

MINUTES  
**Veneta Economic Development Committee**  
**Wednesday, February 10, 2016 – 2:00 p.m.**  
Veneta Administrative Center, 88184 8th Street, Veneta, Oregon

Present: Jason Alansky, Linda Boothe, Dave D'Avanzo, Ryan Frome, Len Goodwin (Chair), Charles Ruff

Absent: Thomas Cotter, Gina Haley-Morrell, Herb Vloedman (Vice Chair)

Others: Ric Ingham, City Administrator; Claudia Denton, Economic Development Specialist; Caroline Cummings, Oregon RAIN Venture Catalyst (guest speaker); Maia Hardy, Community LendingWorks staff (audience); Carolyn Heckler, resident (audience).

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**1. Call to Order**

- a. Chair Len Goodwin called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

**2. Public Comment**

- a. No public comment.

**3. Administrative**

- a. Approval of Minutes:

**Motion: Linda Boothe made a motion to approve the minutes from January 6, 2016. Charles Ruff seconded the motion which passed with a vote of 6-0.**

**4. Implementation of Action Plan**

- a. Caroline Cummings from Oregon RAIN in Eugene: Presentation and Q&A

Len Goodwin introduced Caroline Cummings, Venture Catalyst with the Regional Accelerator and Innovation Network (RAIN), which helps entrepreneurs start and scale their ventures, and helps communities in Oregon launch entrepreneurial ecosystems in their regions.

Caroline Cummings described RAIN, her position there, the entrepreneurial and traded sectors, and important connections with her work to other organizations and resources. Her work covers the four county region of Lane, Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties. RAIN works with all kinds of start-up ventures within the traded sector. She explained the Willamette Angel Conference to match entrepreneurs with Angel Investors, which will be held in Eugene on May 12<sup>th</sup> 2016.

Ms. Cummings explained the "Meet Up" program where a local organizer sets up community gatherings for entrepreneurs and partners to talk about RAIN and other specific topics.

Ms. Cummings said the Economic Development Committee members could support the entrepreneurial sector and RAIN by becoming mentors through MentorPitch, a phone app created to virtually connect mentors and mentees.

Ms. Cummings offered to help set up Meet Up events in the Veneta area. She said

these “pull” models, where organizers “pull” interested businesses to come to them, tend to get more receptive audiences than the “push” models, where organizers go to the businesses.

Ms. Cummings opened up the Q&A.

Len Goodwin commented that this “pull” model with Meet Ups may be a good complement to the “push” Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E) model the EDC is currently pursuing. Ms. Cummings said it’s a great idea to do both.

Ms. Cummings explained that there are three models of economic development: Business Retention & Expansion, Recruitment, and Entrepreneurship & Innovation.

Ric Ingham explained that the information needed and the types of businesses in Veneta required more of a BR&E approach. Ms. Cummings said it would be a good idea to combine “pull” events with the BR&E “push” model. Ms. Cummings said that her Flex time with RAIN allows her to do a variety of work, and she would be willing to host a Mentorship seminar in Veneta at no cost. The seminar would be adapted to the business types of the area and connect local entrepreneurs and existing business owners to Meet Ups, MentorPitch, and business surveys created by Caroline to assist the current economic development efforts.

Len Goodwin said that Veneta is a “bedroom community” and many of the innovators and entrepreneurs go to Eugene to seek resources. He asked if it was better for Veneta to stimulate the economic development process by encouraging these individuals to go to Eugene-based resources like RAIN, or to be “stand alone” and try to invest in a local resource available in Veneta. Ms. Cummings said it is better to utilize existing resources in places like Eugene which can leverage other centralized existing resources. She said Meet Ups and seminars are good options to host more locally.

Len Goodwin asked how to move ahead the great ideas that may stem from local Meet Ups. Ms. Cummings replied that RAIN staff, such as Joe Maruschak, could attend the event(s), who could then move things forward. RAIN staff would assist in promoting the event.

Caroline Cummings thanked the Economic Development Committee for their time. She suggested reaching out to the Ford Family Foundation for support for these programs. Ric Ingham replied that there were already relationships in place and the Ford Family Foundation is currently funding other local efforts including the BR&E program.

## **5. Program/Project Updates**

### **a. Business Retention & Expansion Program and Business List**

Len Goodwin asked Claudia Denton to talk about the updated BR&E Business List. Denton said the list incorporated all the changes previously requested by the Committee, and was complete but could be revised pending Committee comments. She said the list is still a “hopeful” list, with the intention being to invite the businesses to participate, but most of the businesses had not yet been contacted.

In response to a comment by Ric Ingham, Claudia Denton said the non-primary businesses could be contacted in a calculated manner, perhaps seeking out similar businesses to those that decline to participate.

Ryan Frome asked who the intended “interviewee” staff member would be at the larger businesses such as Bi-Mart and Ray’s, and what would be gained from interviewing them, since the local managers would be employees rather than owners, CEOs, or other decision makers. Ric Ingham said it would still be beneficial to see how those larger chains are doing, especially since Ray’s had closed other locations, including Creswell, last year. Other issues or concerns could come out of the conversation that the City would want to know about. Len Goodwin said it would also be important to know how the corporations view the community, especially since Veneta could benefit from recruitment of other businesses relocating into the Veneta area. Maia Hardy in the audience, the former Community and Economic Development Coordinator for the City of Creswell, said the CEO of Bi-Mart is very accessible and may be willing to engage in conversation. Ric Ingham said it would be a good idea to talk to both the local store managers and the CEOs. Ryan Frome said the CEO of Bi-Mart may have an interesting perspective from working with lots of different cities.

Linda Boothe said that although she missed the last Committee meeting and Open House, she reviewed the feedback from the January Open House. Boothe had heard from Pam Petersdorf, owner and operator of the Fern Ridge Review Newspaper, who had said she was very interested in participating in the BR&E program, and asked if it was possible for the Fern Ridge Review to be added to the business list. Ric Ingham said the Fern Ridge Review is a good example of the type of business that may be under the radar currently but would be very missed if it were to disappear, and from that standpoint it would be a good idea to add them to the list.

Claudia Denton added the Fern Ridge Review to the Business List.

b. Visitation Team Recruitment

Claudia Denton presented the updated Visitation Team recruitment flier.

Claudia Denton asked the Committee for feedback regarding the attached Visitation Team recruitment letter. Denton said this letter would be sent to individuals that the Committee or staff had identified as good candidates for the Visitation Team. The letter would be sent on behalf of the Committee Chair and the Mayor. She said the Visitation Team still needed several more members, and recruitment was about halfway.

Len Goodwin said he had a couple of people in mind.

c. Open House Event Overview and Next Steps

Len Goodwin said the logical first step response to the Open House [on January 14<sup>th</sup>] is to communicate to the business community, “here is what we heard”. After that, connect with the residents and community as a whole and get their idea and perspective of these issues that were brought up.

Ric Ingham said the Committee and City should be communicative and responsive to those who attended the Open House and the feedback that was received. He suggested actionable items, including following up in the next Committee newsletter with Farmers Market activity, System Development Charges (known as SDC fees) research follow-up, and the potential to convert the Fern Ridge Chamber of Commerce's Wineries Without Walls space to a business incubator space.

Len Goodwin said the Open House feedback should be addressed in the next newsletter. Some items could be immediately responded to, while other items would require more time, which should be communicated in the newsletter.

Dave D'Avanzo said it is important to address both perceptions and facts. Some problems may be perceived or inaccurate, but are still important to address at the root of the misconception.

Jason Alansky said the next newsletter should include a recap of the Open House, "we listened, here is what we heard, and here is what we came up with" taking care not to have an accusative or dismissive tone. The next following newsletter could include an article about SDC fees in other cities.

Ric Ingham said it would be interesting to compare Veneta and Creswell, and addressed Maia Hardy in the audience, a former staff with the City of Creswell. Creswell has not completed major water and sewer infrastructure improvements like Veneta has, so Creswell will have to address those costly issues in the future. Veneta has completed a lot of capital improvements in recent years, putting the SDC fees to use. He said Cottage Grove has not updated their Master Plan or Facilities Plans in the last 10-12 years. The combination of outdated, low SDC fees and buildup of necessary capital improvement will become a problem for them.

Len Goodwin said another newsletter or media item could be Highway 126. Ric Ingham said there is an adopted Corridor Plan, but funding is an issue. Len Goodwin said all the Open House Feedback should be addressed, but to select several non-controversial topics as well.

Ric Ingham said the Open House feedback should also be woven into the Committee's work plan. He suggested that in response to feedback about "need for networking and collaboration", the Committee could host regularly scheduled events at Domaine Meriwether for anyone that wants to talk about local business and how the Committee or City could be of assistance.

Len Goodwin asked Claudia Denton to draft up newsletter ideas.

Len Goodwin asked the Committee if it was too early to plan something to the community as a whole [rather than specifically to the business community]. He said he felt it was too early, but wanted to ask the Committee's input.

Ric Ingham said the newsletter could be added to the City website. He said he could ask the Veneta Farmers Market to draft a white paper on "the effects of farmers markets on encouraging local farmers" and "the role of farmers markets for farms [and other market participants] to become more viable businesses". He

also asked about the Committee addressing the need for more affordable commercial office space.

Len Goodwin said he thought the topic of commercial space should be discussed further at a future Committee meeting. Charles Ruff said he had previously suggested creating a commercial space inventory, and would like this to be implemented. Ric Ingham said that an inventory had been created in the past but would need to be updated and refreshed. He asked Claudia Denton to add it to her work plan.

The Committee and staff discussed the Open House feedback about Veneta lacking an iconic focus point, and lack of outward identity.

Claudia Denton said she would work with the Committee Chair to ensure that Open House feedback would be addressed appropriately through the newsletter, future Committee meetings, or staff time.

After brief discussion, Jason Alansky said the potential networking and collaboration events could be hosted by the Chamber of Commerce, and would bring it up during a future Chamber board meeting. Charles Ruff said it should be a partnership between the Chamber and the Committee in order to be more inclusive. Jason Alansky said he agreed that it should be a partnership and be very inclusive, and would be promoted as a business community get-together rather than a Chamber-specific event. He said it would be great to invite speakers such as Caroline to attend and discuss topics such as start-up enterprises.

Ric Ingham said that guests such as the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) and their ability to create a detailed Market Analysis are the types of presentations that would be good to “pull” an audience.

Claudia Denton asked the Committee to clarify if there were any actions requested from her. Len Goodwin said not until the next meeting, after the Chamber board has had time to discuss it. He asked Claudia to add it as an agenda item for the next meeting.

d. Timeline for Future Events

i. Lane County Economic Development Guest

Ric Ingham said that inviting Lane County Economic Development staff to a future Committee meeting would be beneficial for the Committee’s work plan, particularly for the business recruitment-oriented action items (1.2.1 and 2.3.1).

ii. South Willamette Economic Development Corporation (SWEDCO) Guest

Similar to inviting Lane County Economic Development staff, Ric Ingham said that inviting a speaker from SWEDCO to a future Committee meeting would be beneficial for the Committee’s work plan, particularly for the business recruitment-oriented action items (1.2.1 and 2.3.1).

iii. Combined Market Analysis Event with Open House or BR&E Conclusion Event

Ric Ingham said that inviting staff from the Department of Land Conservation and Development to do a presentation about a Market Analysis during the BR&E conclusion event in the summer months would be a nice “pull” to bring in an audience.

Ric Ingham said there are plans for Century Link and other fiber providers to attend future Committee meetings, and that he felt it is important to regularly invite speaking guests to meetings. The Chair and several Committee members agreed. Len Goodwin said that Century Link staff was invited to the March meeting, and asked about inviting Sarah Case from Lane County Economic Development in April.

Ric Ingham asked the Chair and the Committee about inviting Sarah Case and SWEDCO at the same time. There was brief discussion about whether or not SWEDCO was active. Len Goodwin said that if SWEDCO was active and had available staff, to invite them to a Committee meeting [at the same time as Lane County staff if available].

## **6. Other**

- a. Work Plan Action 1.1.4: City Prioritization for Economic Development Incentives  
Ric Ingham said that Claudia Denton was working on an Urban Renewal Agency Redevelopment Tool Kit, a Business Loan Program, and a City-wide incentive tool kit. He asked that the Committee participate and review the Redevelopment Tool Kit during the next Committee meeting and other materials as they become available. The three incentive programs would then be sent to the Urban Renewal Agency or City Council for review and approval.

Len Goodwin said it would be great for the Committee to participate, and to add those items to the agenda as they become available.

Ric Ingham said the City was also trying to attain grant funding for a consultant to produce a market analysis and Downtown Next Steps plan. He said once funding is in place, he would like to review the Request for Proposals (RFP) with the Committee.

- b. Economic Forecast 2016  
Ric Ingham asked the Committee members if anyone wanted to attend the Economic Forecast 2016 on February 29<sup>th</sup> 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. at the Hult Center in Eugene, hosted by the Eugene Chamber of Commerce. He said the City had some funding to purchase tickets, and to contact Claudia Denton if interested. Len Goodwin said he would like to attend. Dave D’Avanzo said he was already scheduled to attend through his employer.

## **7. Next Meeting**

- a. The next meeting was confirmed for Wednesday March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at 2 p.m. with a regular meeting schedule of the second Wednesday of the month.

## **8. Adjourn**

- a. Chair Len Goodwin adjourned the meeting at 3:35 p.m.