

**CITY OF COLUMBIA
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING REPORT
APRIL 17, 2012 – 11:00 A.M.
CITY HALL – 1737 MAIN STREET
COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM – 2ND FLOOR**



Prior to entering the meeting please turn all electronic devices (Cell phones, pagers, etc.) to a silent, vibrate or off position. All presenters are asked to speak directly into the microphone for recording purposes.

The Columbia City Council conducted an Economic and Community Development Committee Meeting on Tuesday, April 17, 2012 at City Hall, 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Sam Davis (Chair) called the meeting to order at 11:12 a.m. The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine and The Honorable Leona Plough were present.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

1. Social Enterprise Job Creation and Business Development Program – Ms. Glenice Pearson, CEO of The Nonprofit Network, Inc.

Ms. Pearson outlined the Social Enterprise Job Creation and Business Development Program. The purpose of this meeting is to obtain support to establish a partnership with Richland County and the City of Columbia. Ms. Pearson's Partners are: Dave Parker and Sean McGee both located in Columbus, Ohio. She said the program will target existing black-owned businesses with at least four years of operation. They will work with these businesses so they can grow and employ more people who are unemployable. She explained the five step process:

1. Hold a planning session through a teleconference to establish a timetable.
2. Conduct a community scan – interview a number of leaders which will lead to the creation of a community portrait.
3. Conduct workshops based on interviews and the community scan
4. Interview community stakeholders
5. Provide major workshops for businesses in the area

Richland County has not made any decisions to support the project. There are still questions about the proposal and deliverables.

Ms. Pearson said they are asking for \$25,000 (to include travel for out-of-state partners) from the City and County.

The consensus of the Economic and Community Development Committee is for Richland County and the City of Columbia to get together to discuss. Councilor Devine also recommended that staff get together (Office of Business Opportunity and Economic Development Office) to discuss. A date and time will be scheduled for the next meeting with Ms. Pearson.

2. Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT)

Mr. Jim Gambrell informed the committee that he has been in touch with the Dukakis

Center and the City of Rock Hill. The City of Rock Hill has completed their self-assessment; however, it has not been presented to their City Council.

The consensus of the Committee is to invite Rock Hill to Columbia to discuss their completed self-assessment with the City of Columbia and Richland County. Mr. Gambrell said he will extend the invitation to them.

3. The Haystack Needle Project – Mr. David Kunz, Executive Director of the Cooperative Ministry

Mr. Kunz explained that the project is a partnership for changing lives and transforming communities. The Cooperative Ministry and Host Contact Services, LLC have developed an innovative approach to improving employment opportunities for individuals, families, and communities. In the new model, this assistance is an investment with real returns measured in the growth of household income and achievement of economic self-sufficiency.

Mr. Kunz said they plan to create 300 new jobs within the next 18 months by opening a call center in Columbia (75 people will be hired in the first phase). They will target the working poor and low income individuals.

They are asking the City of Columbia for a 10,000 sq. ft. facility with a 5-year zero-cost lease and 3 years at below market rate. The three sites they are looking at are: the VC3 Building on Lady Street; the Parks and Recreation Administration Building on Calhoun Street; and the Bull and Taylor Streets Building.

The Committee suggested the Parks and Recreation Administration Building. Councilor Davis advised Mr. Kunz that the building is very raw and asked if they will provide the up-fitting. Mr. Kunz will provide all up-fitting; the only request they are asking is use of the facility. The building will be needed within 6-9 months.

Councilor Plough said this is a public facility so we will need questions answered - i.e., projected revenue and expenses; who will manage finances and be the general partner; and a letter of intent.

Mr. Jim Gambrell said a good model of what they are asking is the USC Technology Incubator. The Committee recommended that Mr. Kunz meet with Mr. Gambrell and take a look at the incubator lease.

Mr. Sam Johnson said he will make arrangements for Mr. Kunz, Mr. Allison Baker, Mr. Jim Gambrell and himself to take a look at the Parks and Recreation Facility. Councilor Davis told Mr. Kunz that the entire facility may not be needed and can be reserved for other uses by the City.

The consensus of the Committee is to schedule another meeting with Mr. Kunz with his complete proposal after all of this has been done.

The meeting adjourned at 12:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Jones
Office of Economic Development