

# **Small Business Advocacy Council Meeting**

**Friday, March 5, 2005**

**8:30 AM**

**RI Economic Development Corporation**

**Providence, RI**

## **Meeting Minutes**

**I. Lieutenant Governor Charles J. Fogarty, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m. In attendance were:**

**II. In Attendance were:**

**Lieutenant Governor Charles J. Fogarty, Chair**

**Jerry Meyer, East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce**

**Robert Lafond, North Central Chamber of Commerce**

**Louis Soares, RI EDC**

**Mark Deion, Deion and Associates**

**Jim Hurton, Narragansett Chamber of Commerce**

**John Gregory, Northern RI Chamber of Commerce**

**Josh Miller, Trinity Brewhouse**

**Herb Weiss, City of Pawtucket**

**John McCauley, SCORE**

**Robert Hamelin, RI SBDC**

**Steve Umberger, SBA**

**Hannah Hodgson, Cranston Chamber of Commerce**

**Joe Cannon, CAS America**

**Heather Singleton, RI Hospitality Association**

**Tony Alves, Maral Sales**

**Anastasia Kaufman, Verizon Telecommunication Center at Bryant College**

**Lauren Slocum, Central RI Chamber of Commerce**

**Charles Newton, RI MBE**

**Curtis Spence, Claymar Enterprise**

**Philip Papoojian, Mereco**

**Cheryl Snead, Banneker Industries**

**Darlene Evans, South Kingstown Chamber of Commerce**

**Jeff Broadhead, Inner Business**

**Moe Paradis**

**Don Eversly, ProgressProvidence**

**Ed Greene, CRIDCO**

**Denise Barge, RI MIDC**

**Terry Charles, Pawtucket Credit Union**

**Lanre Olateru-Olagbegi, RI Black Contractors**

**Stan Cameron, RI Black Contractors**

**Rick McAuliffe, Mayforth Group**

**III. Approval of January 28 , 2005 Meeting Minutes**

**The Chairman called for the approval of the previous meeting minutes. A motion was made and seconded for the approval of the minutes.**

#### **IV. Comments from the Chair**

**Chairman Fogarty welcomed Lanre Olateru-Olagbegi and Stan Cameron from the RI Black Contractors Association to talk about the RI Minority Business Enterprise Program and Don Eversly to talk about the Providence Economic Development Partnership. He said that with the legislative session underway he looks forward to working with the council on issues of concern to the business community. He said that the group would be voting on public policy recommendations put forth by the public policy working group. He thanked the working members – Mark Deion, Ed Greene, Jim Hurton, Moe Paradis, John Gregory and Janet Raymond. Chairman Fogarty said that the 2004 annual report was available on the web at [www.ltgov.ri.gov](http://www.ltgov.ri.gov). Chairman Fogarty recognized Herb Weiss of the City of Pawtucket to begin the member updates portion of the meeting.**

#### **V. SBAC Member Updates**

**Herb Weiss said that Pawtucket was recently highlighted in the New York Times as a mecca for the arts in New England. Mark Deion said that the Reg Flex amendments and the SBA tax credit are two pieces of legislation he is supporting. Phil Papoosian said the SBANE legislative committee endorsed 14 issues state and federal level and said they are on the SBANE web-site. Cheryl Snead said that her company is working with the SBDC to promote their new Rhodebuilder business development program. Heather Singelton said that her association has received numerous calls on how the new smoking ban might affect business. Jerry Meyer said that the new fire codes is still an issue with businesses and he is working through the chambers to deal with the issue. Stacie Kofman explained the services they provide for small business on the web. Ed Green said that CRIDCO had just initiated a revolving loan fund for rural communities. Joe Cannon said that the Exeter job corps is up and running and providing an excellent service and urged members to visit. Denise Barge said that MIDC said that they are celebrating their 10-year anniversary and are looking for more referrals and updates. Terry Charles said he was looking to outreach to the small business community.**

## **VI. RI EDC Update**

**Louis Soares, RI EDC**

**Louis said that the EDC has met with leadership in the Assembly on the EDC Jobs Package and overall it was positively received. EDC believes that the tax policy function is important but they are looking at how best to structure the function. He said EDC continues to focus on the bio-tech sector. He said they are working on luring bio tech companies from other regional states. He said the reg flex process is going smoothly in the initial stages (see attachment 1). He said the key is to define negative impact and that the implementation of the process is key. They are working out the administrative procedure of how the process is going to work out. He said that there was a weblog for business to voice complaints in the reg flex process and exchange information. He said that the every company counts program was running smoothly and they are now trying to aggregate data on behalf of the resources partners. They are tracking top referrals and services by sector. They have developed a customer satisfaction survey and the goal is to collect data to determine performance measures throughout the ECC network. He said that they are using the ECC web-site as an online business community resource where businesses can post information articles and tout events.**

## **VII. The Rhode Island Minority Business Enterprise System**

## **Lanre Olateru-Olagbegi and Stan Cameron, The RI Black Contractors Association**

**Rick McAuliffe of the Mayforth Group opened up the presentation by introducing the Black Contractors Association and The Center to Advance Minority Participation in the construction industry and highlighting the concerns of the black contractors (see attachment 2).**

**He said that they are looking to raise awareness of the state MBE purchasing system and the 10% set aside rule for minority vendors by state agencies. Lanre Olateru-Olagbebi said that the state needs to make a greater effort to help the minority business community. Both he and Stan Cameron said that the Center is a useful tool in provide minority contractors with the skills they need to be better business people. He said that they have partnered with CCRI, the SBA and the MIDC for a construction management program and have worked with these organizations on outreach. They said that the 10% set aside for public projects is needed to continue to help this growing economic sector. Rick McAuliffe said he looks forward to working with the black contractors and the SBAC members to ensure that the MBE is as strong as it can be as well as working with members to for assistance and outreach with the center and the black contractors (see attachment 2).**

## **VI. Progress Providence : The Providence Economic Development Partnership**

**Don Eversley, President**

**Don Eversley said that the Providence Economic Development Partnership is the city version of the State EDC. He said the organization is dedicated to economic development and business creation. He said the PEDP is just over a year old and was created to be a comprehensive economic development resource to implement programs and develop a plan to take individual projects and connect the dots. The goals are to entice development, to drive economic development downtown, to move development into the core of the downtown. He said that at least 60% of projects are in planning stages and have an excellent chance of passing, He said the downtown business improvement association have contributed to the down town area focused effort to keep the jewel of the state polished.**

**Mr. Eversley said his organization can help cut through red tape, provide technical assistance, partner with resource partners for direct one on one assistance. They also provide capital through a revolving loan fund. The fund is to be used for job creation, removing slums and blight. He said that the Providence economic development package deals with neighborhood issues to work with the neighborhoods for community and economic development interests. They hope to integrate projects into abandoned storefronts and into the neighborhoods for a balanced economic picture. For more information on ProgressProvidence please visit [www.providenceri.biz](http://www.providenceri.biz).**

## **VII. 2005 SBAC Public Policy Support**

**The public policy initiatives put forth were unanimously support by the SBAC (see attachment 3). The endorsement of a resolution opposing the establishment of a Las Vegas style casino in the State of Rhode Island was moved by Darlene Evans and seconded by Ed Green (see attachment 4). The endorsement of a resolution urging the Governor and the General Assembly to re-evaluate the use of eminent domain in the State of Rhode Island and to promulgate clear definitions and safeguards to ensure that eminent domain is used for its intended purposes was moved by Cheryl Watkins Snead and seconded by Ed Green (see attachment 5).**

**Chairman Fogarty requested a motion for adjournment, which was made and seconded. The meeting adjourned at 10:25 AM.**