

MINUTES OF JOINT MEETING OF THE  
SANFORD CITY COUNCIL  
ECONOMIC GROWTH SUMMIT  
WITH LEE COUNTY AND TOWN OF BRAODWAY

The Sanford City Council met on March 1, 2013 at 8:00 A.M. at the McSwain Extension Education & Agriculture Center located at 2420 Tramway Road, Sanford, NC for a joint meeting (Economic Growth Summit) with the Lee County Commissioners and Town of Broadway. Other leaders from business and education were present. The following Council Members were present:

Mayor Cornelia P. Olive	Council Member Rebecca Wyhof
Mayor Pro Tem Sam Gaskins (Left at 9:30 A.M)	Council Member L. I. (Poly) Cohen
Council Member Charles Taylor	Deputy City Clerk Janice Cox
City Manager Hal Hegwer	City Attorney Susan Patterson

Also present: Bob Bridwell, Community Development Director

Absent:

Council Member Walter McNeil, Jr.  
Council Member Jimmy Haire  
Council Member James Williams  
City Clerk Bonnie White

Having a quorum present, Mayor Olive called the meeting to order.

The summit was conducted by N. C. State University Business and Technology Extension Service State Program Director Dan Parks and Southern Growth Policies Board Executive Director Ted Abernathy. They provided an overview of Lee County's economic setting; a proposal to create one corporation to manage economic development; and ideas for how the county should move forward in strategic planning. (Exhibit A)

Because Lee County has been largely dependent on manufacturing, the economic impact on the area has been more serious than in other areas less dependent on manufacturing. Currently, employment rates are higher in areas with higher percentages of college graduates. The number of employees in agriculture is very low.

Discussion centered around creating a sole corporation to manage economic development which would include combining efforts of the Sanford Area Chamber of Commerce and the Lee County Economic Development Corporation into one organization with a board of directors to include stakeholders who have made an investment in the corporation.

The purpose of creating such a single entity—a public-private collaboration for economic and community development--is to bring together the Lee County organizations involved with economic development into a unified effort. This can be done with a single, focused organization governed by a policy-making board of directors as stewards of public and private

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funding. There would be a chief executive responsible for executing policy, achieving board directed goals, and providing stakeholders with a maximum return on investment.

The mission of this consolidated board would be to create a globally competitive economy for Lee County. The corporation will adopt a broad mission including strategies and tactics to grow existing business and attract both large and small new businesses. The corporation will develop a strategic plan incorporating previous community supported activities and existing studies. The corporation will be responsible for developing a timeline for implementation and the metrics to judge success. The corporation will be transparent to all investors including Lee County, City of Sanford, Town of Broadway, and private investors—corporate or individual.

All efforts of the corporation will be focused on increasing the tax base, as well as increasing and maintaining quality employment opportunities for the citizens of the Lee County trade area. Funding will come from the private sector, Lee County, City of Sanford, and Town of Broadway. Private funds will include current Chamber of Commerce membership dues and sponsorships. Additional private sector funds will be raised through an aggressive, five-year private sector fundraising campaign. Public funds will be appropriated annually by the county and municipalities. It is anticipated that future funding above and beyond the current funding and staffing levels of the EDC and Chamber will be needed to carry out the broad mission of the new organization to spur real, sustainable economic growth.

The next steps include forming the corporation and charging it with developing a comprehensive economic development strategic plan; mapping out the program of work; and raising funds needed to carry out the strategic plan and staffing model. The program of work will then be approved by the local governments and form the basis of the campaign to raise funds from the private sector. Responsibility and accountability for implementation of the strategic plan resides with the corporation, its partners, and allies. (See Exhibit B for additional information.)

Comments from the floor included:

Council Member Rebecca Wyhof stated she would like to see a discussion of quality of life issues for families to move here.

Chet Mann stated that we had not done well in fragmented efforts so a proposal to pool resources under one organization as a city-county collaboration was a positive move.

Mark Lyczkowski stated that life style now is the key to getting people to Sanford and we need to keep the money in Sanford. He supported long-range planning.

Richard Hayes stated he was interested in how to attract people to our area from Southern Pines, Cary, etc.

Donnie Oldham supported a small task force and emphasized the need for public input to include faith based groups.

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Jim Womack stated the need to define where we want to be, in measurable terms, in five to ten years and how to reconcile the EDC in the budget. It could take twelve months to get a new EDC plan. It would be necessary to get recommendations from the presenters and from the current EDC.

Other concerns expressed included the cost of water and taxes for residents; incentives for attracting and keeping businesses; how to protect family-owned businesses; people in control need to be aware of what citizens want and not be self-serving; the need for transparency; consolidated government services; to be careful not to over commit as government can't fix everything; and being aware of social needs and including social service needs in the plan.

County Manager John Crompton stated he would ask his board where they wanted to go with developing a strategy.

Council Member Rebecca Wyhof moved to adjourn the meeting by acclamation.

Respectfully submitted,

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Cornelia P. Olive, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Janice Cox, Deputy City Clerk