

***Pulaski County
Community Development Commission
Strategic Visioning Committee***

Tuesday, 1 June 2021
Winamac Municipal Utilities Complex
Winamac, Indiana

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, 4 May 2021
Winamac Municipal Utilities Complex
Winamac, Indiana

Members present: President/Committee Chair Sheila Jimenez (Winamac), Membership Officer Kelsie Zellers; County Commissioner Maurice Loehmer, County Councilor Kathleen Thompson; Bill Champion. Executive Director Nathan P. Origer.

Members absent: Lynn Johns (Francesville) [business].

Guests present: None.

(Roman text indicates in-person attendance; *italics indicate telephone/Facebook attendance.*)

Call to Order

President Jimenez called the meeting to order at 5:01 *p.m.*

Key Action Steps Review

Marketing/Branding/Business Development: Discussion ensued regarding how the annual Summit has taken shape relative to this original vision therefor. The members reached a consensus that, as described in the plan, an “aggressive initiative” for marketing the Commission would be overkill, but efforts such as starting the quarterly newsletter anew and renewing coffee hours would be advisable. Increasing interest in coffee hours could be made possible by inviting local and state-level elected officials to participate and by maintain greater consistency in scheduling them. Mr. Champion spoke of past efforts by the former Logansport Economic Development Foundation to host quarterly breakfasts, which could be explored in the future. The president suggested publishing highlights from quarterly newsletters in local papers.

Workforce Development: Mr. Champion suggested that the Commission should “guide the flow of where to [find relevant workforce-training information]”, helping to funnel information from Ivy Tech and other organizations cleanly and clearly. Discussion ensued regarding specific organizations from which to channel information and with which to become more engaged, including Conexus and the Indiana Manufacturers Association.

Councilor Thompson suggested asking certain commission members to accompany the director to his 2022-budget meeting with the County Council to emphasized the need for proper funding and staffing to implement this and other action steps.

Targeted Industry Sectors: Suggesting that the 2010 plan included too many sectors as worthy of being targeted and emphasizing the demographics- and logistics-driven need for focusing more on business retention and expansion than on attraction, Director Origer sought guidance in paring the list of sectors better to reflect Pulaski County’s strengths and opportunities. The director reported that a conversation that he had had at the most recent Pulaski County Industrial Forum meeting evinced an openness among the existing industrial base to building a stronger local supply chain relative to other forms of business attraction. The Committee agreed that value-added agricultural business could be worthy targets as well; depending on the ultimate number of solar-energy projects built in the region, targeting a company that maintains and repairs renewable-energy equipment or finding a means by which to provide training for these skills may be advisable.

Business Retention: Mr. Champion succinctly stated that business retention and expansion must be a top priority for the Commission.

Partner Priority Review

Community Foundation of Pulaski County: It was agreed that the updates to the Key Action Steps addressed in the meeting aligned with the Foundation’s Aspiration #1, “We want a thriving and growing community.”

Pulaski County Chamber of Commerce: It was agreed that the updates to the Key Action Steps addressed in the meeting aligned with the purpose of the Chamber as defined in Article 1, Section 1 of the Chamber's bylaws.

Other Business Determined to be Necessary

County operations: Councilor Thompson raised her concerns regarding a disconnect between expected services and a willingness to pay for them as well as the County's refusal to rely on sufficient training and consulting to ensure the implementation of best practices in budgeting.

Adjournment

By consensus. 5:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nathan P. Origer, Executive Director/Recording Secretary