

Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation

Enterprise Zone Council

Minutes of Meeting of March 27, 2012

RIEDC: Narragansett Room

315 Iron Horse Way, Suite 101

Providence, RI 02908

In attendance:

COUNCIL AFFILIATION

D. Varin Vice Chairman

D. Langley Urban League of RI

M. Wood RI League of Cities and Towns

R. Caniglia Stand Corporation

B. Parsons RIEDC

OTHER AFFILIATION

V. Barros RIEDC

F. Presley City of West Warwick

J. Aubin Town of Cumberland

J. Moran City of East Providence

E. Partridge City of Central Falls

S. Larrick City of Central Falls

J. Rhodes RI Statewide Planning

J. Garrahy Moses & Afonso, LTD

W. Clark Town of Portsmouth

L. DiBoni City of Cranston

M. Godin ED Foundation of RI

K. Cosentino City of Providence

M. Wojcik City of Woonsocket

At 10:10 Mr. Varin called the meeting the Rhode Island Enterprise Zone Council to order and noted that there was a quorum present. He announced a change in the order of the agenda. He noted that the zone re-designation request from the Central Falls/Valley Falls Enterprise Zone would be heard first because Matt Wojcik from Woonsocket was delayed in traffic and would be arriving late to the meeting.

The first item of business before the Council was the Meeting Minutes for February 28, 2012.

Mr. Parsons made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Langley. Mr. Varin asked if there were any additional comments or questions. There being no further discussion, all voted in favor and the motion was unanimously approved.

The next order of business before the Council was Zone Re-designation Request for the Central Falls/Valley Falls EZ

Mr. Varin informed the Council that a representative from each zone would provide a general overview of the zone re-designation request

followed by questions from the Council.

Ms. Partridge from the city of Central Falls introduced herself and talked about the city's re-designation request, emphasizing the importance of the EZ program to the city. She also introduced Mr. Larrick who is responsible for economic and business development related activities in Central Falls. He stated that businesses frequently ask about incentives and are generally excited about opportunities available from residing in an EZ.

He added that the change in the tax credit does have a disproportional impact on Central Falls because of the large number of smaller main street type businesses that are not c-corps.

Mr. Langley asked what other incentive the city offers.

Mr. Larrick talked about the affordable commercial building stock and the economic expansion plan that offers tax stabilization on both tangibles and real estate on certain types of investments.

He talked about the city's work with EDC through Broadband RI designed to help close the digital divide in RI's urban communities.

Mr. Caniglia asked if the businesses in Central Fall are still energized and positive about the city – wanting to see it succeed.

Ms. Partridge gave several examples of how proactive the local businesses have been in support of the city.

A general discussion ensued about the state of the city including the improving residential housing stock and historic tax credits.

Mr. Aubin from the town of Cumberland introduced himself and provided an overview of the town's portion of the zone re-designation request. He stated that the zone includes the southern portion of the Valley Falls district, extended up Mendon road to the Ashton Berkley mill village.

He stated that the town is focused on when a business comes into the town that they can get a quick turn around on building permits and related items.

He talked about the Board Street Corridor Plan developed in concert with Central Falls and Cumberland.

Mr. Varin asked about the training center as a part of the six village proposal that appeared in the re-designation proposal.

Mr. Aubin explained that it would be a town center development in the northern part of town on a 30-50 acres site known as the monastery. On a portion of the monastery site, the town has plans to develop of a workforce training and education center that dovetails with the

envisioned mayoral academy.

Mr. Langley asked how closely the town works with the city of Central Falls.

Mr. Aubin stated that they do work together with both Central Falls and Pawtucket.

Mr. Langley suggested that the town and city should work together on a more defined, tangible plan.

A general discussion ensued about several different aspects of the town's proposal.

Mr. Wood made the motion to approve the re-designation of the Central Falls/Cumberland EZ for an additional five (5) years. The motion was seconded by Mr. Parsons. Mr. Varin asked if there was any further discussion. There being no further discussion, all voted in favor and the motion was unanimously approved.

The next order of business before the Council was Zone Re-designation Request for the Woonsocket/Cumberland EZ

Mr. Wojcik from the city of Woonsocket informed the Council that he would not be giving a point-by-point review the re-designation proposal instead he would be summarizing the 20-slide PowerPoint

presentation that accompanied the proposal which addresses the state of the city's commercial tax base.

He talked about what the city needs to raise in its tax levy in order to support ongoing municipal operations. He determined that the city's commercial tax base must grow by \$73 million.

He stated that as much as half of the city's commercial properties are within the city's enterprise zone which shows that the program's reach is fairly significant.

He talked about projects in the economic development focus areas of expansion, greenfield development, redevelopment and rehabilitation.

He stated that he believes one of the biggest problems facing the city is that it has a large inventory of very old and very low value per square foot commercial and industrial buildings that needs to be tackled by policy issues. The city tries to leverage the state's investment through the EZ program with the city's job creation incentives program for which the city has authorization to go to 10 years.

Mr. Langley strongly expressed his view that the cities of Central Falls and Woonsocket need to work more closely to put pressure on the government to provide additional incentives to help improve the lives of their residents. He talked about the importance of holistic

approach to job training.

Mr. Parsons exited the meeting.

Mr. Aubin addressed the town of Cumberland's portion of the Woonsocket/Cumberland zone re-designation request and emphasized that coordination and partnership is occurring between the town and the cities of Central Falls and Woonsocket.

He stated that this portion of the zone represented new Cumberland and talked about development at Highland Corporate Park, a commercial corridor on Mendon Road, Cumberland foundry and Gainsboroughs Commons.

He talked about alternative economic development opportunities, not big box development, identifying mixed used site development.

Mr. Varin asked for a motion. Mr. Caniglia made the motion to approve the re-designation of the Woonsocket/Cumberland Enterprise zone for an additional five (5) years. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wood. Mr. Varin asked if there was any further discussion. There being no further discussion, all voted in favor and the motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Caniglia thanked all the communities for the thoroughness of their presentations and the work that went into preparation their

re-designation proposals.

The next order of business before the Council was a Recommendation for 2010 Certification of TD Bank

Mr. Barros stated was one (1) businesses was being presented for 2010 year-end certification – TD Bank which had satisfied the requirements for year-end tax certification; as a result, staff recommended approval bring the year-to-date total for 2010 certification to seventy six (76) businesses resulting in five hundred and sixty nine (569) new full-time jobs.

Mr. Varin asked for a motion to approve TD Bank for 2010 tax certification. Mr. Langley made the motion which was seconded by Mr. Caniglia. Mr. Varin asked if there was any further discussion. There being no further discussion, all voted in favor and the motion was unanimously approved.

The next order of business before the Council was a Legislative Update

Mr. Barros provided a general review of the four enterprise zone related bills listed on the agenda, letting the Council know what the each bill was designed to accomplish and where they stood within the legislative process.

A general discussion ensued about the status of the bills, the likelihood of approvals and accompanying fiscal notes.

Mr. Varin asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Wood made the motion which was seconded by Mr. Caniglia. Mr. Varin asked if there were any questions or comments. There being none, all voted unanimously in favor of the motion.