

Beaufort County Economic Development Corporation
June 17th – Regular Meeting – 2:00 pm
Technical College of the Lowcountry, New River Campus

Meeting Minutes

Present: Feaster, Alsko, Dallas, Gough, Mantua, Murray, Fobes, Shelton, Sulka
Absent: Rodriguez, Panu, Sommerville
Staff: O’Toole, Stone
Guests: Stephen Steese, Eric Sommerville, John Fleming, Joe Fragale, Stu Rodman, Jackson Puckey, York Glover, Mike Levine, Kristen Ling

Chair Feaster called the meeting to order at 2:04 pm.

Chair Feaster entertained a motion to enter executive session to review the confidential projects; Fobes moved; Dallas seconded; approved unanimously; the Board entered executive session at 2:05 pm.

Chair Feaster entertained a motion to exit executive session; Mantua moved; Dallas seconded; The Board exited executive session at 2:30 pm. No motions or votes were taken in executive session. Public session followed.

Chair Feaster entertained a motion to approve May 20th minutes; Fobes moved; Alsko seconded; approved unanimously.

Chair Feaster entertained a motion to reelect Ashley Feaster as Chair, Mike Alsko as Vice-Chair, Lisa Sulka as Secretary, and Steve Fobes as Treasurer; Murray moved; Dallas seconded; approved unanimously.

Project Legacy is a mid-western aerospace company interested in purchasing the Magnus Speculative Building at the Beaufort Commerce Park. Project Legacy projects a capital investment of \$14.5 million and a job creation of 150 new jobs. Project Rogue is a tech driven machine shop on Hilton Head Island. Project Rogue is pursuing an expansion and the purchase of a new 8,000 sq. ft. facility on Finch Street. The project projects a capital investment of \$3.8 million and a job creation of 13 new jobs. Project Gullah is the Gullah Farmer’s Cooperative on St. Helena Island. The Gullah Farmer’s Cooperative focuses on socially disadvantaged farmers, the Cooperative will be tapping into a steady supply of skilled producers who have not previously been able to maximize this market opportunity.

Chair Feaster entertained a motion to approve a \$300,000 grant for Project Legacy, a \$25,000 grant for Project Rogue, and \$50,000 grant for Project Gullah; a grant total of \$375,000; Fobes moved; Sulka seconded; approved unanimously.

Chair Feaster and the board offered a general consensus for the BCEDC to pursue the second speculative building and negotiate with Magnus. No motion or vote was made.

Chair Feaster entertained a motion for the BCEDC to seek approval from County Council and the municipalities on a FILOT, 15% SSRC, and a MCIP for Project Legacy; Sulka moved; Gough seconded; approved unanimously.

The Beaufort County EDC applied for a \$200,000 grant through SC Department of Commerce’s Site Enhancement initiative. The application scope entailed wetland mitigation at the Beaufort Commerce Park. Currently, the parcel adjacent to the spec building site has 2.37 acres of wetlands that limits the development potential. The BCEDC applied for funds to mitigate 1.49 acres. The BCEDC considers this site to be one of the prime sites in the park due to the lack of MCAS restrictions on use.

O’Toole reviewed BCEDC strategic session. The following themes were suggested throughout the session:

- Regional coordination to strengthen relationships
- There is a lack of awareness of job reward – pay/benefits
- Need to connect the private sector with education during strategic start up
- Students need career programs that connect them with emerging opportunities
- More data on education standards and outcomes in Beaufort County
- Addressing workforce and underemployed
- Retaining existing industry and understanding overlapping industry issues
- Need for product and development plan – MCIP

Mission/Vision

BCEDC reviewed new vision and mission statements.

Vision: To be the collaborative driver for leading economic development efforts in the communities we serve.

Mission: We engage key stakeholders to diversify the county's economy, attract investments, create well paying jobs, respecting the natural environment.

Chair Feaster entertained a motion to adopt the new vision and mission; Murray moved; Shelton seconded; approved unanimously.

The Beaufort County EDC's product report is focused on scalable development and short-term sites at the nexus of infrastructure. Chair Feaster entertained a motion to approve the draft of the product plan that exists today; Mantua moved; Fobes seconded; approved unanimously.

Fobes and O'Toole provided an update on the 2020-2021 FY Budget. Subcommittee of Fobes, Shelton, and O'Toole are implementing new mapping strategy to better track items.

O'Toole and Stone provided update on BCEDC activity. BCEDC has currently attracted \$25.78 million in capital investment, 223 new jobs (annual compensation of \$10.2 million at completion), and 99 leads in FY 2020-2021. The BCEDC has also completed 45 existing industry visits and brought in \$1.45 million in external incentives for companies and site development grants.

The BCEDC has several SC Department of Commerce visits to Beaufort County in June. SCDOC is sending down Project Managers, the Recycling Division, the Product Development Division, and the International Strategy and Trade Division for various familiarization tours and company meetings. Project Garden, Materials Research Group is a New Jersey manufacturer moving their operation to Lot 15 of the Beaufort Commerce Park. They will construct a 10,000 sq. ft. facility, invest \$3.19 million and create 26 new jobs. The company is working with Beaufort Design Build and will receive bids back on their project on June 25th. Project Mira, is a California company purchasing an existing 48,000 sq. ft. facility in Beaufort. The company will be a dry food distributor and create 28 new jobs with an investment of \$2.05 million. The company closed on the building on May 26th. Blue Sky Processing, a hemp processor at Gardens Corner has closed their facility. Currently, the BCEDC is assisting the owner in marketing the 15,000 sq. ft. facility. One interested prospect is Project Fox, a firearms and ammunition distributor. Lowcountry Fresh Market and Café hosted their grand opening on May 26th. The BCEDC is also continuing conversations with Project Legacy, an aerospace company out of Illinois. The company has given the odds as 90-95% in favor of Beaufort County. Also, Magnus Development Partners has broken ground at the Beaufort Commerce Park and are planning a groundbreaking ceremony in the upcoming weeks. The BCEDC is also working with GEL Engineering, SCA and the City of Beaufort on redrafting the Beaufort Commerce Park master plan.

Fleming provided an update on SCA activity. Select USA is working with SCA to generate lead calls and is finding the virtual meeting/calls to be high quality leads. SCA has a marketing mission to Boston and Switzerland in September, and additional meetings to Italy and Australia in October. On product development, SCA is assisting with the Beaufort Commerce Park master planning and Yemassee plan.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 pm.