

RHODE ISLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
MEETING OF THE SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC SESSION

June 8, 2011

The Rhode Island Science & Technology Advisory Council (STAC) met on Wednesday, June 8, 2011 in Public Session at the offices of the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation, Providence, Rhode Island pursuant to notice of the meeting to all Members and public notice of meeting, a copy of which is attached hereto, as required by applicable Rhode Island Law.

The following Members were present and participated throughout the meeting as indicated: Clyde Briant (Co-Chair), David Farmer (Co-Chair), Peter Alfonso, Pierre Corriveau, David Hibbitt, Stuart McGuigan, Thomas Rockett and Peter Snyder. Members absent were, Kimball Hall, Saul Kaplan, Margaret Leinen, Jeffrey Seemann and Donald Stanford.

Also present were Governor Chafee, Lt. Governor Roberts, RIEDC Executive Director Keith Stokes and RIEDC staff. Co-chairs Briant and Farmer presided over the meeting.

Welcome

Co-Chair Clyde Briant welcomed Governor Chafee and then stated the agenda would focus on one of the Governor's key economic development priorities: the redevelopment of land becoming available through the relocation of I-195. Redevelopment of this parcel promises to bring a new hub of high-wage, high-skilled job growth to that area that will build upon and enhance existing medical, education and commercial assets and strengthen our urban economic base through the revitalization and reconnection of city neighborhoods once separated.

The Governor noted the importance of creating this foundation for a new economy. He also thanked Dr. Farmer for his service to the Council and to the State of Rhode Island.

Approval of Minutes

Citing no changes, upon a motion duly made by Dr. Snyder and seconded by Dr. Rockett, the minutes of the February, 2011 STAC meeting were accepted.

Profile of Pittsburgh as a Tech Hotbed

Dr. Farmer introduced Dr. Christina Gabriel for a presentation on “How Innovative Collaborations Have Transformed Pittsburgh from Steel Town to Tech Hotbed”. Dr. Gabriel is the President of the University Energy Partnership, a new collaborative effort among five major research universities, working with the U.S. Department of Energy's National Energy Technology Laboratory and its industrial partners, to strengthen energy-driven innovation and inclusive economic growth throughout a broad, multi-state region surrounding Pittsburgh. The Governor recently traveled to the Texas and Maryland to survey academic-medical hubs in those state. Next on the schedule is a trip to Pittsburgh which has transformed itself from a declining steel city to one of the fastest growing tech hotbeds. Dr. Gabriele noted that the key to Pittsburgh growth has been strategic collaborations and partnerships that have made the city's success sustainable and inclusive. Also critical has been strong support from community philanthropic agencies such as the Heinz Foundation. Dr. Gabriele noted that Pittsburgh's success has been qualified, and that it has learned from mistakes it has made from not respecting community priorities. She stressed that successful development is dependent on strong leadership that can secure adequate funding, build collaborative networks and deploy deep talent in sectors to be developed.

Introduction to the RI Consortium for Nano Science and Nano Technology

Dr. Farmer introduced Dr. Arijit Bose (URI) and Dr. Robert Hurt (Brown), Co-directors of the recently formed RI Consortium for Nano Science and Nano Technology to brief the Council on the history, mission and goals of the Consortium. Nanotechnology is the manipulation of matter at an atomic scale and molecular scale to create new materials and new devices for use in a variety of industries, including energy, medicine, textiles and electronics. In the last decade, nanotechnology taken off, and helped produce a wide variety of products – from cosmetics to computer chips. URI and Brown have long had strengths in Nano science and the disciplines that support it – engineering, chemistry and physics. The new consortium was created with federal funds, with special thanks to Sen. Whitehouse and to Sen. Reed. Its goals are to support research and seed collaboration with industry, grow future federal investments in nanotechnology and lead to workforce development that will create jobs in Rhode Island. The Consortium is working to bring industry and higher education together to develop world-class nanotechnology R&D capacity in the state. A recently held Nano Showcase brought together over 125 university researchers with industry officials to share ideas about uses for nanotechnology.

Report on Council Initiatives

Dr. Briant presented an update on a joint project with the GPCC to develop an Innovation Index to benchmark Rhode Island's innovation economy with the nation, other EPCOR states, and selected comparator states. A working group of STAC and GPCC members have been formed to work with the consultant to select 25 indicators that reflect RI's strategy for investment in science and technology-based economic development. The goal is to produce an Index that will provide an independent review of our progress in meeting long term and intermediate goals. Estimated project completion is September.

NSF EPSCoR Director Report

Dr. Peter Alfonso, RI EPSCoR PI, reported that the National Science Foundation has reviewed and accepted our comprehensive five-year strategic plan. This Plan will guide the work of EPSCoR for the five-year grant. Dr. Alfonso also stated that the NSF has selected RI to participate on a panel at the national EPSCoR Conference in October 2011 to present our Governing Committee model.

Adjournment

There being no further business in Public Session, upon a motion duly made by Dr. Corriveau and seconded by Dr. Snyder, the meeting was adjourned at 2:36 p.m.

Christine M.B. Smith
Secretary