

Economic Redevelopment Sub Committee Notes
Tuesday, July 14th, 2009
Alachua County Community Support Services
Conference Room A

Attendees

David Donnelly	- Alachua County Emergency Management
Travis Butcher	- Gainesville Council for Economic Outreach
Leslie McLendon	- Alachua County Growth Management
Shaad Rehman	- City of Gainesville
Paul Brewer	- Alachua County Property Appraiser
Roland Loog	- Alachua County Visitors and Convention Bureau

Agenda

- I. Welcome and Introductions – 5 minutes
- II. Purpose - 5 minutes
- III. Concepts to discuss – 10 minutes
- IV. Planning Process – 10 minutes
- V. Seven Strategies – 20 minutes
- VI. Pre-Incident Economic Processes – 10 minutes
- VII. Current Assets – existing businesses/industries – 10 minutes
- VIII. Reduce the ‘hassle factor’ – 10 minutes
- IX. Visioning - 20 minutes
 - a. Where are we?
 - b. Where do we want to be?
 - c. What current problems could be upgraded post incident?
 - d. Other opportunities/problems
 - e. Competitive Advantages
- X. Seeding economic transformation – 10 minutes
- XI. Communications Plan – 10 minutes
- XII. Adjourn

Notes

David Donnelly facilitated the meeting. The stated purpose of the meeting was to identify private sector/economic issues as it relates to post disaster recovery and to develop a strategy to deal with these issues which would be part of the larger Post Disaster Redevelopment Plan and be an identified action plan to follow as guidance for either short or long term items.

Concepts included in the discussion were systems thinking and the development of policy as a guide. As a community we must analyze “how are the parts interconnected; locally, regionally?”

The policy that would be developed as part of the plan would serve as criteria to implement the strategy, wait on decision until needed and identifying ‘soft path’ solutions which could be modified depending on the course of the recovery.

As part of the Planning Process, people, jobs, transportation and housing were identified as key to recovery. Local government must provide basic services and provide guidance on acceptable re-building practices.

How do we develop a strategy that would move an impacted community to a point “as if the disaster never happened”? How do we get on a positive trajectory?

At this point, the group conducted a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis:

Strengths:

- Educated population
- Relatively stable funding stream
- University of Florida, Shands
- Health Care and other stable industries
- Location
- Gainesville Airport
- Road Transportation Network

Weaknesses:

- Lack of diverse industry
- Interconnected financial institutions
- Potential Debris
- Potential bottlenecks
- Interstate 75/US 441 impacted at same time?
- We are a host community
- Hotels/Motels (5000 rooms)
- Shelters
- Gainesville Airport

Opportunities:

- Time to inventory housing stock – apartment associations, management
- Encourage self sufficiency (i.e. generators)
- Inventory of businesses with generators
- Time to identify incentives for businesses to prepare
 - Tax holiday on disaster supplies
 - Tip of the Month – Chamber newsletter
 - “Disaster Ready Business” designation
- Through professional licensing process, determine which businesses have plans (capture data)
- New policies

Threats:

- Major Hurricane – Storm of 1896
- Tornadoes – Gainesville 1978

- Macroeconomic Conditions
- Terrorism
- Cyber Attacks
- Wildfires
- Infrastructure Failures
- Nuclear Plants – Levy County, UFTR
- Sinkholes
- Post Disaster Crime

Next the group discussed Visioning: What's possible for the future? Can we avoid groupthink? Can we build on what's already working?

Goal Setting – What should be done to be more resilient? Less exposed, less vulnerable?

How do we reality test our strategy?

Seven Strategies as identified in Managing for Long Term Community Recovery in the Aftermath of Disaster (Alesch, Arendt and Holly, 2008) were broken down into relevant examples:

1. Do we continue the usual economic development tactics?
2. Do we attempt to rebuild a dying or dead business district?
3. Do we go for the 'pie in the sky'?
4. Do we transform ourselves?
5. Do we work with the market (our current resources, assets)?
6. Do we build on what we have?
7. Do we only repair infrastructure?

Next the group examined current Pre-Incident Economic Processes. It was noted that state funds were coming in for education, health care industries. At this point, it was suggested we build on what we have by growing and diversifying industry based on our intellectual strengths.

Currently, there is slow economic growth occurring in the County but no Venture Capitalist investing in new startups. We have a high wage, high skill, technical population. Sustainment is on-going but no investing in growth. There is a lack of skilled workers for manufacturing.

Another ideal presented in the Managing for Long Term Community Recovery book was the need to "Reduce the Hassle Factor". The authors highlighted the success of those communities who had achieved this. This includes items such as permitting, funding (revenue/capital), re-construction, transportation (move the airport to a more central locale with Ocala?) communications, supplies, products, employees and for the customers.

The idea of government seeding economic transformation post disaster; the most famous example being the State of Wisconsin's transformation of being a wheat producing state into a leader in all things dairy in the late 1800s. How can this be included in the strategy?

The last item of discussion was the inclusion of a Communications Plan in the PDRP. Mainly for local government to ensure its message is getting out, the emphasis needs to be on two way communications

in this case with the business community not only during and after a disaster, but before hand as well.
What mechanisms can be used to ensure this communications?

Action Items :

Research Incentives – Shaad

Review Occupational Licensing data with Tax Collector – Paul

Contact FDOT reference I75/US441 – David

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, August 18th – 9 AM

Combined Communications Center Conference Room

1100 SE 27th Street Gainesville

Adjourned.