

Executive Committee
Economic Development Council Meeting ♦ February 4, 2016
Doubletree by Hilton, Flagstaff, AZ

Members:			(Absences YTD)	Members:			(Absences YTD)
Rich Bowen	Present	0		Karalea Cox	Present	0	
Jodie Filardo	Present	0		Casey Rooney	Absent	1	
Paul Watson	Absent	1					

Guests: Wendy Bridges, Membership Committee Member

Staff: Teri Drew, Regional Director
Julia Sawyer, Executive Assistant

1. Call to Order/Welcome/Introductions

Karalea Cox called the meeting to order at 9:18. She introduced Julia Sawyer as the new Executive Assistant to the Regional Director of NACOG, Teri Drew. There was a quorum present.

2. Approval of October 1, 2015 Minutes

Chairman Cox called for a motion to approve the October 1, 2015 minutes. **Richard Bowen made a motion to accept the October 1, 2015 minutes, seconded by Jodie Filardo. Motion passed unanimously.**

3. Chair’s Report

•Tourism Update

Chairman Cox began her report with concerns regarding the plans for the 2016 Spring Tourism Forum, which is supposed to take place in Navajo County. She feels that planning has moved along, but had a concern that there was not adequate representation from Navajo County. Regional Director Teri Drew explained the organization of the Tourism Committee, which is composed of members from all four counties. There are two folks from Apache County, and had been two from Navajo County, two from Yavapai County and two from Coconino County. One of the representatives from Navajo County withdrew, leaving one. There have been efforts to solicit another member from Navajo County. The meetings are usually held by phone to make it easier for the members to attend. Steve North had been approached regarding participating on the Tourism Committee regarding the Spring Forum planning because of his local knowledge of the White Mountain locations for the Spring Tourism Forum, specifically the Pinetops-Lakeside resort and the Torreon Golf Resort. There was some confusion at the last telephone conference meeting that led Mr. North to conclude that the members from Coconino and Yavapai were changing the place for the Forum to one of their counties, but actually the discussion was in regards to what was going on in their individual counties. Chairman Cox stated that Mr. North remained on the conference call, and Sharon Adams of Navajo County was also in attendance. Chairman Cox’s understanding was that the agenda items for that meeting highlighted tourism activities in Yavapai County and Coconino County, rather than highlighting tourism activities that are happening in Navajo County. Ms. Drew then commented that the agenda being addressed was really geared toward the “Best Practice” panel, and with lack of participation at the meeting from Navajo county, Navajo County best practice was not raised. Therefore the voices being heard on the phone were those from various tourism boards in Yavapai and Coconino counties. She encouraged representation from Navajo County. Chairman Cox noted she would reach out to the Chambers of Commerce.

Ms. Drew noted that at the October 2015 Retreat, she hired a facilitator to develop a Tourism Scope of Work, which includes developing Best Practice opportunities, as well as organizing a Spring Tourism Forum. Ms. Drew commented that there wasn’t much representation at the Retreat from Navajo or Apache counties, except for Becki Christiansen, who spoke out about looking at White Mountain Chambers, which include Navajo and Apache Counties, for a possible location for the Spring Forum. There was some miscommunication between members as to the location of the Tourism Forum being

either at Pinetops-Lakeside Resort or The Torreon Golf Resort in Show Low. Some email discussion between committee members had been circulating regarding food and other locations. Ms. Drew stressed to the committee the need to do cost comparisons for the properties and food, and the committee is now in the process of bidding and getting cost comparisons. Ms. Drew noted that the effort has always been for economic development to understand tourism and tourism to understand economic development, so included in the Forum will be an economic development tour. However, the communication between the some members of Tourism Committee was emphasizing an economic development tour of a facility in Coconino County rather than Navajo County, leading to more confusion. Therefore, there has been some frustration within the committee.

Discussion followed regarding the tentative agenda for the Forum. The first night would be an informal barbeque reception, and chamber activity. Day two would include breakfast and welcomes, then the Tourism Committee presentation on their Scope of Work with a Power Point on "What is the Economic Impact of Tourism in Northern Arizona", a Visitor's Profile, hosted by the White Mountain Regional Chambers, then the Arizona Office of Tourism and Arizona Office of Commerce presentation. Following the lunch break for that day would be some break-out sessions on forest health and restoration and off-road regulations in Coconino County. Also included in the Forum will be sessions on multi-agency collaborations, community case studies, National Geographic Verde Valley, etc. Chairman Cox raised a concern that Navajo County may feel disengaged from participation with the existing forum planning, and she would like to see some of the Navajo County best practices being highlighted to bring those residents into the Forum. Ms. Drew pointed out that the existing draft of the agenda intends to reflect something from all four counties. She also commented that the budget needs to be looked at, as well as securing some local sponsorships.

Chairman Cox suggested that they reach out to the local chambers in Navajo County for participation, since it is anticipated the Forum would be in the White Mountain area near Show Low. There was some discussion regarding possible contact people.

Chairman Cox suggested a possible tour of the Apache Railroad because of the history and story behind it. There was positive feedback to that suggestion. Ms. Drew reiterated the need for another voice from the area to participate in the committee planning. She was still waiting for feedback regarding her request for someone to investigate the rates for Torreon. Chairman Cox had spoken with folks from the Torreon resort regarding their rates and their willingness to work with costs if we contract some of the food through them.

Chairman Cox asked the Executive Committee how they can support the Tourism Committee and help make the Forum a success. Ms. Drew replied that the "Save the Date" for the Forum in the White Mountains has gone out already. There isn't much time to secure a place. The main speakers for the Forum have been secured. Some discussion followed regarding potential invitees to speak at the Forum. Rich Bowen suggested that the Forum focus on Economic Development rather than to splinter off into other discussion that doesn't lend to economic development discussion, with the focus being on bringing business to the Northern Arizona area. Some discussion followed regarding past successes in other areas that could influence decisions within our tourism committee. Ms. Drew reiterated the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy states that the Tourism Subcommittee's goal is to improve the quality of life and to unite the natural cultural amenities with the outdoor recreational opportunities to make Northern Arizona a great place to live and visit, and the objectives are outlined in the CEDS as well. Chairman Cox wished to reassure the Tourism Committee that the EDC board supports their efforts and encourages them to continue. There was no action taken.

4. Director's Report

Chairman Cox turned the floor over to Regional Director Teri Drew. Ms. Drew reported that on January 5, 2016 the Governor's office for the State of Arizona unveiled a draft plan to make each of the twelve local areas in the State their own Economic Development Region. Ms. Drew noted that it would not make sense for the State to impose requirements into the existing CEDS, since the funding is federal and there are no state funds on the table. She also commented that it does make sense to blend with other counties that are similar. There is a possibility circulating between Yavapai County and Coconino County to put their planning resources together to become a planning region, but would have to seek

approval through the Governor's office and go through that process. In summary Ms. Drew said that NACOG is now looking at developing another plan with the other workforce areas for now, at least until June 30, 2016. Ms. Drew, being a local area director, will now have to develop an Economic Development plan for Yavapai County in addition to the CEDS that was just approved in 2015.

5. Membership Committee Recommendations

Chairman Cox then moved on to the Membership Committee recommendations and asked Ms. Drew to update the Executive Board briefly. Ms. Drew reported that there are 3 seats up for recommendation today, a Yavapai County private seat, a Coconino public seat, and also a membership renewal. There is a vacant Navajo County private seat for which applicants are being considered. Carol Curtis, the chair for the EDC Membership Committee is expected to call in on the phone for the general EDC meeting, and will be available as a support and reference for Wendy Bridges, who has agreed to report on behalf of the Membership Committee.

6. Member Comments

Chairman Cox called for member comments, there were none.

7. Public Comments

Chairman Cox then called for comments from the public. There were no comments from the public.

8. Adjournment

Chairman Cox called for a motion to adjourn the Executive Board Meeting. **Jodie Filardo moved to adjourn, Richard Bowen seconded. Motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 10:00 AM.**