

**OFFICIAL  
EAST CENTAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL ASSOCIATION  
PROSPERITY EASTERN IOWA (PEI) PROCEEDINGS**

Regular Meeting: 3/27/17  
9:00 A.M. PEI  
ECIA Offices, Dubuque, Iowa

Present: Embree, Boss, McDonald, Kirchhoff, Heiar

Upon motion approved secretarial notes from the January 23, 2017 PEI meeting. (Unanimous)

Upon motion adjourned meeting at 11:03 a.m.

Detailed secretarial notes are available by completing a public information request to ECIA.

**SECRETARIAL NOTES  
PROSPERITY EASTERN IOWA (PEI)**

**DATE:** Monday, March 27, 2017  
**TIME:** 9:00 a.m.  
**PLACE:** ECIA, 7600 Commerce Park, Dubuque, IA

**VOTING  
MEMBERS  
PRESENT (8):**

=Absent  
\*by phone

- Donna Boss, Delaware County Economic Development (DCED)
- Angela Rheingans, DeWitt Chamber & Development Company (DCDC)
- Dan McDonald, Greater Dubuque Development Corp. (GDCC)
- Jacque Rahe, Dyersville Economic Development Corporation (DEDC)
- Dusty Embree, Jones Co. Economic Development Comm. (JCEDC)
- Dave Heiar, Jackson County Economic Alliance (JCEA)
- Dale Mescher, Cascade Economic Development Corporation (CEDC)
- Mike Kirchhoff, Clinton Regional Development Corporation (CRDC)

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

- Steve Shupp, Alliant Energy
- Greg Willging, Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC)
- Jay Wickham, Small Business Development Center (SBDC)/NICC
- Patty Manuel, Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative (MVEC)
- Mark Reinig, Center for Industrial Research and Service (CIRAS),  
Office of Economic Development & Industrial Relations
- Rudy Pruszko, Center for Industrial Research and Service (CIRAS),  
Office of Economic Development & Industrial Relations
- Marla Loecke, Iowa Workforce Development (IWD)
- Katie Bahl, Iowa Workforce Development (IWD)
- Ron Axtell, ECIA, IowaWorks
- Mike Kirchoff, Clinton RDC
- Janelle Kreiling, Clinton RDC
- Nicolas Hockenberry, Jackson County Economic Alliance (JCEA),  
and alternate for Heiar
- Jeff Beneke, STEM
- Andy Sokolovich, Clinton RDC
- Amy Green, Northeast Iowa Community College
- Kristin Dietzel, Greater Dubuque Development Corporation
- Marti Wolf, University of Iowa
- Samuel Odegemi, University of Iowa
- Todd Bagby, University of Iowa
- Emily Seiple, University of Iowa

**STAFF PRESENT:**

- Holly McPherson, Regional Economic Development & Sustainability Coordinator
- Kelley Hutton Deutmeyer, Executive Director
- Chandra Ravada, Director of Transportation and Planning
- Jerry Schroeder, Economic Development Director
- Sharon Nesteby, Executive Assistant

## **Petal Project Presentation from University of Iowa students – Initiative for Sustainable Communities**

Marti Wolf, Samuel Odegemi, Todd Bagby, and Emily Seiple, students in the Masters' Program at the University of Iowa and participants in the Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities (IISC), presented a powerpoint presentation on the evaluation and potential remake of the Petal Project to the board members. Over the past year, they have conducted interviews with community leaders and surveyed business owners in the Prosperity Eastern Iowa (PEI) region. 95% respondents are satisfied with the Petal Project, but want fewer criteria and more flexible options, along with changes to the membership fee. The students explained the key findings and four guiding principles of the Petal Project remake. Suggestions include a tiered program structure by creating three levels of certification covering not only the environment and efficient operations, but quality of workers and workplace; and recognition of those businesses that have completed the program with possible mentorships, lunch and learns, or as an advisory committee to share their knowledge and continued involvement after certification. The students proposed a toolkit giving businesses the first step in starting the program, with five categories in Effective Operations and Efficient Strategies and five categories in Quality Workers and Quality Workplace. They continued with case studies and noted two groups, Inclusive Dubuque and Opportunity Dubuque, who could offer assistance in obtaining the certification. Membership fee suggestions include a pro-rated scale by the tiered categories and certification; businesses pay for the value of the program; and after certification, businesses track their savings with donations to the Petal Project.

Discussion followed that the criteria could be different between urban and rural areas; that the criteria be relevant to the participating businesses; and the Quality Worker category to help attract and retain workers. The students also suggested that businesses register at the same time each year so they will be at the same level of participation, with an end-of-year recognition event to celebrate achievements.

Deutmeyer commented the original intent of Petal's focus was on manufacturing, but is now focused on non-profits and Grants to Green; and that the program may need to return its focus to manufacturing. She also thought integrating inclusivity into the Quality Workplace aspect is important. It will be difficult for staff to work with businesses in the Petal Project without membership fees to cover their time. Deutmeyer said Clarke University is currently working through the Petal criteria.

Board members and staff thanked the students for their hard work and presentation on Petal.

### **Call to Order**

### **Introductions**

### **Welcome to the Clinton Regional Development Corp. for rejoining PEI**

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Embree at 9:40 a.m. Introductions by board members and staff followed. McPherson welcomed Mike Kirchhoff from Clinton Regional Development Corporation, noting they have rejoined the PEI group.

### **Approval of Secretarial Notes (action item)**

#### **a. January 23, 2017 Minutes**

Motion by Boss, second by Heiar to approve the secretarial notes from the January 23, 2017 PEI meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

### **IEDA Grant Funding**

#### **a. NICC Business Summit**

McPherson distributed a spreadsheet to the board members explaining that at the January PEI meeting, it was decided to make available the first-year \$11,400 IEDA grant funds to the members by population percentages; in the same way membership dues are accessed. These grant funds can be used as sponsorships to businesses for any program events that address workforce challenges such as retention, recruitment, employee engagement, company culture and technology. She noted that if funds are not used, they should be returned to PEI for redistribution to other members. The IEDA grant funds must be used by December 31, 2018 or returned to the State. McPherson referred to a flyer with details on the Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) Business Summit that members could pay registration fees for their business people to attend on May 23. She requested members submit paperwork to her for reimbursement for the sponsorship/registration fees.

### **PEI Strategic Plan**

#### **a. Goals**

McPherson said it was determined by the PEI members to discuss one Strategic Plan goal at a time at upcoming meetings. She distributed Goal #1 (Attract and cultivate a world-class workforce that meets the needs of existing and future industries) to the board members. Discussion followed by board members and staff concerning each bullet item with suggested activities listed below the items.

Several changes include combining the third and sixth bullets (Increase and diversity workforce housing options and Market the quality of life in the region); consolidate all items under Educate businesses and include apprenticeships; and drop the regional housing study and feasibility of a regional collaboration with an existing regional workforce website.

Reinig commented that the fiscal analysis of each community and county, with indicators of agriculture, health, workforce and more, is completed and available on the Iowa State website. He will arrange a presentation at an upcoming PEI meeting if board members and staff are interested.

McPherson noted that the Strategic Plan is a guide, with information gathered for the annual update to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) document required by the Economic Development Association (EDA).

Discussion continued on credentialed or non-traditional business apprenticeships, confidential information not entered into Synchronist; and perception of skilled trades by students versus parents. Kirchhoff suggested board members watch a video on their website about manufacturing and perceptions. Board members proposed that advocating for pro-workforce program development with area legislators should be added to Goal #1 as part of the umbrella statement. A list of all available programs, resources and initiatives to be handed out to businesses would be useful. Discussion continued that Iowa Workforce Development staffing in

rural areas is insufficient; Federal Bonding and Workforce Tax Credit are two critical components as it pertains to businesses; and quality of life for millennials.

McPherson will make the suggested changes to Goal #1. She will send Goal #2 to the board members for discussion at the May PEI meeting.

### **USDA – Upcoming Grant Trainings**

#### **a. Brownfield’s Workshop, April 5 and 6, 2017**

McPherson noted ECIA is partnering with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), along with Kansas State University and the Delta Institute, to hold two Brownfield Workshops: April 5 at Maquoketa and April 6 at Manchester. She will register any interested parties.

#### **b. Business Retention Presentation by Laith Ward, May 22, 2017**

Laith Wardi, CEcD, will follow the next PEI meeting to discuss Business Retention & Expansion at a Lunch & Learn on May 22 at ECIA.

### **Idea Sharing/Other Business/Events**

#### **a. Downtown Forums – Filling that Vacancy**

McPherson distributed information on 2017 Downtown Forums....Filling that Vacancy to the board members; one will be held in Maquoketa on June 13 with registration on the IEDA website.

#### **b. Other**

Pruszko said an ISO workshop will be held in Dubuque on June 6 with new standards in place by 2018. Information is available on the CIRAS website; he will send a flyer to McPherson for the board members.

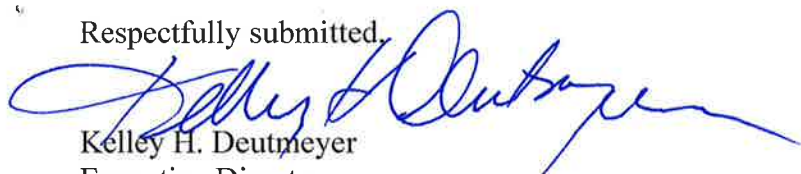
McPherson invited all members to a Freight-Study lunch meeting immediately following.

The next PEI meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 22, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. at ECIA.

### **Adjourn**

Motion by Heiar, second by McDonald to adjourn the meeting at 11:03 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kelley H. Deutmeyer  
Executive Director