

MINUTES

DUTCHESS COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION BUSINESS SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, 12/3/09 7:45 a.m.
DCEDC, 3 Neptune Road, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

Present: P. Calogerakis, E. Griffin, T. McQuade, M. Sweeney, M. Tomkovitch

Absent: R. Akeley, J. Bonura Jr., Dr. D. Conklin, S. Dahowski, J.C. Fouéré, A. DeDominicis, J. DeMarco, R. Higgins, L. Holfelder, K. Libolt, L. Morris, R. Savage, D. Tooker, S. Wesley

Staff: J. MacEnroe, C. Maloney, S. Obermaier

Chairman's Welcome

Paul Calogerakis called the regular meeting of the Dutchess County Economic Development Corporation Business Services Committee to order at 7:45 a.m.

- P. Calogerakis opened the meeting by briefly mentioning that after discussion at the last meeting, the committee has decided to “switch gears”: EDC staff is taking on a more active role in developing activities and events and will bring them to the committee for added suggestions and feedback. Also, Simone Obermaier was introduced as the new business development assistant.

Procurement Initiative

- Staff met with three out of the five colleges;
- Colleges already purchase as much local as possible
- Issues that staff heard about instead:
 - MWBE certification would give businesses an edge
 - Credit card acceptance would also help raise sales for local businesses to colleges
- John MacEnroe mentioned that DCEDC is working with Rockland EDC to set up a satellite office of PTAC here to help local businesses access the federal contracts; DCEDC would give PTAC in-kind office space instead of paying a fee for their services

Next steps:

- No action on MWBE or Credit card acceptance issues; BSC felt that businesses have a reason why they don't offer credit card service and that promoting MWBE would merely shift sales from one business to another within the county
- John is in charge to set up PTAC access; tentative date is Q1 of 2010; to promote PTAC, DCEDC will send direct letters to the 100 largest companies in the county and alert the chambers of commerce so that they can promote it to their members

Marketing Initiative

- A recurring theme that staff heard from companies on various site visits was “help us find customers”; a marketing event/seminar would be a possible response

BSC feedback:

- Hold a ‘guerilla marketing event’ at little or no charge
- Increase EDC’s marketing to let businesses know we are here and ready to help
- Hold an ‘open house’ at EDC where businesses can come in with their issues and staff helps one-on-one
- Hold a networking event with smaller target groups to facilitate sharing of ideas/best practices

- Create a searchable database by industry to make it easier for businesses to identify potential customers for warm calls

Next steps:

- Create a database of businesses that is accessible on EDC's website
- Set up a networking event for small machine shops which should be headed by a facilitator to keep the group focused and get results
- Possibly in the future hold guerilla marketing event and/or open house at EDC

Business Services Team

- Cathy reported that EDC coordinated the first meeting to establish a team similar to the red carpet team in neighboring counties; the purpose is to share information and ultimately help businesses by connecting them with the right service providers to fill their needs

Angle Network

- Cathy and John met with some of the angels; angels claim to be active and asked to be forwarded projects for consideration
- BSC's stated that angels never acted on establishing the promised \$1M fund
- BSC feels that a fund is essential to generate investment activities
- John is in talks with a law firm out of Newburgh who wants to start a regional fund; this will however be a slow process

Organizational notes:

- As Paul is taking over as EDC board chair in January, Tom McQuade will become chair of BSC
- Meetings in 2010 will be held on a bi-monthly basis; to avoid overlap with EMC meetings, meetings will start in January

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

The Next Meeting will be held on Thursday, January 7, 2010 at 7:45 a.m.