

# **RHODE ISLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

## **MEETING OF DIRECTORS**

### **PUBLIC SESSION**

**MARCH 28, 2011**

The Board of Directors of the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation (the "Corporation") met on Monday, March 28, 2011, in Public Session, beginning at 5:00 p.m., at the offices of the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation located at 315 Iron Horse Way, Suite 101, Providence, Rhode Island, pursuant to notice of the meeting to all Directors, and public notice of the meeting, a copy of which is attached hereto, as required by the By-Laws of the Corporation and applicable Rhode Island law.

The following Directors were present and participated throughout the meeting: Governor Lincoln D. Chafee, Ms. Helena B. Foulkes, Mr. Lynn Singleton, Mr. Jerauld Adams, Dr. Timothy Babineau, Dr. David Dooley, Mr. Stephen Lane, Mr. George Nee, Mr. Daniel Sullivan, Mr. Jack Templin and Mr. Stanley Weiss.

Directors absent: Mr. Karl Wadensten and Ms. Cheryl Snead.

Also present were: Executive Director Keith Stokes, Governor's Chief of Staff Patrick Rogers and Secretary David M. Gilden.

#### **1. CALL TO ORDER AND OPENING REMARKS**

Governor Chafee called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting, including the new Directors, Ms. Foulkes, Mr. Adams, Mr. Weiss and Mr. Templin.

Governor Chafee updated the Board on his recent tour of the City of Woonsocket, which he visited as a part of the Main Street initiative for distressed communities. He told the story of a couple he met on his tour who had moved from New York City and now live and run their small business out of a building they own in downtown Woonsocket, and how positive they were about living and doing business in Rhode Island.

#### **2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON FEBRUARY 24, 2011**

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Foulkes and seconded by Mr. Singleton, the following vote was adopted:

**VOTED:** To approve the Public Session Minutes of the meeting of February 24, 2011.

Voting in favor of the foregoing were: Ms. Foulkes, Mr. Singleton, Mr. Adams, Dr. Babineau, Dr. Dooley, Mr. Lane, Mr. Nee, Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Templin and Mr. Weiss.

Voting against the foregoing were: None.

### **3. DISCUSSION OF APRIL BOARD RETREAT**

Ms. Foulkes revealed preliminary plans for the upcoming Board retreat scheduled from 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m on April 9, 2011. She noted that Executive Director Stokes will lead discussion of the Governor's five primary areas of focus and that the retreat would serve as a forum to create milestones, define measurements of success, organize leadership and Corporation staff around each of the areas of focus, and create Board subcommittees based on the areas of focus.

Ms. Foulkes reiterated the Governor's areas of focus: (1) growth of key industries (with a focus on tourism); (2) creation of business-ready infrastructure hubs (with a focus on the Knowledge District, as well as the Port of Providence and Station Interlink); (3) making it easier to do business in Rhode Island; (4) revitalization and rebranding of the urban core (specifically the Main Street initiative); and (5) access to capital for Rhode Island businesses.

Mr. Sullivan suggested that education be another area of focus for the Corporation. There followed a brief discussion of possible speakers and invited guests for the retreat.

Mr. Stokes commented that the Corporation staff will create a timeline for implementation of retreat determinations to begin on July 1, 2011, the beginning of the Corporation's next fiscal year. He explained that teams of senior staff will be realigned with the areas of focus. He noted that he will report back to the Board with plans for reorganization, at which time he will seek the Board's advice as to the budget and the realignment plans in order to best implement the strategies developed by the Board. Mr. Stokes also noted that the process of working with the Board to shape and design the budget and work of the Corporation is new for the Corporation.

### **4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

A copy of Executive Director Keith Stokes's report is attached as **Exhibit A**.

Mr. Stokes also welcomed the new Board members and noted that the retreat is an important milestone and opportunity to synthesize the Governor's areas of focus with the work of the Corporation.

Mr. Stokes commented on the Governor's recent visit to the City of Woonsocket as a part of the Main Street initiative. Mr. Stokes noted that many of our distressed communities have economic development plans in place and are far along in urban planning; however, the communities continue to need assistance through State and government partnerships. He reported that the Corporation has established work teams to look at urban issues and to discuss with the various participating stakeholders priorities for capital formation, in order to create a statewide model for urban development. Mr. Stokes noted that, in the 30 years that Main Street initiatives have been implemented, success has been achieved in initiatives which have equal parts historic preservation/restoration, and investment in businesses and access to capital.

Mr. Stokes also stated that he will be participating, in conjunction with the Department of Revenue, in a series of public forums with local Chambers of Commerce and other business community associations, in order to discuss and receive feedback on the Governor's fiscal year 2012 budget.

Mr. Nee commended the Corporation's staff for attending the first meeting of the legislative commission on port development, stating that it sent an important message of cooperation to the legislature. Mr. Stokes commented that the Corporation has supported the Providence port site and that both Quonset and Providence are assets and opportunities for the State.

**5. CONSIDERATION OF RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT FUND  
APPROVAL OF THE CITY OF EAST PROVIDENCE**

Mr. Julian Dash, the Corporation's Director of the Renewable Energy Fund (the "Fund"), presented the application of the City of East Providence, which consisted of a \$200,310 grant request for predevelopment expenses associated with the proposed development of a 10 MW solar farm, consisting of mounted solar panels, at the site of the former Forbes Street landfill (See **Exhibit B** for more details). Mr. Dash explained to the Board that the grant would be recoverable upon the successful development of the solar farm pursuant to a repayment schedule defined by the Corporation's staff, which would be brought back to the Board for approval. He further noted that the Fund is statutorily mandated to fund both feasibility studies and municipality projects in the form of grants.

Mr. Dash introduced Ms. Jeanne Boyle of the City of East Providence Planning Department, who discussed how the 10 MW solar farm would off-set the City's energy needs, including through direct connections in the first phase to the Riverside Middle School and the City's sewage treatment facility. She also discussed how the City is looking into virtual net metering, the possibility of providing energy to abutting communities, including Providence and Barrington, and the potential for purchase agreements with utility companies such as National Grid.

Dr. Dooley noted that a large scale feasibility study, such as the one proposed, could be used to answer questions regarding the economic viability of solar power within the State as a whole.

Mr. Dash also introduced Mr. William Barton of CME Energy, the proposed developer of the project. Mr. Barton reported that the total proposed project cost would be approximately \$50 million. He noted that the East Providence solar farm could be a template for others in Rhode Island and New England, especially in light of its transformation of fallow land into productive land.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Nee and seconded by Mr. Adams, the following vote was adopted:

**VOTED:** See text of Vote at **Exhibit C.**

Voting in favor of the foregoing were: Ms. Foulkes, Mr. Singleton, Mr. Adams, Dr. Babineau, Dr. Dooley, Mr. Lane, Mr. Nee, Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Templin and Mr. Weiss.

Voting against the foregoing were: None.

**6. CONSIDERATION OF RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT FUND  
APPROVAL OF SAFEWAY AUTO SERVICE**

Mr. Dash also presented the application of Safeway Auto Service (“Safeway”), a small business which provides automotive services in the Town of Bristol. The application requested \$125,000, made up of a \$62,500 grant and a \$62,500 loan, amortized and payable over a ten (10) year term at a rate of interest of two percent (2%), which would be used by Safeway to install a 50KW wind turbine that would be net metered against Safeway’s facility. (See **Exhibit D** for more details).

Mr. Dash introduced Safeway’s owner Mr. Joseph Coelho to the Board. Mr. Coelho noted Safeway’s commitment to reducing energy dependence and measures which Safeway had already taken to conserve energy. Mr. Coelho stated that he had already received all of the necessary town and zoning approvals.

In response to questions from the Board regarding the split between a grant and a loan, Mr. Dash explained the continued need to subsidize renewable energy and that the grant money includes federal stimulus funds. He also noted that the amount of recoverable funds coming out of the Renewable Energy Fund is increasing, citing that now nearly 75% of capital which is coming out of the Fund is now recoverable. Mr. Stokes also commented that the Corporation is moving away from grants and is instead seeking a return on investments by means of low interest loans. He further noted the Corporation’s larger policy of identifying utility scale investments within the State.

Mr. Stokes reiterated the statutory mandate to make investments in the renewable energy, with the goal of building a consensus within the community regarding the use of renewable energy. He noted that funding of this applicant will include the application of the technology and serve as an example within communities for businesses to think outside the box with respect to energy.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Singleton and seconded by Dr. Babineau, the following vote was adopted:

**VOTED:** See text of Vote at **Exhibit E**.

Voting in favor of the foregoing were: Ms. Foulkes, Mr. Singleton, Mr. Adams, Dr. Babineau, Dr. Dooley, Mr. Lane, Mr. Nee, Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Templin and Mr. Weiss.

Voting against the foregoing were: None.

There being no further business in Public Session, the meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m., upon motion made by Mr. Singleton and seconded by Ms. Faulkes.

Voting in favor of the foregoing were: Ms. Foulkes, Mr. Singleton, Mr. Adams, Dr. Babineau, Dr. Dooley, Mr. Lane, Mr. Nee, Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Templin and Mr. Weiss.

Voting against the foregoing were: None.

---

David M. Gilden, Secretary