***Laurens County Development Corporation***

Board Meeting - **Minutes**

Tuesday – March 17, 2015

Attendees:

Greg Alexander, Stan Bryson, Mayor John Carter, Roger Case, Rusty Denning, Randy Garrett, Randy Lis, David Pitts, Frank Stovall, Ernie Segars and John Young

Guests:

Emelie Hegarty (Upstate SC Alliance), Diane Anderson (Laurens County Council), Stephen Taylor (City of Clinton), Ed West and Jennifer deCesare (SC Department of Commerce)

Staff:

Marvin Moss, Jon Coleman, Lynn Finley and Sandy Cruickshanks.

Press:

Cory Engle (Advertiser), Emil Finley (WLBG), Jennifer Brown (golaurens.com) and Vic MacDonald (Chronicle).

Chairman Bryson called the meeting to order at noon and gave the invocation.

*Minutes and Financials*

Chairman Bryson asked the Board for a motion to approve the meeting’s agenda. Frank Stovall made the motion to approve and Randy Garrett seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the agenda.

Chairman Bryson then asked the Board for a motion to approve the minutes from the 01/20/15 meeting. Randy Garrett made the motion to approve the minutes as presented and Frank Stovall seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the minutes.

Lynn Finley provided a recap of expenses for January and February. With no questions or comments, the financials were accepted as information only.

Update on Investors: 4 new investors in the past two months, 1 was $1,000, 3 were $500 with 44 current investors.

*Existing Industry/Retail Update – Jon Coleman:*

* Held semi-annual job fair on January 29 at the CAM. Had over 500 people attend. This was an increase in attendance over the previous job fair and plan to look at hosting another this summer.
* An e-Zone information session was held at the CAM for local industry in February. The e-Zone program is money and tax credits available to companies if they offer training to their employees. The interest was so strong a second session was planned.
* All economic update visits to area councils and boards have been completed. Will plan another round of visits in the second half of this year for an annual update.
* Jon and Lynn continue to make calls for introductions with existing industry throughout the county.
* Attended the Upstate SC Alliance annual meeting in March which was held in Spartanburg.
* Working on documents for two existing industries and hope to have announcements in the near future.
* Chick-fil-A has now broken ground and expects to be finished about August.
* The annual golf tournament is planned for April 2. Investor and industry interest has been strong and there are more teams participating than we’ve ever had and actually had to cut off the registration.

*Economic Development Update – Marvin Moss:*

* RFIs: 9 in January, 3 in February
* Site Visits: 4 in January, 3 in February
* 2 project requests that we could not submit on. Both had very specific site specifications that we do not have available.
* The LCDC annual meeting was held at the CAM on February 17. There were just over 60 in attendance.
* The infrastructure committee will be meeting soon to review the progress of the different projects in the works. Jeff Field has recently presented to the Laurens and Greenwood County Councils concerning the water access at Lake Greenwood.
* Uniscite has been acquired by a new company called Inteplast. Inteplast is a worldwide company and already has some plans for extension.

*CEDC Update – Frank Stovall:*

* Currently cutting timber on some city owned property to use the revenue to upgrade Clinton Corporate Park III. Have cleared about 13 acres and plan to have space available for a development ready pad.
* Meeting on March 31 to review the final version of the City’s economic development strategic plan.
* Have a new restaurant opening soon in town.
* The City has partnered with the Kauffman Foundation to offer the Fast Track Program to local business owners. It’s an opportunity for current small business owners to take accelerated business courses through this partnership.

*Laurens ED Update – John Young:*

* Two new stores on the Square: The Humdinger which is a gun and ammunition store and one that will be opening in a few months called the Vault Salon and Spa.
* The Capitol Theatre is now selling food again in place of the retail clothing items.
* Have hosted the first Finally Friday event at Roma and another is planned in several weeks which will be out on the Square.
* Jump Start grant opportunities of about $5,000 are available and also $5,000 in façade improvement grants.

*Upstate SC Alliance Update – Emelie Hegarty:*

* The Upstate SC Alliance annual meeting was recently held in Spartanburg with almost 300 people in attendance. It was also the launch of the Upstate SC Alliance’s Regional Export Plan. This is a joint effort with Brookings Institution.

*Approval of Revised Budget – Frank Stovall:*

Chairman Bryson stated that the Finance Committee met in February to review changes needed to the current operating budget. The Chairman of the Finance Committee, Frank Stovall, presented the recommendations. The finance committee voted to utilize excess funds from the last budget year to pay off the building loan. And, expectations of receiving a grant or financial support for paying the majority of the costs associated with the contract with Retail Strategies didn’t come through the way expected. The committee revised the budget to address these two issues. The committee also voted to recommend to the board the adoption of the revised budget for the operating year. Coming from a committee no motion was needed so a vote was called by Chairman Bryson. With no further discussion the Board unanimously approved.

*Review SCDOC County Assessment – Marvin Moss:*

Marvin Moss introduced Ed West and Jennifer deCesare of the SC Department of Commerce as partners in completing the county assessment tool. Mr. West presented the background of the assessment and value in completing. Laurens County is the first county in the state to complete and review the data. The extensive assessment of about 135 questions was completed by a smaller group of local individuals from the utilities and those with direct involvement in daily economic development. The assessment covers demographic data, economic planning, funding for economic development, business climate, infrastructure, available product, and quality of life.

Mr. Moss presented the overall scores and highlights of the assessment and opened the floor for discussion. The topics generated productive conversation and a desire to discuss the results to greater detail at a follow-up meeting.

*Other Business*

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn S. Finley