

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASKFORCE

There was a meeting of the Indian River County (IRC) Economic Development Taskforce on Wednesday, April 4, 2007, at 2:00 p.m. in the First Floor Conference Room "A" of the County Administration Building, 1840 25th Street, Vero Beach, Florida.

Present were members: Chairman William Penney, Banking Appointee; Penny Chandler, Indian River Chamber of Commerce (IRCOC) Appointee; Talmage Rogers, Jr., Citrus Industry Appointee; Ray Coniglio, Sebastian River Area Chamber of Commerce Appointee; and Deborah Segal, Member-at-Large Appointee

Absent was member: Linda Schlitt-Gonzalez, Member-at-Large Appointee (excused).

Also present were IRC Staff: Sasan Rohani, Chief Long Range Planning; Bill Schutt, Senior Economic Development Planner; Terri Collins-Lister and Carolyn Clarkin, Staff Assistants IV.

Call to Order

Chairman Penney called the meeting to order.

Discuss Revisions to the County's Targeted Industry Sectors

Chairman Penney referred to the Draft Indian River County Target Industry Report Card 2001-2005 (Report Card) and noted the purpose of the Report Card was to measure the results of the efforts to attract high quality jobs. He mentioned the Report Card tracked over time would tell whether the County was really growing the jobs and wages in the targeted industries, which would lead to the question of whether these were the right targeted industries.

Chairman Penney asked the committee what their desired outcome was for the meeting and what the group agreed upon as to what the targeted industries should be.

Mr. Rogers clarified that any recommendation made by this committee would be taken back to the Economic Development Council for approval.

Ms. Chandler handed out material which was an overview of what Enterprise Florida considers as the State of Florida's key industries, a copy of which is on file in the Commission Office.

Mr. Rogers asked whether the Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund (QTI) had been updated. Mr. Bill Schutt, IRC Senior Planner, noted the July 2005 QTI was the most recent revision. Ms. Segal wondered if any business had utilized the QTI. Mr. Schutt mentioned Extreme Systems had utilized the QTI in the year 2005 and Girard Equipment had just recently applied.

Mr. Rogers opined any target industries the EDC would happen to choose should be in agreement with what the state supports. Mr. Coniglio was surprised the QTI was not updated because the state was making a lot of funds available for both the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Energy for alternative fuels. Mr. Schutt indicated he had talked with the state and it was determined alternative fuels were included under chemical manufacturing.

Mr. Rogers stated unless the QTI was broken down to the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Codes, the QTI would be so broad that the committee would be chasing after everything which would be meaningless. He suggested choosing three to four of the NAICS codes and making them the focal points for the Chamber of Commerce and EDC to go after.

Ms. Segal opined more research would be needed before limiting the targeted areas to make sure the chosen business were viable one that would want to come to IRC as opposed to somewhere else.

Chairman Penney wondered if there should be a large list of target industries to respond to but a narrow list to focus on locating to IRC.

A discussion ensued on clarification of the EDC Taskforce. Chairman Penney concluded there was a discussion at the March 20, 2007 EDC Meeting and it was questioned whether the EDC had the right targeted industries. Mr. Coniglio emphasized the EDC Taskforce should look at the real need in the County instead of the want.

Ms. Segal suggested maybe a search of businesses which were clean industry that paid higher wages and would perhaps be able to utilize some of the citrus land that no longer was used in IRC.

Mr. Sasan Rohani, IRC Chief Long Range Planner, stated another way was to look at an industry within the County and then look at the suppliers providing services or materials to that industry.

Ms. Chandler indicated the Indian River Chamber of Commerce was targeting industries; however it may take up to ten years before the business would even come and visit IRC.

A lengthy discussion ensued on the target industry list and the format for the Report Card. Ms. Chandler felt the report should give a snapshot of the sectors contained in the QTI and be able to track how the sector had grown over a period of five years, any changes in the average wage, the number of new businesses added or those in which had closed in that particular sector to give the report more clarification. She continued a snapshot of the QTI which included for example: Homeland Security, Aviation, Agriculture, and Technology would give everybody on the EDC an idea of what we were about. Chairman Penney opined it was a good point and mentioned if the EDC Taskforce passed out a piece of paper to the EDC with a list of QTI and asked the committee to check yes or no there would be a lot of adverse answers.

Ms. Chandler pointed if the Report Card was done by sectors, then the EDC could look at what QTI were increasing or decreasing and be able to focus more. Mr. Coniglio concluded sectors would never be out of date because regardless of what comes along it would fit into one of the sectors, whereas if you list sub-categories it may not be the trend. Ms. Chandler volunteered to work with Mr. Schutt to create a draft of the second Report Card.

A discussion ensued on the information contained in the Report Card. Ms. Chandler suggested getting a basic format, do a snapshot by category and then break it down.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on April 17, 2007 immediately after the EDC meeting, if time permits. Ms. Chandler suggested inviting Emerge Interactive to give a presentation on what they were doing at a future EDC Meeting.

Adjournment

There being no business the meeting adjourned at 3:22 p.m.