

RHODE ISLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

MEETING OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS **MAKE IT EASIER TO DO BUSINESS SUBCOMMITTEE** **PUBLIC SESSION**

DECEMBER 19, 2011

The Make It Easier to Do Business Subcommittee of the Board of Directors of the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation (the "Corporation") met on Monday, December 19, 2011, in Public Session, beginning at 3:00 p.m., at the offices of the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation located at 315 Iron Horse Way, Providence, Rhode Island, pursuant to notice of the meeting to all subcommittee members, 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 individuals were present and participated throughout the meeting as indicated: Subcommittee Chairman Karl Wadensten, Mr. Paul McGreevy, Mr. Henry Kates, Mr. Gary Ezovski, Mr. Bill Parsons, Ms. Leslie Taito, Mr. Michael Walker, Ms. Sherri Carrera, and Ms. Nora Eshkhanian.

Mr. Wadensten called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m. and introduced Ms. Taito, the new Director of the Office of Regulatory Reform ("ORR"). Ms. Taito noted the substantial work which lies ahead for both the ORR and the subcommittee. She stated that 1,623 regulations have been re-filed with the Office of the Secretary of State, as well as the issued guidance and bulletins. Ms. Taito introduced Mr. Ezovski, Chair of the Small Business Administration ("SBA") Regulations Committee, and noted that the Lieutenant Governor will have a Small Business Advisory Council ("SBAC"), which will also have a regulatory advisory subcommittee. Ms. Taito noted the need for the various groups to keep each other up-to-date on their efforts. With respect to the ORR, she stated that they will need to formalize a comprehensive scope of work to accomplish, as well as the mission and vision of the office. Ms. Taito emphasized the need for a clear, predictable and reliable system and she presented the vision/mission statement.

Mr. Wadensten questioned what the subcommittee can do to support this effort. Mr. Ezovski stated that, from a small business standpoint, the more support that can be brought to the table, the easier this will be. He noted that the State has a 10% unemployment rate, with a construction unemployment rate of approximately 45%. Mr. Ezovski stressed the need for the timelines for permits must be as short as possible to keep the construction industry working, which is a sentiment shared by the Builders Association. It was noted that, through the cooperation of the SBA and the Builders Association, a bill was passed to compact the amount of time that a building inspector has to review a building permit for housing projects. It was reported that Ms. Taito and Ms. Carrera have met with the new director of the Builders Association, as well as with city and town officials. North Smithfield has volunteered to have their permit process mapped out; this will start after the first of the year. Mr. Ezovski reported that Mr. John Leyden, the Rhode Island Building Code Commissioner, and the State Fire Marshall

have also been engaged in the discussion. It was reported that funds are an issue with the fire department when it comes to reviewing plans and that computerizing permitting systems throughout the State has been proposed by the Building Code Commissioner. Mr. Wadensten noted the need to stay on top of the issues and to establish baseline numbers.

Mr. Wadensten questioned how the subcommittee can assist the SBA and the Builders Association. Mr. Ezovski noted that physical alteration permits from Rhode Island Department of Transportation are often necessary in communities to start the building process and/or to obtain a building permit. He stated that expediting this process would be extremely beneficial to all parties. Mr. Parsons stressed that pre-application meetings with the agencies would be helpful in preventing delays. Mr. McGreevy stated that the mapping process in North Smithfield will lay the foundation for what we can apply to other cities and towns. He stated that the sequence of events should also be reviewed.

Mr. Ezovski suggested that every department in each city and town should look at its own rules and identify what needs to be fixed. Mr. Wadensten noted that a white paper would be helpful to take assumptions and turn them into facts and Ms. Taito agreed to take on the task of creating this document. Mr. Parsons stated that agencies should also be looking at their own rules and regulations to see if they are outdated and need to be refreshed; however, it was questioned whether agencies could objectively view their own rules and regulations. Ms. Carrera additionally noted that the process of rulemaking is complicated and stated that could be a reason why agencies are quick to re-file.

Mr. Wadensten asked Mr. Parsons about the America's Cup permits and the June timeline. It was that the Corporation should not merely expedite the applications through the system, but rather fix the process itself. The need to avoid delays was also noted with respect to the I-195 Redevelopment District. The new Department of Motor Vehicles headquarters building was cited as an example of how the system should work and it was noted there should be consistency. Mr. McGreevy noted the need to engage the League of Cities and Towns. Ms. Taito stated that the building inspector in North Smithfield, along with the Town Manager, will provide a wealth of knowledge. Mr. McGreevy stated that they are looking at a timeline of two months for North Smithfield and then June for Newport. Mr. Parsons noted that customer service is a huge part of this process. Mr. Wadensten stated that Mr. Ezovski has laid down a lot of ground work, while noting the need for road maps to show progress and to keep everyone engaged. He further stated that, from a marketing standpoint, the formation of the Office of Regulatory Reform was a profound piece of legislation and that a further statement needs to be made that Ms. Taito is here for the business community. Ms. Taito noted the importance of feedback from the business community, as well.

Mr. Wadensten noted the need for the ORR office and SBA regulations committee to cooperate with one another and it was noted that it would be important to bring in other groups and organizations to the conversation. The subcommittee

expressed the desire to meet monthly and include entities such as Department of Environmental Management, which was not able to attend this meeting. Lastly, Nora Eskhanian was introduced as the new research assistant.

The meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

David M. Gilden, Secretary

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