

Minutes
York County Economic Development Committee Meeting
Wednesday, January 24, 2024
5:00pm

The York County Economic Development Committee met on the above date for an Economic Development Committee Meeting at 5:00pm at 1070 Heckle Boulevard, Rock Hill, SC. The following Council members were present: Council member Watts Huckabee, Council member Allison Love and Council member Tom Audette. Also present were County Manager, David Hudspeth, Economic Development Director, David Swenson, County Attorney, Michael Kendree, and Clerk to Council, Karen Brogdon.

Jason Flora from Economic Development also attended.

Meeting called to order by Chairman Tom Audette

Motion was made by Council member Allison Love and seconded by Council member Watts Huckabee to approve the minutes from the December 6, 2023 Economic Development Committee meeting. Motion Carried.

David Swenson, Economic Development Director provided general Economic Development activities update and reported that there were 4 new opportunities with 3 in manufacturing. Mr. Swenson stated that 2023 generated \$1.1B in investments, which is a huge win for York County, with QTS Data, Silfab Solar, State Seal OneH2, and Poetker Construction Company.

Mr. Swenson reported on Business Retention and Expansion:

- Safety Council meeting held in January / 40+ attendees / March next meeting
- HR Roundtable in February at BedGear – SC National Guard WF Advisor
- York County Regional Chamber will recognize Manufacturer of the Year in February
- Visited with firms in Rock Hill and Clover

Marketing/Research

- Marketing Mission Trips
 - JEC Trade Show – Paris, France March 3-5 / SC I-77 Alliance / DOC
 - Site Selectors Guild – Nashville, Tennessee April 3-5 / SC I-77 Alliance
 - NPE Trade Show – Orlando, Florida June 6-10 / SC I-77 Alliance
- Atlas Copco video work beginning
- Collaborative Branding Plan wrapping up
- Fall Business Pulse Survey completed

Items to Note

- Governor and SCDOC ED Summit – January 29th
- SC I-77 Alliance fundraising underway – next 6 months
- YC Growth Partners Annual Meeting – February 21st

Mr. Swenson provided an overview regarding the previous Gravity Center discussion/proposal. The request was for \$100,000 annually for a 3-year commitment to fund non-profit Gravity Center.

At the Committee's request at the last meeting, Mr. Swenson researched other entrepreneurship efforts in Greenville and Spartanburg Counties.

Start Up Greenville (*Brand*)

- Brand focused on building the spirit of entrepreneurship
- Focused on coordinating and supporting a diverse ecosystem focused on:
 - Imagining Innovation & Startups with a focus on Networking, Training, and Concept Development
 - Establishing Entrepreneurs via Universities, Prototyping, Market Introductions, Specialized Space offerings, Seed Capital, and Coworking
 - Growing Entrepreneurs with Early Stage Capital Partners
 - Scaling Innovation and Commercial Operations with growth capital and expansion resources
- Public and Private sector focused

NEXT (*similar to Gravity Center*)

- Wholly owned subsidiary of Chamber that supports organization leading the vision for Greenville's efforts
- Staff of 5
- Foundational Partners – City of Greenville, Greenville Chamber and Greenville County
- Budget = ~\$450K to \$600K
 - City of Greenville - \$250K for NEXT and \$250K for StartUp Gvl
 - Greenville County - \$150K
 - Greenville Chamber (Main/Foundation) - \$50K - \$100K
- Services – access to flexible space, venture mentoring, direct connections, workshops
 - VMX – MIT model like what Gravity Center was undertaking
 - Workshops – Entrepreneur Exchange, Learning Labs, Fireside Chats
 - Venture Pitch – annual conference; focus on educational workshops, keynote speakers, and showcasing top startups in the Carolinas
- Key Partners & Allies
 - Clemson University, Furman, University, USC Upstate, Greenville Tech, SBDC, Community Works, Greenville Chamber, Upstate Warrior Solution, Appalachian Development Corp, SCRA, CoWorking & Specialized Space providers, Networking Groups/Events, SC Department of Commerce SCBIO, Upstate Alliance, City of Greer

PowerUP Spartanburg/Small & Minority Business Initiative

- Run by One Spartanburg and funded by Spartanburg County
 - \$6M invested over 5 years (\$1.2M in loans/grants); ARPA funds; \$200k in grants
 - Staff of 3 and 2 consultants; Advisory Board – 15 & partners – 8
- Focus on three key areas
 - Access to Capital & Space

- Start up loans, existing business loans, existing business impact grants
- Downtown Spartanburg focus on small-scale storefronts, office & retail space
- Technical Support
 - Accelerator, subject matter experts, securing contracts, business mentors
- Social Capital
 - Expert series, community captains, VMI mentoring
- Key Partners & Allies
 - SBDC, SCORE, Local Chambers, Local Development Groups, Urban League, Accelerator, MIT, Sparks Center, Spartanburg Community College, USC Upstate, Innovation Space

Takeaways

- Need to align public and private sector partners and funding into a collaborative that fits for our needs and market potential
- Need to identify our target focus because each group requires different resources and support
 - Small business – commercial/retain/sales & service
 - Minority and/or Women owned – may be a mix of both
 - Innovation Operations – high tech focus & possibly mfg
- Peer to Peer networking is key to innovation economy success
- Real estate resources support efforts and should not lead the efforts

Committee members liked the information gathered and would like to take a day in March and visit Greenville and Spartanburg to gather more information about these programs.

Council member Tom Audette reported that he has talked with Dean Faile, Executive Director of the York County Regional Chamber and they are supportive of these efforts and would like to collaborate with the County. Once the committee members have gathered the necessary additional information from Spartanburg and Greenville, Councilmember. Audette would like Mr. Swenson to meet with Mr. Faile to discuss how to proceed.

Motion was made by Council member Watts Huckabee and seconded by Council member Allison Love to go into Executive Session to discuss Economic Development Project Updates. Motion Carried.

There were no matters for consideration following Executive Session.

There being no further business a motion to adjourn was made by Council member Watts Huckabee and seconded by Council member Allison Love. Motion Carried.