house was held in April. We have a good base for the next executive director.

The 2017 meeting schedule will remain 8AM the first Wednesday of the month. The annual meeting will be February 1<sup>st</sup>, and Lance Diehl has volunteered to again chair the nominating committee. He needs one volunteer and will be following up with board members about serving. The Class A members who may serve again are John DeFinnis and Harold Hurst. Dave Soltz has announced his retirement and departure from the area in 2017 so that seat will be considered "open" at some point in 2017.

#### New Business:

On behalf of the "Task Force" members (Matt, Lance and Al), Matt reported on a positive mid-December meeting with Berwick Industrial Development Association (BIDA) representatives Joe Scopelliti and Steve Phillips. Matt sees many areas where there is clear agreement of the parties but there are a few obstacles too, including the BIDA board acceptance of a participation in a formalized regional partnership and the details of that structure.

Discussion on the points of agreement and possible contention ensued: need for a regional umbrella entity to coordinate economic development in the two counties; need for broad representation on the board; importance of maintaining office locations in both counties; need for experienced and professional staff selected and endorsed by all partners; means to allow existing financial supporters' contributions to continue i.e. providing appropriate legal organizational structure for use of county and private sector funds; need for flexible goals i.e. family sustaining job opportunities in business and industry, tourism, commercial and health care sectors as well as opportunities for institutional self-sufficiency. There was additional discussion of whether BIDA leaders fully understand why and how DRIVE's status as a Council of Governments came to be created; BIDA's new commitment to a "cradle to grave" model of economic development support (start-ups to mature industries located in BIDA-owned & operated complex); the hazards of communities being heavily dependent on large employers from any specific sector which is common to Berwick and Danville and thus a shared issue of concern; and the role of county funding commitments and financial investments in economic development.

It was suggested the "Task Force" consider creating a flowchart of partner entities and their legal structures to clearly determine whether various organizational models under discussion can satisfy all potential partners' goals and interest to move forward.

*A motion to authorize Attorney Hackman to spend up to three-hours of professional services time to provide expertise and organizational background, and continue discussions was made by Greg and seconded by Harold. Motion carried.*

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Commissioner Ridgeway initiated discussion of the need for shovel-ready sites in the region where new family-sustaining jobs can be created. Concerns were expressed about a proposed "Human Services Overlay" to current zoning at the former Windsor Foods Plant which was most currently an industrial-food-grade facility, and a potentially rail-served site. The significant public investment in a flood protection system to ensure the possibility of ongoing industrial activity was highlighted. A proposal for another human services use by the current owner has been reported and many have toured the site and are seeking to find a productive use of the now-vacant building. The Columbia County Planning Commission has been asked to consider approving this new "Overlay" and Commissioner Ridgeway asked if DRIVE would consider writing a letter of support to retaining the use for industry.

*A motion to write a letter of support was made by Chris and seconded by Susan. Motion carried.*

An Executive Session to discuss applications for the vacant executive director position was called at 9:00 AM and ended at 9:10 AM.

#### Regular Session Resumed:

The Regular Meeting resumed at 9:12 AM.

John announced DRIVE will continue to accept letters and expressions of interest in filling the staff vacancy but no action will be taken at this time.

#### Adjournment:

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

*A motion to adjourn was made by Matt and seconded by Trevor. Motion carried.*

The meeting adjourned at 9:13 AM.

Submitted by Teri MacBride, Secretary