

Make It Easier To Do Business/Customer Focus Subcommittee

Public Session

Monday, October 27, 2014

Rhode Island Commerce Corporation

315 Iron Horse Way, Providence, RI

The following were in attendance:

Appointees/Delegates

Tim Hebert

George Nee

Roland Fiore

Karl Wadensten

Commerce RI Staff

Marcel Valois

John Pagliarini

Christopher Cannata

Lori Bassett

Others

Nancy Scarduzio, DOA

Mr. Wadensten (Chair) was running late so the meeting was started without him. Mr. Fiore called the meeting to order at 4:13PM. The minutes from the July meeting were approved unanimously.

Ms. Scarduzio presented the Period 4 Report and gave an update on what her agency has been doing. She noted that all the other agencies are currently in compliance.

Ms. Scarduzio stated that the online small business suggestion box has been launched on their website. She stated that regulations are based on law so they are not easily eliminated; legislative changes must be enacted to modify regulations. Mr. Hebert asked if we have the ability to advocate for this (yes, we do). Mr. Fiore asked how this works; Mr. Pagliarini stated that he and Mr. Valois have been in discussion with the House and Senate leaderships.

Mr. Pagliarini asked about the regulations that were repealed; where they equally scattered? Ms. Scarduzio said they were mostly obsolete regulations that needed repealing. The Secretary of State's office has been helping to clean this up.

New and amended regulations are currently monitored by Ms. Scarduzio; she has reviewed 160 of these since January of 2014. She noted that the Department of Health cannot always make accommodations for small businesses because of health or safety concerns.

Mr. Nee asked for her input on the APA hearings; she said she seldom attends so as not to send up a "red flag".

Ms. Scarduzio noted that Department of Health involves the most challenges, especially with the food industry. They are short staffed and having a hard time meeting needs.

Mr. Nee asked how vacancies are addressed; often State Reps get involved for the small businesses that are affected.

Further discussion ensued regarding mapping; Derek Pelletier is currently working on that. E-permitting was addressed by Mr. Wadensten. Many cities/town are already starting their own system of e-permitting. They are currently working on a pilot program in place with ten cities/towns. The vendor is being finalized. Electrical and building permits will be processed through this system. Mr. Valois stated that the vendor that is being reviewed is different from the one the City of Providence has chosen for their system. The goal is to have one comprehensive system for the State; unfortunately Providence has already chosen a different path.

Mr. Wadensten asked Mr. Valois about the scope of the subcommittee's position and how they can help. Mr. Valois suggested a carrot approach to push the system. Mr. Hebert noted that there are many software packages that are compatible and can be synchronized.

Further discussion ensued about the Regulatory Report and the next steps of Ms. Scarduzio's group.

The meeting adjourned at 4:53PM