



Central Virginia Planning District Commission Executive Committee Minutes

*Executive Committee and Regional/Local Economic Developers meeting
Ramey Auditorium, VDOT, Campbell Ave, Lynchburg*

March 06, 2019

Attendees:

Kenneth Campbell, Amherst County
Sara Carter, Amherst Town
Waverly Coggsdale, Altavista
Robert Hiss, Bedford County

Dean Rodgers, Amherst County
Frank Rogers, Campbell County
Bonnie Svrcek, Lynchburg

Staff and Others:

Traci Blido, Bedford Economic Development
Gary Christie, CVPDC
Mike Davidson, Campbell Economic
Development
Chris Faraldi, Lynchburg Regional Business
Alliance
Jamie Glass, Lynchburg Regional Business
Alliance

Victoria Hanson, Amherst Economic
Development
Kelly Hitchcock, CVPDC
Megan Lucas, Lynchburg Regional Business
Alliance
Marjette Upshur, City of Lynchburg Economic
Development and Tourism
Mary Zirkle, Town of Bedford Economic
Development

Gary Christie welcomed the group and outlined the purpose of the meeting to explore next project opportunities, especially next GO Virginia grant opportunities.

Improving the readiness of an existing industrial site in each County and the City

Megan Lucas discussed a GO Virginia grant that the Regional Business Alliance is working on to upgrade the state of readiness of an industrial site in each County and the City. Megan reminded the group that the Alliance has reviewed many of the public industrial sites and determined a cost estimate to raise the Tier Level, often times by performance a due diligence activity that would be required by a prospect. Several comments about the duration and shelf life of these due diligence activities were acknowledged. It was noted that often these Tier upgrades were good for five years and it was important that we be ready to respond to market requests.

Dean Rodgers noted that doing this engineering assessment/work as a group would result in a lower price when compared to doing this work individually. Bonnie Svrcek noted that the Airport site was not included in the proposed list.

It was noted that having sites designated as Tier 5 would help bring prospects who may look at other sites.

Natural Gas

The installation of Natural Gas was discussed but the consensus was that a \$100 million price was unaffordable. It was commented that gas is available in Appomattox and at TEVA in Bedford. CVTC has access to gas but no tap.

GO Virginia application for a Master Plan Development at the Central Virginia Training Center

Several suggested that we pursue a GO Virginia grant for \$250,000 to be matched with \$250,000 from the Local Government Council or from private sources or a combination. Megan said that she has a consultant service identified to develop this Master Plan for \$500,000.

Victoria Hanson noted that the economic impact of the Training Center is at \$87 million and it could come back if CVTC were redeveloped. Megan noted that initial costs to clean the site was \$50 to \$100 million.

STEM Academy Scholarships

It was noted that participation at the STEM academy is often dependent on how much financial support comes from the local school board and suggested that we work to find supplemental funding to allow more students to attend the STEM Academy. Dean commented that STEM is still college bound and we should focus our energies on a vocational technical center. Megan suggested that Lynchburg City School's educators should look for a pathway to help students into vocational and career technical education programs.

Megan noted that Alliance and Workforce Board members went to Alabama to see a Career Technical Education center. Megan also mentioned that an Educators Academy like the one they saw in Alabama is being discussed here. Chris Faraldi noted the importance of counselors and parents encouraging students to look at all career options, including vocational/technical.

It was commented that we need machinists in this area.

Mean noted that there is a study underway to collect information from the business community about their workforce needs and interests.

Agriculture and Bedford Train Stop

Traci Blido suggested that our comprehensive economic development strategy should include a section of Agriculture and the proposed Amtrak stop in Bedford.

GO Virginia Macro-Region

It was suggested that we examine the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies of all three regions within GO Virginia Region 2 to see if there are commonalities that we can take advantage of.

The Thing that excites, brings together, motivates

Sara Carter said that successful regions pick a thing and pursue it to build regional identity and enthusiasm. Identify the one thing that will have an “Ah Ha” factor and will build energy around. Megan suggested that the CEDS be used to elevate the region. Gary said he would check with John Provo to see if Virginia Tech has done research comparing the three regional CEDS.

Importance of Collaboration

Marjette Upshur commented that Roanoke has anchor institutions like Carillion who work together with the nonprofits and governments to make important initiatives and partnerships.

Central Virginia Training Center

Dean noted that the CVTC redevelopment plan could lead to the area becoming an important manufacturing center. Victoria noted that we’ve been successful at getting over \$800,000 from the Virginia General Assembly for site remediation. All agreed that the Commonwealth is not set up to redevelop this property in the highest and best use that will also benefit Amherst County and the region. Several argued that no one will step up if we don’t. One comment from Staunton said that locals have to take ownership of the revitalization of the Training Center properties.

It was noted that when the redevelopment plan is completed it would become part of Amherst County's comprehensive plan.

Next steps

The CVPDC Executive Committee will discuss this further at the next meeting. Megan offered to provide the scope of work that would be used for the redevelopment planning process.