



WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WORKING SESSION

February 4, 2010

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Schwartz at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Room, Administration Building, 220 North Main Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Comms. Bergman, Gunn, Irwin, Judge, Ouimet, Peterson, Prater, and Schwartz

MEMBERS ABSENT: Comms. Ping, Sizemore, and Smith

OTHERS PRESENT:: Bob Guenzel, County Administrator, Verna McDaniel, Deputy County Administrator; Bob Tetens, Parks and Recreation; Jennifer Watson, Support Services; Tony VanDerworp, Melissa Milton-Pung, Brett Lenart, Anya Dale; Ken Schrader, ITS; Joanna Bidlack, Administration; Jason Brooks, Clerk's Office; various citizens; and members of the press.

Roll Call

Citizen Participation

None

Commissioner Follow-Up to Citizen Participation

None

Discussion Items:

Presentation of the Annual Reports for:

Ann Arbor SPARK:

Mike Finney reported on the SPARK Annual Status (on file in County Clerk's office). MEGA Tax Credit Information was provided (on file in County Clerk's office). Local entrepreneurs spoke about their success in working with SPARK. Finney thanked ETCS for their participation in the success of SPARK.

Comm. Peterson stated that he would like to applaud business leaders attending the meeting. He added that this is a benchmark when tax dollars are invested in a program. Comm. Peterson stated that he would like to increase the allocation to SPARK when the question comes up. He asked how the government is doing with business retention and attraction and asked what could be done to enhance business retention and attraction. He added that he would like an assessment on where the County stands and where it can improve.

Comm. Ouimet stated that the input from business leaders is exactly what needs to be seen. He asked what the breakdown is as far as male vs. female start up businesses. Comm. Ouimet stated that he would estimate that the County is way ahead of the national average on female owned businesses. Comm. Ouimet asked is there is a way as investment is frontloaded, how the original investment can be evaluated as it is leveraged out over time. Finney stated that he would be able to return to the Board with this information. He added that there is a thorough portfolio management approach when it comes to investment dollars. Comm. Ouimet asked if there is a formula with the micro loan. Finney reported that there is very detailed criteria that came from professional investors. Finney stated that he would be happy to share this detail. Finney stated that micro loans often are in the thousands of dollars and serve as startup. He added that CEED funds are usually available prior to venture capital. Comm. Ouimet stated that he would like to see what could be done to attract that venture capital. He complimented SPARK on their work.

Comm. Bergman stated that the Act 88 millage has allowed continued support of this program.

Comm. Judge stated that this presentation was very helpful. She added that it is exciting to see everything that is being done by SPARK. Comm. Judge stated that it is also interesting to see things that cannot be quantified.

Comm. Irwin thanked Mike Finney and the SPARK staff for all of their work. He added that he appreciated feedback from the business leaders attending the meeting. Comm. Irwin asked for an update on the Cultural Ambassador program. Finney stated that SPARK is trying to identify major ethnic groups and ensure that a welcoming environment is provided. He added that there is currently a search for more funding to expand this program to a regional level. Comm. Irwin stated that it is an advantage to play off of this favorable reputation and all of the cultural opportunities. Finney reported that a top question asked by business is whether or not the needed talent can be obtained.

Comm. Peterson stated that there will be an increased request. He added that the entire County is in this together. He added that he would like to meet to discuss a planning process prior to the departure of Bob Guenzel. He stated that everyone benefits from this type of program. He stated that the Board of Commissioners welcomes the opportunity to meet challenges.

Ann Arbor Success and Eastern Leaders Group:

Rich Sheridan, Tony VanDerworp Jeff Irwin and Mark Ouimet reported on Ann Arbor Success and Eastern Leaders Group. (Report on file in County Clerk's office.) Sheridan reported that a top way to improve quality of life is transit. He added that a conference center would add a tremendous economic benefit.

Comm. Prater asked about plans to deal with Wireless Washtenaw if the federal grant does not come through. McDaniel reported that James McFarlane could provide an update.

Overview of the new Department of Energy and Economic Development

The overview was provided by Tony VanDerworp (on file in County Clerk's office).

Comm. Judge stated that she would like to thank Anya Dale for her help in Pittsfield Township. She asked if the upper floor windows at 14A-2 are part of the retrofitting plan. Lenart reported that it is not currently part of the plan.

Comm. Prater asked if energy costs have been reviewed. Comm. Schwartz asked for feedback before the solar project moves forward.

County Administrator's Report

None

Items for Current/Future Discussion

Comm. Prater stated that he feels that there are some good issues in the list of initiatives provided by Administration. He added that it is critical for commissioner input at the front end of these projects. Comm. Prater stated that he would like financial controls included in the internal controls review.

Comm. Peterson asked if some of this will be discussed. He added that this discussion is about fairness and added that it is important to have a meeting about the document that was presented. Comm. Peterson stated that he would like any retreat or review session to take place in the Board Room. Comm. Prater stated that he has had discussion with the Chair. He added that the Chair indicated that he would like to hold a public discussion. Comm. Peterson stated that if anything is going to change that the new Administrator needs to know it.

Comm. Judge stated that the goal was to have public discussion sometime before the first of May. Comm. Peterson stated that he would like to hold this meeting prior to the first of May.

Comm. Irwin asked about the engagement of the consultant and the cost. Guenzel reported that he has authorized a contract not to exceed \$20,000. He added that Comm. Smith is involved in putting together a committee.

Comm. Peterson stated that he does not want the Board to be bogged down in the summer months. He stated that he feels uncomfortable with the delay in this meeting.

Comm. Prater stated that this years' budget is down 4.25%. He added that something needs to happen in these next two years.

Comm. Judge asked if it would be helpful to have an open discussion at the next Working Session.

Pending

None

Citizen Participation

None

Commissioners Follow-up to Citizen Participation

None

Adjournment

Comm. Peterson seconded by Comm. Prater moved that the meeting be adjourned until February 18th, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

Ken Schwartz, Vice Chair

Lawrence Kestenbaum, Clerk/Register

By: Jason Brooks, Deputy Clerk

APPROVED: February 17, 2010