

Oconee County Economic Development Commission  
Minutes of Meeting  
May 18, 2012

The Oconee County Economic Development Commission meeting was held May 18, 2012 at the Commission office, 502 East Main Street, Walhalla, SC.

**Attendance**

**Commission Members:**

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

**Ex-Officio Members:**

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

**EDC Staff:**

- √ Richard K. Blackwell, Executive Director
- √ Jim Alexander, Director
- √ Russell Johnson, Project & Marketing Manager
- √ Thelma Miller, Administrative Assistant

**Guests:**

- Paul Corbell, County Council District I
- Reg Dexter, County Council District V
- Dave Eldridge, Interim Chair, MLBDC
- Lisa Simmering, Oconee County GIS Analyst
- W.C. (Bozo) Richards, Citizen

**News Media:**

- Ray Chandler, Anderson Independent Mail

**Call to Order:** Mr. Field, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**Action to Approve the Agenda:** Mr. Blair moved the agenda be approved; Mr. Dickson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Minutes approved:** Mr. Dickson moved the Minutes of the February 17, 2012 meeting be approved; motion seconded by Mr. Blair. Motion carried.

**Guest Report:** Ms. Lisa Simmering, GIS Analyst, Oconee County, reported on the ability of the GIS Department to utilize GIS mapping to help County Departments make good decisions. Ms. Simmering presented two maps published on the internet: the City of Seneca half-marathon map and the 2012 Oconee County Council District map. The web application is hosted by ESRI, developers of the GIS mapping software used by the Oconee County GIS office. Local datasets (e.g. voting precincts or fire hydrants) can be published on top of several different base maps. Hyperlinks to images and attribute data were demonstrated in the City of Seneca half-marathon map. The GIS Department is partnering with the School District of Oconee County mapping hundreds of miles of bus routes. Ms. Simmering commented, "Whether publishing or viewing a map, the ESRI tool is free and easy to use." This is and has been a tool for economic development.

**Oconee County Update:** Mr. Moulder, County Administrator, was not available. Mr. Corbeil commented briefly on the FY 2012-2013 Budget in the final stage of preparation for approval. Oconee Focus, the broadband project is in Phase II; completion of the project is scheduled for August 2013. Mr. Dave Eldridge has been named Interim Chairman of the Mountain Lakes Business Development Corp. following the resignation of Mr. Carl Cliche. Mr. Dexter added the County is culminating plans to bring sewer to the Golden Corner Commerce Park.

**Oconee Alliance Review:** Mr. Jim Gadd, Executive Director was not available. Mr. Alexander reported the May educational meeting featured three speakers discussing their areas of expertise: Kevin Short, Director, Oconee Regional Airport, Neal Workman, Trebel, update on housing development and Al Babiniwz, Director, CAT mass transit. Mr. David Bennett, CEO, Proterra, Inc., the electric bus manufacturer located in Greenville accompanied Mr. Babiniwz.

**Directors Report:** Mr. Richard Blackwell, Executive Director, commented on his "busy first month and a half." He participated in two Mission Trips: SAE (Society of Automotive Engineers) Trade Show and SEDC (Southeastern Economic Development Council) 5<sup>th</sup> Annual "Meet the Consultants" Event in Atlanta, GA. The SAE trade show was not well attended and not conducive to industrial re-location clients but was aimed at development of automobile standards and research partnerships. During the trip introductory presentations were made to five potential companies in the area with plans for the Southeast. The SEDC program introduced 18 site consultants and provided the opportunity to meet and talk with each about Oconee County and the Upstate of South Carolina. Economic Development professionals from the SEDC 17 state membership were in attendance which provided great learning and networking.

Professional Development is a priority for Mr. Blackwell. In April he completed the second of four sessions of the Advanced Symposium, an educational program sponsored by SCEUA. He will attend sessions in July and October and receive the South Carolina Certified Economic Developer designation award in November.

Mr. Blackwell, Mr. Johnson and District III County Councilman Archie Barron attended the McNair Law Firm Economic Development Primer held at the law offices in Greenville. An update of basic economic development incentives, regulations and programs were reviewed.

Three candidates were selected following a review of the RFP's for development of the Economic Development Strategic Plan. Community involvement is vital to the plan and various

opportunities will be provided for their input. EDC members are welcome to serve on the Steering Committee. It is expected to take eighteen weeks to complete the Strategic Plan.

Mr. Blackwell shared a memorandum from Ed McCallum, Senior Principal, McCallum Sweeney Consulting providing an overview of his Oconee County visit. Suggestions included moving forward with the development of the Golden Corner Commerce Park and Echo Hills. The Propex property with rail is a great investment and development is encouraged as any rail served site in the southeast is an advantage. Overall Oconee County is prime for economic development success due to location and potential product.

Commission members were asked to review County Ordinance No. 201205 to revise Boards, Commissions and Committees. Note changes in Section 5, pages 5-7.

**Project and Marketing Report:** Russell Johnson, Director of Projects and Marketing displayed a version of the Golden Corner Master Plan that will be unveiled at a Public Hearing on May 29<sup>th</sup>. The meeting will be held at the Farles Cove Baptist Church near the GCCP starting at 6:00 p.m. This is an opportunity for the public and especially the Fair Play Community to see the plan, make comments, ask questions and contribute to the final document that will be presented to County Council for their endorsement.

County Council approved the purchase of the 100 acre rail site (Former Propex site) near Seneca. The next step will be a feasibility study of the property.

Mr. Johnson reported a busy month of client activity with several RFI's (Request For Information) the largest request included 19 pages. Currently there are three projects on the short list for purchase of the shell building. He anticipates a telephone call at any time to complete a transaction.

Mr. Johnson attended Session II of The SCEDA Institute held in Greer, SC. The two day economic development course featured speakers on community development and tourism.

A marketing program this month featured ads saluting Tri-County Technical College on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the College and thanking them for their service to the three county area.

The EDC office building has a new roof after more than 20 years and a new sign in the front yard is expected to be installed in June.

**Old Business:** Mr. Alexander commented on the potential for the Propex Property rail site and complimented staff on their work with RFI's for the shell building.

**New Business:** Mr. Field noted this was the last meeting Mr. Alexander will attend before his retirement on June 30<sup>th</sup>. The Economic Development Commission extended appreciation to Jim for his many contributions to the economic development programs for Oconee County. Mr. Alexander has served 12 years as Director of the Economic Development Commission.

The next EDC meeting will be hosted by Fort Hill Natural Gas at their new facility, 1031 Highway By Pass 123, Seneca starting at 9:00 a.m.

**Adjourn:** Mr. Dickson moved the meeting be adjourned; seconded by Mr. Blair. The meeting adjourned at 10:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Thelma Miller, Secretary