



**Visioneering Wichita
Entrepreneurs & Small Business Strategic Alliance
Agenda Meeting
March 10, 2009
Meeting Notes**

Attendees: Tony Myers, Phyllis Robertson, Jim Holt, Pat Carney, Roger Douthett, John Willoughby, Tim Pett, Byron Watkins, Marcia Stevens, Tracee Adams, Andrea Gegen

Leadership Team: Abel Perez, Don Checots, Donna Wright, John Gendron, Marc Howell, Marcia Stevens, Phyllis Robertson, Randy Summers, Roger Douthett, Tim Pett, Tony Myers, Tracee Adams, Trish Brasted

Next Entrepreneurs & Small Business Strategic Alliance Meeting: April 14, 2009, WSU Center for Community Support & Research (formerly known as the Self- Help Network), 358 N. Main, Sunflower Meeting Room

I. Purposes of the Meeting

• **Updates/Review:**

- Visioneering Updates
- Business Incubator Leadership Team Discussion Conclusion
- Economic Development Foundation Meeting Preliminary Update

• **Discussion:**

- Economic Development Foundation Meeting Preliminary Discussion

II. Visioneering Updates

Suzie provided an update on the Visioneering Wichita Review, Revise and Refocus process, which is Visioneering Wichita's opportunity to review the past five years of implementing the Visioneering Wichita plan and what our priorities are going forward. Some themes heard from the meetings held have included:

- Downtown development and the need to connect all of the development pieces together to have a cohesive downtown environment
- Comprehensive recreation
- Economic development – higher level thinking and collaboration are needed
- Entrepreneurs and small business – access to resources and information in a variety of ways, including time of day

Once the Review, Revise and Refocus process is complete in March 2009, the Visioneering Wichita document will be reissued to the regional public.

III. Business Incubator Leadership Team Discussion Conclusion

This Alliance has considered the idea of the development of a business incubator by: 1) gathering information from speakers about what has happened in the region around business incubators in the past to the present; 2) identifying different types of incubators (i.e., lifestyle and high tech) and

structures (i.e., non-profit vs. for profit); 3) and discussing it with others who have expressed interest in the idea (e.g., the mayor, Urban League, etc.). Per the recommendation of the Alliance at the February Alliance meeting, the Alliance's Leadership Team met to discuss whether or not to pursue the idea of developing a business incubator at this time. Alliance Leadership Team representatives Tim Pett and Roger Douthett reported that given the present challenges, including the current economic climate, lack of a champion, cost analysis, etc., it doesn't seem feasible for the Alliance to work on this further currently. There are groups that are presently looking at developing business incubators, including lifestyle, high tech and arts, and so it may make sense for the Alliance to collaborate with and lend support to these groups in the future as their incubator development work evolves.

IV. Economic Development Foundation Meeting Preliminary Update & Discussion

Suzie lead a preliminary discussion of the Alliance related to the findings from the Economic Development Foundation Meeting that there is presently a lack of higher level thinking and collaboration around economic development for the region. Initial discussion insights and ideas included the following:

- GWEDC is doing a good job and has accomplished much but is focused on recruitment, retention and expansion of jobs
- There is a need for a higher level, intentional, regional focus – we're currently missing economic development opportunities because of a lack of this type of focus (e.g., regional business park)
- Developers currently operate in secret and don't want to collaborate – there is a need for a larger group to put pressure on them to work together for the benefit of our region
- Not capitalizing on innovative technology (e.g., wind turbines)
- There is a lack of urban planning which leads to urban sprawl and a lack of space
- We have regional strength and need to capitalize on it
- Creation of an entrepreneurial environment attracts all sizes of businesses
- This alliance could have a leadership role in a higher level, intentional, regional focus
 - Opportunities to do this:
 - It's time
 - It's our regional future
 - We're losing out on economic development opportunities
 - We have a great entrepreneurial spirit
 - Downsides to doing this:
 - Maybe need to have a meeting to focus on discussing this
 - It's risky
 - Do we know who we want to be as a community? Are we willing to do the things we need to get there?
 - Leadership needs to answer this and be willing to do the work
- Effort could entail a conference, etc.
- Rebecca Ryan is coming back June 2009 to conduct community handprint – what kind of community are we in attracting and retaining young professionals?
- Reviewed the "Did You Know? Shift Happens" YouTube video. This video can be reviewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jpEnFwiqdx8>
- We're lacking a sense of urgency about this and it's an urgent matter – we'll continue to lose resources in young professionals
 - Also don't lose sight of the 40 somethings moving back to Kansas
- We all need to come to the table with openness and listen to each other – may not always agree

- If we can help foster this, it's a healthy and good thing
- Can't drive significant change until majority of people believe that the pain of staying the same is greater than the pain of change
- Negativity, crisis can create impetus for change

The Alliance agreed to continue the discussion, including the possible leadership role and related action steps of this Alliance in a higher level, intentional, regional economic development focus, at next month's Alliance meeting.

IV. Next Steps

The next Entrepreneurs & Small Business Strategic Alliance meeting will be held on **April 14, 2009 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.** at The WSU Center for Community Support & Research (formerly known as the Self-Help Network), 358 N. Main, in the **Sunflower Room**. The primary purpose of the meeting is to continue the discussion on the findings from the economic development foundation meeting, including identifying the Alliance's possible role(s) and related actions steps.