

Oconee County Economic Development Commission
Minutes of Meeting
January 20, 2012

The Oconee County Economic Development Commission met Friday, January 20, 2012 at the Commission office, 502 East Main Street, Walhalla, SC.

Attendance

Commission Members:

- Kim Alexander, District I
- Harold Gibson, District II
- Hank Field, District III
- Sammy Dickson, District IV
- Gene Blair, District V

Ex-Officio Members:

- Scott Maulder, County Administrator
- Ronnie L. Booth, President, Tri-County Technical College
- Michael Lucas, Superintendent, School District of Oconee County
- Jeanne L. Ward, President/CEO Oconee Medical Center
- Marvin Carmichael, Clemson University
- Robert C. Winchester, General Superintendent, Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority
- Art Holbrooks, Planning Commission
- Jim Gadd, Executive Director, Oconee Alliance
- John Lummas, VP Economic Development, Tri-County Technical College

EDC Staff:

- Jim Alexander, Director
- Thelma Miller, Administrative Assistant
- Russell Johnson, Assistant

Guests:

Glen McPheeters, Chairman, Fair Play Community Association
Paul Corbeil, County Council District I
Archie Barron, County Council District III
Reg Dexter, County Council District V
Ms. Gwen McPhail, Oconee Heritage Fair

News Media:

LaDonna Becker, The Journal

Call to Order and Welcome: Mr. Field, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. He wished everyone a Happy New Year and thanked the Commission members and guests for their attendance.

Action to Approve the Agenda: Mr. Gibson made the motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Blair seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Minutes approved: Mr. Corbeil moved to approve the Minutes of the November 18, 2011 meeting; seconded by Mr. Dickson. Motion carried.

Guest Report: Mr. Glen C. McPheeters, who devotes much of his time to community activities, gave the guest report. Mr. McPheeters is currently the president of the Edgewater Property Owners Association and is the treasurer of the Fair Play Community Association. He also serves as a director of the Voice of South Oconee and is a board member of the Stop Pioneer Now Coalition.

He spoke about the Fair Play Community Association which was formed in 2008 to provide a focal point on zoning. This is still an active issue as standards of the village are undefined and great opportunity exists to leverage the ZEO. Mr. McPheeters emphasized The Mission of the Fair Play Community Association: In an active partnership with Oconee and Anderson Counties, is to develop a positive economic future and a positive quality of life for our (Fair Play) area. To further define this effort the Association involved Clemson University's Institute for Economic and Community Development. A team of students conducted a survey to establish the wants and needs of the population. Results were shared with the community with many differences obvious between newcomers and longtime original residents. Opportunities identified to leverage strong social capital included: Local Farmers Market, a Commercial Kitchen and a Community Center.

Mr. McPheeters concentrated his remarks on the development of the Community Center. The former Fair Play school is now owned by the Fair-Oak Youth Center serving nearly 500 youth for sports activities annually. Other than a functional gym, they have no interest in the remainder of the building. The Fair Play Community Association is currently devising a phased plan for the redevelopment of the Fair Play School. An architectural design was displayed illustrating the future Fair Play Community Center. Restoration and up fitting will include replacing the roof, demolishing the existing gymnasium and replacing it with a larger gym, electrical updates, new HVAC systems and redesigning the classroom wing into a facility to host business establishments. "The Clemson student study recommended this project as a way to bridge the divide among residents, and develop the school into a community center offering a wide range of programs and services across the community," said McPheeters.

The Association is embarking on a major fundraising campaign to kick-off the project planning to raise \$1.5-\$2 Million.

County Comments: Mr. Paul Corbeil, County Council District I, announced the appointment of Glenn Breed to the position of Assistant Administrator for External and Emergency Services. He commented, "This position will be important to the management of the County."

The FY 2012-2013 Budget planning process will begin February 7th. Priorities for the decision making process will be consistent with those set in 2012. The Departmental Budget Process is designed for ease of use and understanding.

Oconee Alliance: Mr. Jim Gadd, Executive Director, Oconee Alliance, announced that a Scrabble Tournament will be held January 28, 2012 at the Walhalla High School Cafeteria starting at 9:00 a.m. 120 players are anticipated with the hope of raising \$2,000 for the Education Foundation to support grants to teachers and students throughout the school year. The tournament is sponsored by the Westminster Chamber of Commerce and the Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative.

The Oconee Alliance has initiated the Junior Leadership Oconee program aimed at High School Juniors. The series of training for future leadership roles includes five sessions. Registration is \$300 per student.

The next educational meeting of the Oconee Alliance is Thursday, February 9, 2012, 8:00 a.m. at the Thrift Development Corporation office, Seneca. Dr. Harris Pastides, President, University of South Carolina will share information about what the University is doing to stimulate economic development throughout the state, with focus on USC's School of Medicine in Greenville. Joining Dr. Pastides will be Don Herrriott, president of Innovista partnerships. Mr. Herrriott is an Oconee County resident.

School District of Oconee County: Dr. Michael Lucas, Superintendent, SDOC, provided an interesting update on the financial analysis model for education in Oconee County. He defined "Where does the money go?" through a graph illustration showing Instruction, Instructional Support, Operations, School Management, Program Management and Superintendent/Board categories. He noted that Instruction cost is 57% and Instructional Support of 14% equaling 71% of the budget spent in training the student. 20% of the budget is for Operations which includes transportation, food service, safety, building upkeep, data processing and business operations all necessary for instruction of the students. Dr. Lucas commented, "Make sure that you understand that less than 9% of the funding is spent on management." "Often there is a misunderstanding regarding expenditures for Program Management, the District Office, the Superintendent and the Board," he added. Dr. Booth asked for a breakdown of the SDOC revenue sources.

(Dr. Lucas provided the information comprising all sources of revenue (including bond sales) to the EDC on Monday, January 23rd.)

Directors Report: Mr. Jim Alexander, Director, reported that General George Patrick, Deputy Director, South Carolina Department of Commerce and Ms. Megan Anderson, Grants Manager, SCDOC visited Oconee County during the month of December. The visit offered the EDC staff the opportunity to discuss ongoing economic development programs and show off "the best" shell building in the state along with industrial parks under development and available sites and buildings.

Forward/Motions, the AdvanceSC Quarterly newsletter, January 2012 edition featured the BASF expansion. AdvanceSC awarded BASF a \$100,000 grant towards the expansion of this high-tech company. BASF is expected to add 25 jobs throughout the next three years. This is the single largest industrial investment in Oconee County's history.

Seamon Whiteside & Associates was awarded the contract to develop the Master Plan for the Golden Corner Commerce Park. Work on the plan will begin this month.

The Health and Safety Plan for the Oconee County Voluntary Cleanup Contract Investigation at the Propex facility near Seneca is nearing completion.

Excitement continues to mount as the Mountain Lakes Business Development Corporation is preparing to bring three to five clients into the County's Brown Building serving as the incubator site. The MLBDC has 120 clients with 6 mentors assisting with business planning and revenue sources. They are anticipating the opening of another incubator facility in Easley.

The Nalley building located in the Seneca area off of Radio Station Road has become available. The building is 48,000 SF with 22' ceiling height. It is considered an asset to the available building inventory for the county.

Mr. Alexander extended congratulations to Jaime Herrera, General Manager Production Units Americas at the Sandvik Westminster facility. Mr. Herrera has been promoted to Tools Manager Sandvik Machining Solutions and will relocate to Tübingen, Germany. He will report

to Andreas Evertz, President, Sandvik Machining Solutions, and is a member of the Sandvik Management Team. Under his leadership Sandvik invested over \$100 million in facility and equipment expansions at the Ocoee County facility.

Project and Marketing Report: Mr. Russell Johnson, Marketing & Project Manager, reported the publication and distribution of the EDC 2011 Annual Report had been completed earlier this month. The Annual Report/newsletter included six pages highlighted 2011 industry expansions, capital investment and job creation, the Showcase, MLBDC and editorial comments.

Mr. Johnson discussed an article published in the January 16, 2012 GSA Business magazine titled, "Spec building inventory nearly exhausted." The current recession has changed spec building construction from private developers' investment as lenders are unwilling to finance them. Ocoee County was sighted as taking the initiative to finance spec building construction. Ocoee County completed one 40,000 SF spec building in 2006, sold it in the midst of the recession in 2008 and completed a second spec building in 2011. A photograph of the County's shell building was featured in the article. Mr. Johnson was quoted, "If we don't build it here, no one is coming to visit. We don't have an area that generates so much traffic that private developers want to build on it." "We have to take it on ourselves to create the product and build it ourselves." He commented at the meeting, "County Council made a tough decision to build a shell building; we appreciate their support."

Old Business: The chairman reminded the Commission to submit nominees for the 2011 Ambassador for Economic Development.

New Business: Election of officers was held according to Ordinance 2005-15, (That at the January meeting of each even-numbered year there shall be elected a Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson from the appointed Commission Members.)

Mr. Gibson moved the nomination of Hank Field for Chairperson. Motion seconded by Mr. Dickson. Motion carried.

Mr. Dickson made the motion of nomination for Harold Gibson to serve as Vice Chairperson. Motion seconded by Mr. Field. Motion carried.

Adjourn: Mr. Dickson moved the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Mr. Gibson. The meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m. with the Commission extending Happy Birthday wishes to Mr. Dexter.

Respectfully submitted,



Thelma Miller
Administrative Assistant