

Nebraska Innovation Zone Commission
Board of Commission Meeting
7:00PM, March 6, 2008
Mahoney State Park – Red Oak Room
Ashland, NE.

DRAFT

Commissioner Attending: Mary Anne Borgeson, Marsha Babcock, Paul Cook, Rich Jansen, Pete Kotsiopoulos, Jeff Weak, Dave Neilsen, John Plucknett, Phil Mullin, Brad Stauffer, Brenda Gunn, Tim Gilligan – alternate, Mark Stursma – alternate, David Potter –alternate.

Kathy McKillip – NIZC Executive Director, Richard Baier – NDED Director, Joseph Young, - NDED.

Members Excused: Bernie Heier, Ken Svoboda, Chuck Sigerson, Ernie Abariotes, Marlin Petermann, Jim Grotrain,

Visitors: Deborah Dorbal, Doug Bisson, Kandi Srb (sp?), Paul Mullen, Larry Jacobsen, Jack Stannard, James Ruhge, John Knapp, Connie Anderson (sp?), Bruce Fountain, Doug Tweton, Joseph Kennicker, Rudy Smith, Norma Nelson, Jarel Vinduska, Kim Stuhr, James Krance.

Chair Brenda Gunn welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 7:05PM.

Kathy McKillip, NIZC Executive Director, then took the Commission roll call at 7:07PM.

Approval of the Agenda

Chair Gunn asked for approval of the agenda as distributed. ***Motion made by Commissioner Plucknett and 2nd by Commissioner Nielsen, to approve the agenda as distributed. Motion approved by consent.***

Approval of Minutes

Chair Gunn asked for approval of the 10/04/07 NIZC minutes as distributed. ***Motion made by Commissioner Nielsen and 2nd by Commissioner Stauffer to approve the minutes as distributed. Abstentions; Borgeson, Cook. Motion approved by 9 to approve with 2 abstentions.***

Commissioner's RFP Phase -1 Proposal Report & Discussion

Doug Bisson, HDR Team project manager, presented an update regarding the progress being made with the Phase I project. Copies of the mid-term report for the Commissioner's and public members were provided by NIZC for review. Currently, this plan is targeted for completion by the end of March or early April, with a final report due in the Month of May, 2008. More than 1152 participate in the web survey, with the average participants' age being 41. The final report will include information from the Omaha Chamber of Commerce's Young Professionals Organization webs survey that

should also be of interest. As a result of Phase I, a series of “Guiding First Principles” have emerged from the plan. Key elements include the focus of different jurisdictional opportunities; some of these elements are still in need of being folded into the report. In addition to monthly NIZC meeting to which a public comment period is always provided, there were other opportunities such as focus groups, the planners’ roundtable and www.I-80ideas.com to where community members could register ideas, suggestions, and comments. It will be important to incorporate into updated plans the role of economic development and how this fits into the guiding principles. *A request was made by Commissioner Gunn and supported by Commissioner Weak, that the HDR Team incorporate in stronger detail the population projections per county in the report.*

In addition *Commission Mullin requested that as a Commission, we utilize this information to create and develop an economic development component, when will this be done?* In general discussion, Commissioners commented that economic development components, along with quality of life issues, tax structures, inter-governmental incentives, should be addressed in detail along with the guiding principles in the final phase of the plan.

Commissioners were asked to review the distributed report and send any changes or comments to the HDR Team, so that they could be implemented in time for the April meeting.

Public Comment Period

Public Comment Period opened at 7:50pm.

Doug Tweton, Greenwood, interested in having Greenwood part of the planning, and would like to add his name to the contact list.

Jim Ruhge, Cass County, is there a way to send emails to county board members?

Jarel Vinduska, SAVE, suggested urging the counties to preserve a greater percentage of conservation areas for the promotion of environmental good.

Kim Stuhr, SAVE, consider tourism and recreation since they do generate funds and should be considered as economic development. Also stated was the opinion that people don’t pay attention to websites.

John Knapp, SAVE, suggested that the Commission draw a general circle around a map to include a target area, and that there is a need for more farmers to participate in the process.

Bruce Fountain, Gretna, A key to the corridor area is regional cooperation, Mr. Fountain participated in the K-10 project/corridor, and it has experienced a great deal of success.

Jim Krance, Omaha, Expressed hope that the next phase focuses on specific projects, and that there is a consideration towards recreation and tourism as an expanding industry regarding economic development.-

At this time, seeing that there were no more additional public comments, Chair Gunn, closed the public comment period.

Public Comment period closed at 8:25pm

Executive Director Report

If there are additional correspondences that I need to be aware of and add to the list please let me know. Hard copies in the mail have been eliminated to only those specifically requesting them.

Remember, if you are a guest, please sign in and provide contact information so that the Commission can keep you updated and informed.

The 2008 NIZC Legislative Luncheon was held Jan 9, 2008. There were more than 31 Senator's that attended plus 3 staff members. There was a strong number and great response – several others declined the invite due to pre-scheduled events. The Commission has reserved the date of January 7, 2009, room 1023 at the Capitol for the Senator's luncheon and Commission update.

We welcome a new Commissioner, Paul Cook representing Sarpy County Board; Dr. Joan McDowell will be leaving the Commission and replaced with Dr. Jack Huck, from Southeast Community College. The Commission was notified that we were not selected for an Environmental Trust Grant. Funding is still an issue for the final phase of the Regional Comprehensive Plan, scheduled to begin the summer of 2008.

Other Business

Commission Chair, Gunn, introduced and welcomed Richard Baier, and Joseph Young with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. Legislative update regarding LB 998 was provided. Senator Gay does not anticipate at this time to any legislative funds being appropriated to NIZC. Mr. Baier suggested to the Commission that they could consider CDBG re-use funds from community within the six targeted areas as potential dollars and a funding source for the final phase of the regional comprehensive plan.

LB 895 Super Advantage, should advance to the floor for debate. If the Commission is interested, this could be placed on the NIZC April agenda for an update and discussion.

Deborah Drbal, USDA, as a guest provided an update regarding USDA programs, as well as distributed general data and contact information. USDA, awarded grant funds to NIZC/NDED for use in the development and design of a regional comprehensive plan.

The NIZC 2007 Annual reported needed to be presented for Commission approval. Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and second by Commission Gilligan to approve the NIZC 2007 Annual Report as distributed. Motion carried by consent.

State Fair discussion engaged Commissioner comments as to what is the potential for a rural setting within the corridor for the State fair, if so, where there any counties, communities that submitted a proposal? Having the regional comprehensive plan completed before the State Fair issue, would have been a very good tool, and assistance to the State Fair discussions, due to the population base within the targeted six counties. Only general discussion occurred at this time.

At this time, seeing that there was no other Commission business. *Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Borgeson 2nd by Commissioner Gilligan. Motion approved by consent.*

Meeting adjourned at 8:52PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy McKillip
Executive Director - NIZC