

Nebraska Innovation Zone Commission
Board of Commission Meeting
March 4, 2010, 7:00pm
Quarry Oaks Golf Course – Club House
Ashland, NE.

Commissioner Attending: Tim Gilligan (alternate), Tom DeLong, Marsha Babcock, Jack Huck, Marlin Peterman, John Plucknett, Jeff Weak, Brad Stauffer, Mark Stursma
Kathy McKillip – NIZC Director, Richard Baier, NDED Director

Members Excused: Mary Ann Borgeson, Rich Jansen, David Potter, Dave Nielsen, Pete Festersen, Phil Mullin, Larry Hudkins, and Brenda Gunn.

Visitors: Bob & Mary Buck, Cathy Kepple (sp?, Pine Grove RV Park), Scott Schimone, Eric Murray, Karen Stille, Mary Koncka, Tim Weander, Kevin Anderson, Jon Pesce, Glenda Wood, Mike Werner, James Rughe,

NIZC Chair, John Plucknett, welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Kathy McKillip, NIZC Executive Director, then took the Commission roll call at 7:06PM.

Approval of the Agenda

Motion made by Commissioner Gilligan, 2nd by Commissioner Peterman, to approve the agenda as distributed. Motion approved 9-0.

Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Commissioner DeLong, 2nd by Commissioner Stauffer, to approve the February minutes as distributed. Motion approved 9-0.

Public Comment Period

There public comment period opened at 7:07pm. There was no request for public comments, but rather a request for open general discussion from roughly 20 community members in attendance, regarding the Commission’s current agenda and sun setting phase. Discussion also revolved around how the Commission’s sun setting will affect area businesses and the work already completed. To maintain the scheduled NIZC agenda, the general discussion was closed at 7:25pm and the Commission moved on to the next agenda item.

Commission Discussion/Notes

Brain storming session: A brief Commission update was reviewed and handouts presented focusing on 6 regional corridor associations across the country. In general, the following comments were shared;

- Funding – how will a new corridor association manage to fund itself?
- What model will work best for the area and Nebraska’s needs?
- How can the larger Chamber of Commerce, assist and collaborate with the I-80 Corridor communities and their Chambers?
- Does this area have the potential of replicating the Panhandle Association that focuses on economic development?
- Does the association need to be broken into different components, such as marketing, planning and zoning – to ensure and assist that communities are working together to utilize the Regional Design Standards and Guidelines, and infrastructure planning – economic development collaborations?
- Important to ask for Senator and Legislative endorsement or support.
- The over-lay district that Gretna is working on with JEO Consulting an encouraging and interesting approach to incorporating the design standards, and should be reviewed.
- How does a new association build a private/public membership base?
- The association has to maintain communication and contact with interior communities and not just Omaha and Lincoln.
- Get infrastructure developed and going as the main focus so that there is something to start working towards and available when projects do develop.
- The association should promote development, and prevent projects from inappropriate development.
- This area needs national quality tourism and exit 426 needs to be a key player in that process.
- What would the function of a corridor association be? The point of contact for the region? Is that duplicating?
- There needs to be a unique approach that addresses the incentives that we have as a state and a region as well as an assessment of what we lack.
- Utilize the NIZC Phase 1 guiding principles that an association can incorporate. Using unity with uniqueness.
- How do we focus and direct focus on site ready areas?
- An association should preserve and protect the areas within the I-80 corridor interior and also promote additional large development sites.
- Keep including local control and unity while promoting a collaborative spirit.
- Can Marketing and Zoning/Planning be one-in-the-same association?
- Current weaknesses as presented by NDED for the area, relate to;

- ❖ The level of community leadership and Knowledge for development, planning, marketing, and collaboration.
- ❖ Lack of sites and buildings ready and related to project needs.
- ❖ A current challenge is that the area has a relatively small labor force.
- ❖ Challenges in the equity & ventures markets, stimulating activity for start-ups.
- ❖ Innovation & Existing Companies
- ❖ Cash up Front – Kansas and Texas offer cash incentives up for business relocations.
- ❖ Stronger tourism component for the area promoting and focusing on current environmental strengths and existing assets.

Seeing that the agenda time was coming to a close, the group wrapped up with suggestions about asking outside entities for suggestions relating to the development of an I-80 corridor association and what general thoughts existed about the topic, as it relates to the brainstorming session and ideas development from the session.

Closing Comments

At this time, since there was no new business or agenda an item to address, motion was made by Commissioner Weak and 2nd by Commissioner Gilligan to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned by consent.

Meeting adjourned at 8:46 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy McKillip
Executive Director - NIZC

