

The Economic Alliance
Board Meeting
September 26, 2012
Koala Street Grill, Omak

Attending Board Members:

Nan Kallunki, 1st Vice Chairman
Coleen Couch, Treasurer

Arnie Marchand
George Brady

Absent Board Members:

Rich Watson, Chairman
Kyle Desautel, 2nd Vice Chairman
Amanda Jackson, Secretary
Lael Duncan, Past Chairman
Alison Gillette
Art Himmler
John Andrist
Steve Kreider

Bill Black
Mary Watson
Andy Lampe
Gail Howe
Kurt Danison
Okanogan County Tourism Council Rep -- Vacant
Nespelem/Coulee Dam Position #2 – Vacant
At Large Position #2 - Vacant

Staff & Guests:

Roni Holder-Diefenbach, Executive Director
Carolyn Davis, Admin. Assistant
Nancy Nash, WorkSource
Nancy Warner, IRIS, Listening Post
Chris Branch, City of Oroville

Corina Radford, Omak Downtown Assoc.
Bonnie Waude' WVC
Jamie Huber, NW Public Radio
Melaine Wyss, Gebber Farms

1st Vice Chairman, Nan Kallunki, called the meeting to order and asked for introductions. The agenda was approved as presented. No quorum was established. This is an informational meeting only.

Guest Speaker

Corina Radford with the Omak Downtown Association and the Omak Chamber of Commerce spoke about the effort to revitalize the Omak downtown area. She has served as the Omak Chamber President for the past five year and has seen a lot of changes in the downtown area and she felt with the new mix of businesses it was a good time to approach the topic of revitalizing the downtown area. They have a good working relationship with the Chamber and with the city of Omak and held their first meeting in this spring. The first thing they did was to hold a cleanup day and five businesses actually painted their buildings. She attended the Main Street Program planning meeting in Chelan and brought back information to the group. This program is now under the State Historic Preservation Department instead of the Department of Commerce. Many communities are using the Main Street 4-Point Approach to address the complex and changing issues facing the downtown business environment. The Main Street Approach provides a flexible framework that puts the traditional assets of downtown and locally-owned businesses to work for economic growth and community pride. As an Affiliate Community they are provided with access to resources and networking opportunities that can help revitalize the downtown area. Benefits include: Phone and email consultation; invitation to workshops spread throughout the state; discounted registration charge for workshops; one two-for-one registration to Revitalize WA Main Street & Preservation Conference; they would be eligible to apply for the annual 'Excellence on Main' Awards and the Mentor Community Visit. They were required to submit an application and letter of agreement and will provide a yearly progress report on activities. They are currently doing a need assessment for the downtown area.

The Eight Guiding Principles of a successful downtown revitalization program include:

- Incremental process
- Comprehensive four point approach
- Quality

- Public and private partnership
- Changing attitudes
- Identify and capitalize on existing assets
- Self-help program
- Action oriented

Their next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 8:00 at Magoo's Restaurant in Omak. Additional things that are happening in Omak are the upcoming Halloween Harvest Festival on October 27, 4 – 8 at the Omak Civic League Park. They will have a pumpkin pie eating contest, costume contest, kids carnival, decorated pumpkin contest, and movie (Casper). The Omak Christmas Parade is scheduled for the second Saturday in December at 4:00.

Nancy Nash with WorkSource stated that she walked the downtown area and met with each of the businesses. She did an inventory of what is located in downtown and asked 113 business owners what they would like to see for the future of the downtown. She found that the business owners each had a story to share. There was a lot of the same things mentioned including more benches, more retail businesses (shoe, clothing, home décor, knitting/yarn, ice cream, pharmacy), bicycle parking, and have stores stay open later.

Corina stated that the city of Omak has a web portal – Shop Omak – on the city web site www.omakcity.com. Any licensed business in Omak or a chamber member can register and have their business listed. They currently have over 100 businesses listed.

Arnie Marchand suggested that the downtown areas need to welcome Canadians with money at par. Chris suggested getting the signage down to eye level. He currently serves on the Tree Board and they are in the process of getting trees trimmed, which will make it easier to see signage.

George Brandy spoke about the efforts of the city of Pateros to revitalize their downtown community. They have received several grants and have been able to connect sidewalks, put lights in the mall area, put up a reader board, a splash pad, and walking tour signs. He felt it has really improved the downtown area. The new motel and the remodel of the restaurant have also had a great impact on Pateros. They city currently has seven lots available for sale for retail businesses. He felt that right now there wasn't enough retail in their downtown area for visitors.

Executive Director Report

Roni Holder-Diefenbach distributed her monthly report. (Attachment #1) Roni reported that the NCW Workforce Development Council is looking for a new Board member. She serves on this Board and they, in consultation with local elected officials, oversees the one-stop (WorkSource) system programs and WIA Title 1-B employment and training programs and coordinates local area workforce development services.

She had a meeting with local city planners and Perry Houston and next month's guest speaker will be Perry Houston. He will be speaking about the potential opportunity of developing certified sites in Okanogan County.

Roni also attended the recent Department of Transportation meeting regarding the roundabout that is being proposed on Hwy 97. Most of the comments were opposed to a roundabout.

Leslie Miller, manager of the Eastern Washington Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) presented a seminar yesterday on Doing Business with the Federal Government. Eight people attended this seminar. Roni also spoke about Okanogan County losing its designation as a "Distressed County". Because of this Okanogan County is no longer eligible as a Certified HUB Zone and businesses will not be eligible for the 8a program, except on the Colville Reservation. This federal program is based on

unemployment rate and Okanogan County no longer qualifies. She also stated that the state is still not counting unemployment figures from the Tribe. This will have a major affect on some of our businesses. It is hoped to have additional series of seminars in conjunction with PTAC in the spring and also seminars beyond social media.

Board Business

Vacant Board Positions: There are still three vacant positions on the Board, an At Large #2, the Nespelem/Coulee Dam Area #2, the Okanogan County Tourism Council representative. Roni Holder-Diefenbach stated Melanie Wyss is interested in the vacant At Large #2 position. Melanie stated that she was born and raised in Brewster and is part owner of Gebbers Farms and owns an orchard with her brothers. She has missed being involved with organizations and is looking forward to being more active. It is hoped to seat her at the next meeting.

Standing Committee Reports

Treasurers Report: An updated cash flow projection was distributed to Board members with actual through August. Coleen Couch reported that the anticipated funding from Kinross Gold should come in soon. The cash position still looks positive.

Communication Committee: Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that the new web site is almost ready to go live. There will be an area where people can add information about events or programs. Events will be listed and workshops and seminars will be able to be paid for via PayPal. Demographic information will automatically be updated and it is hope that the new site will be a valuable resource for the community.

Infrastructure Committee: No Report.

Business Education Committee: No Report.

Old Business

No discussion.

New Business

Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that the CWU College of Business will be hosting a conference on October 30, 9 a.m – 4 p.m. in Ellensburg titled Wind, Wine and Water. She has attended this in the past and felt it was a good conference to attend.

Nancy Warner distributed registration forms for the upcoming Success Summit, which is being held on November 15 in Entiat at the High School, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The NW Public Radio is a partner this year and will be talking about the summit on the radio. She stated that there will be more interaction in the afternoon this year and the agenda will be coming out soon.

Nancy Nash reported that the Methow Valley will be having a job fair in March, 2013.

Meeting adjourned 1:06

Next Meeting October 24, 11 – 1, at the Koala Street Grill. Please mark your calendars! Guest speaker, Perry Huston, Okanogan County Planning Department will speak about Certified Sites.

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Davis, Administrative Assistant



Meetings Attended:

- NCW Workforce Development Council
- Development Agreement Meeting w/City Planners & P.Huston
- NCW EDD
- ADO Conference Call-Budget
- VIA 97 International Meeting
- Government Contracting Training
- DOT Roundabout meeting

The month of September has been a busy one for the Economic Alliance. The EA Website is almost ready to be launched with its brand new look and updated information! We also attended several meetings one of which was in Osooyas B.C. where Glen Mandziuk the CEO of the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association presented to us an opportunity to have a formal agreement with partners to the south to share info for promoting the 97 corridor. BC has a 10 year Economic/Tourism regional strategy for the first time...He shared that 80% of tourism revenue is made in 3 months. They would like to see that change and be more evenly spread out throughout the rest of the year. More information is available at www.totabc.org

I also had the opportunity to meet with the planners from the cities and Perry from the County Planning department to discuss development agreements. Everyone was interested in pursuing this idea and we scheduled a time to meet again in October and then will present to the EA board a "scenario" or table top process example of when this would be used at the October meeting.

Business Education classes in the works:

- Social Media: Beyond Facebook & Twitter (this class will touch on Social media platforms such as HootSuite, Sprout or Sprinklr to assist in marketing your business). This will be part one of three of a business education series and will be held in October.
- Eastern Washington PTAC-Spring Series