

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

PUBLIC SESSION

November 7, 2013

The Rhode Island Science & Technology Advisory Council (“STAC”) met on Thursday, November 7, 2013 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: David Savitz (Co-Chair), Gerald Sonnenfeld (Co-Chair), Janet Coit, Pierre Corriveau, David Hibbitt, Molly Magee, Patricia Phillips, Thomas Rockett, Peter Snyder, and Marcel Valois. Jay Marshall and Donald Stanford were absent.

Also present during the meeting were Governor Chafee, and RIEDC staff. The Co-chairs presided over the meeting assisted by Christine Smith.

Welcome

Co-chairs Savitz and Sonnenfeld welcomed everyone and noted it was both a pleasure and an honor to begin their service as Co-chairs of the Council and looked forward to working with the Council to develop globally competitive world class R&D in Rhode Island. They also introduced and welcomed new member Janet Coit.

Approval of Minutes

Citing no changes, upon a motion duly made by Peter Snyder and seconded by David Hibbitt, the minutes of the June 13, 2013 STAC meeting were accepted.

RIEDC Director’s Report

Executive Director Marcel Valois updated the Council on the Agency’s activities including a partnership with the RI Foundation to convene business leaders and subject matter experts to identify unique market opportunities at the intersection of industries in which Rhode Island has a unique competitive advantage. This information will be used to inform the RhodeMap RI process, which will produce an economic development plan for the state by October 2014, and generate specific actions that can be undertaken in the meantime to boost the Rhode Island economy. Director Valois also stated the RIEDC is working to boost financial assistance available through the agency and rebrand the state’s image.

CoresRI Briefing

STAC member Peter Snyder, presented information on CoresRI, a newly-developed directory of core research facilities, services and instrumentation in the state. This has been a multi-year project which initially began as an exercise to identify and decommission underutilized equipment to strengthen applications for multi-user large instrumentation grants. Led by Brown and Lifespan, it became a multi-institutional effort to design and develop a searchable database of hundreds of shared research instruments and services at 12 academic and medical institutions around the state. The resource is open to any scientist looking to arrange access to needed facilities for research purposes and provides detailed information on more than 500 lab instruments and services available in more than 30 core facilities and laboratories.

RI NSF EPSCoR Status Report

STAC Executive Director Christine Smith provided an update on RI NSF EPSCoR stating that as this was the fourth year of a five-year grant, much focus will be placed this year on planning for the submission of a renewal grant. Meetings have already been held to inform the community of the upcoming renewal opportunity and a schedule has been developed to solicit white papers so that writing teams will be ready to start work when the Call for Proposals is issued in March or April 2014 for a submission due date of late summer.

Innovate RI Small Business Fund Briefing

Ms. Smith next presented a progress report on the development of three programs under the newly established Innovate RI Small Business Fund. In the last session, to foster job creation, facilitate small business development and enhance the workforce pipeline, the Rhode Island General Assembly created the Innovate Rhode Island Small Business Fund (IRISBF), tasked STAC with administering the program and provided \$500K in funding for FY14. Through a variety of programming supported by the Fund, eligible Rhode Island small businesses may apply for grants to defray the cost of applying for SBIR/STTR awards, match SBIR/STTR Phase I awards and hire interns. STAC members Molly Magee, Peter Snyder and Marcel Valois have been providing guidance on the development of program guidelines and guidelines have been adopted and posted on the STAC website for the Phase I Matching Grants program. The first round of applications for this grant are due November 15. Guidelines for internship grants will be posted next and draft guidelines will be posted for public comment in January for a program to provide reimbursement for costs associated with preparing and submitting a SBIR/STTR Phase I application.

“The Art of Critical Making”

Anais Missakian, Dean of Fine Arts RISD was joined by John Dunnigan, Department Head of Furniture Design RISD to present on RISD’s new publication “The Art of Critical Making”. For RISD, “critical making” is practice-based innovation where making questions, ideas, and objects, using and inventing materials, and activating experience all serve to define a form of critical thinking with one's hands. RISD’s original mission was to support local industry and its ability to harness creativity can be used today beyond the realms of art and design to navigating complex problems in a wide range of fields and situations. RISD wants to be a partner with industry and looks forward to being a resource beyond traditional role of art and design.

Discussion and Adjournment

There being no further business, upon a motion duly made by Molly Magee and seconded by Peter Snyder, Co-Chair Savitz adjourned the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

Christine M.B. Smith
Secretary