

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: ECONOMIC GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

DATE: JUNE 27, 2011

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS TAYLOR
CONOVER
CHAMPAGNE

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

SUPERVISORS MONROE
GOODSPEED

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION:

VICTORIA PRATT GERBINO, PRESIDENT
JOHN WHEATLEY, VICE PRESIDENT
DANIEL STEC, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD

SUPERVISORS GERAGHTY

THOMAS

SOKOL

STRAINER

KENNY

WOOD

JOANNE COLLINS, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Taylor called the meeting of the Economic Growth & Development Committee to order at 9:54 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Champagne, seconded by Mr. Conover and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Vicki Pratt Gerbino, President of the Economic Development Corporation (EDC). Ms. Gerbino thanked the Committee for the opportunity to speak at today's meeting. She noted that although she was new to the community, she had been in the business of economic development for many years and she declared her goal to facilitate economic vibrancy for Warren County and the region.

Ms. Gerbino announced that the EDC Board retreat was scheduled for July 19th and advised that a strategic vision and mission were created to align priorities and resources to achieve optimum outcomes for economic vibrancy. She contended there were many opportunities to accomplish the EDC's goals which could include utilization of the Local Development Corporation's (LDC) resources, as well. She asserted that economic development was a team effort and explained that some entities managed hard assets, such as land, buildings and infrastructure improvements, while other entities managed the financial aspect of economic development which included the ability to leverage private sector dollars. The aforementioned team dynamic, she stated, played an important role in achieving the conditions inherent in economic vibrancy. Additionally, she noted, marketing the community, providing support for entrepreneurs, and ensuring consistent communication with all customers were critical components to that end.

The stakeholder's, Ms. Gerbino apprised, included the County and private sector businesses and their goal was to invest in economic development organizations which fueled the success of public and private sector partnerships which would enable economic success.

With regard to outreach efforts, Ms. Gerbino advised that she had launched an outreach program to meet with customers and stakeholders to better understand their interests and priorities. She noted she would continue discussions with Supervisors, private sector companies, and agencies

engaged in economic development. She expounded the importance of regional collaboration and noted that the selection of a particular area for the purpose of capital investments was largely based on a business/capital investment plan, versus attachment to a particular area. In the final stages of location selection, she said, the particulars of an area, which included quality of life, would then be considered.

Ms. Gerbino explained that part of her role was to partner with Warren County municipalities, surrounding counties, and regional and State organizations, to market the County for the purpose of attracting new capital investors. Mr. Champagne asked what the most critical issue was, or what activity of the EDC required the most development. Ms. Gerbino advised that after a careful web study which included the EDC and related organizations, the collection of information was cumbersome and she expressed the need to offer easily accessible and organized data for customer use. She said her goal was to insure that programs and services were in place to enable businesses to succeed. Ms. Gerbino said she felt Warren County had all of the necessary resources and the task of presenting that information in an organized and user friendly manner was critical.

A discussion ensued regarding educational programs as they related to the needs of regional employers.

Mr. Taylor asked Ms. Gerbino to address the expectations of the EDC for Warren County. She noted it would be discussed at the retreat and reiterated the importance of developing public and private partnerships. Ms. Gerbino advised that private sector businesses had a genuine interest in economic development as their ability to recruit talent to the community depended upon the economic vibrancy of that community. She further stated that the private sector valued the availability of a platform as a single point of contact for investment activities. Ms. Gerbino asserted that the EDC wanted to ensure that private sector investments in Warren County would be profitable; thereby proving their value which would lead to further investments.

Ms. Gerbino advised of her goal to make the Warren County EDC a model for public and private partnerships at the local level. Mr. Champagne opined that it was challenging to engage private sector investors. Mr. Conover expressed his support for Ms. Gerbino's ideas and goals and he cited that small hands-on business owners typically lacked the time to grow and develop. Ms. Gerbino, he stated, could be instrumental in directing an effort to create a customer friendly one-stop resource platform for small and growing businesses. The platform, he said, could encompass training, local course offerings and financial advisement.

Mr. Taylor noted that the last meeting of the EDC was held at Finch Paper.

There being no further business to come before the Economic Growth & Development Committee, on motion made by Mr. Conover and seconded by Mr. Champagne, Mr. Taylor adjourned the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne Collins, Legislative Office Specialist