

Task Force Agenda Meeting Minutes – January 18, 2012

In attendance:

Task Force: Annette Lund, Anthony Spears, Kim Fortier, Brett Akkerman, Mark Chenoweth, Richard Fanning, Gary Taylor, Grant Rademacher, James Singular

Advisory: Bob Hoenie, Durwin Long, Jeff Moores

Other: Greg Morrison

Facilitators: Ellen Watters

Staff: Elizabeth Tolzmann, Amy Baldwin, Jason Aarsvold, Alisha Strowbridge

Welcome by Ellen Watters

Introductions:

- Introduction of Task Force Member Grant Rademacher

Housekeeping:

- Review and notify Ellen if you would like changes to the draft minutes.
- Please take a minute to fill out the survey that was sent out after the January 4, 2012 meeting.

Review of the first draft of Task Force Recommendations from January 4, 2012 Meeting

Topic : “Access to Information and Resources for Business”

Additional comments:

- Hire positive, well-trained employees, and use situation based questions in hiring practices
- Make “suggestion box” available for customers
- Focus on explaining why codes/regulations are different between different cities
- Ensure all employees have a base knowledge regarding all City matters
- Respond quickly like a private sector business
- Want efficient process or ambassador (someone to go to quickly for an answer that cares about what you are trying to accomplish)
- Don’t add another layer of bureaucracy to create ambassador style response team
- Hotline – exclusive access, clear communication on what the hotline is to be used for business.
- Would like to see Park Pages sent to businesses.
- Would like to see more positive marketing pieces in the media.

January 18, 2012 Topic: Access to Workforce and Training Providers

What has been your experience finding experienced workforce for your business?

- Took 2 ½ months to find a qualified marketing manager, the perception of the area was not favorable or unknown.
- There is difficulty when hiring professional positions, entry level or “line staff” are easier to find and can be hired through the temp agencies, walk-in’s, advertising, etc.
- Potential employees are choosing not to work in Brooklyn Park because of their perception of the area.
- Use “Pro-Staff” staffing agency to fill temporary or hourly positions.
- Would like to work with the community college and high schools to develop programs that meet the businesses needs.
- Offered different pay to get workers to come to Brooklyn Park but they refused, bad city image.
- Hear about bad perception but don’t feel it is true.

Presentations:

Durwin Long (Dean) - North Hennepin Community College

Summary of discussion:

- Degree Programs – 34 associate degree programs, 8 bachelor’s degrees
- 14,000 students
- 40% choose to continue their education after receiving an associate’s degree
- Provide customized training modules for businesses
- Internships: Some students are required to complete an internship, many students choose to complete an internship as a learning experience before graduation, and some students look for internships on their own unrelated to their coursework.
- Many students live nearby
- Average age of a student is 26, many students are working and going to school
- See handout for additional information.

Jeff Moores (Community Development Manager) – Rasmussen College

Summary of discussion:

- Campus in Brooklyn Park open for 7 years, Rasmussen has been around for over 100 years
- 1,000 students
- Mission: View business community as the customer.
- Upcoming Career Fair: February 16, 2012
- 40 Employers at the career fair (contact Jeff if you would like to participate)
- Average student’s age is 27, very diverse student population
- Narrowed focused programs
- Provide clearinghouse of information for incoming students
- See handout for additional information.

Bob Hoenie (Business Services Specialist) – DEED Workforce Center

Summary of Discussion (Workforce Development):

- DEED tries to find out what employers need to grow their businesses
- Mnworks.net – job posting board
 - Currently 74,000 active resumes on the website
- Can test employees for skill levels – skills tests available through DEED
- Can assist with prevailing wage scales and benefits
- WOTSY Program – Veteran hiring initiative, tax credits available to employers and employees for veterans that have been unemployed for 6 months or more.
- Employer of the day – Promote employer for 2 weeks (pre-screen candidates)
- English as a second language training – on site or at workforce training center
- 20% visitors to the workforce center are unskilled workers, 80% workers have work experience
- Position descriptions available
- See handout for additional information

Topic: Embracing Diversity and Community Engagement

Elizabeth Tolzmann (Community Engagement Coordinator) – City of Brooklyn Park

“An Innovative Approach to Community Outreach” – Community Engagement Initiative

- Immigration attorney for 7 years before working at Brooklyn Park
- Snapshot of Community
- In 2009 Brooklyn Park started Community Engagement Initiative (community driven groups)
 - Core Planning Team → Strategies → Strategic Objective
 - Resources, Youth, Diversity, Measurement Team (meet once a month)
 - GO BP Coalition Advisory Group (meet once a month)
 - Core Planning Team (meet once a year)
- Mission Statement “A thriving community, inspiring pride where opportunity exists for all”
- Business List
- Coordinated Youth Activities
- Starting to see positive changes as a result of community engagement

Presentation Discussion:

- Are you proud to be located in Brooklyn Park? Mixed consensus, mostly positive.
- Can't sell products such as salt, firewood, etc. outside on the sidewalk. This is the only location which prohibits this
- 80% of residents are positive about living in Brooklyn Park
- How does the city prioritize the budget?
- Minority volunteers up 400%

- More people should be involved in Tater Days
- How do we ensure businesses stay engaged after the Business Forward Task Force Meetings wrap up?
- What can Elizabeth do to engage business owners?
- Business owners should “sell” Brooklyn Park to businesses outside of the city. City should make Brooklyn Park business friendly and that will attract more businesses

Topic: Improve Business Regulation

Review summary notes from Community Cafes

Where should the City focus the discussion for the February 1, 2012 Meeting?

- Signage
- Permitting for existing and new buildings
- Fair/Equal Enforcement
- Streamlining the “Process” – Reduce time it takes to get quality services, how Brooklyn Park regulations compare to other cities, NAIOP study, Perception that Brooklyn Park is not efficient
- Exterior Storage – Zoning
- Are there areas where cities are looking to loosen regulations?
- SAC/WAC fees - determined by met council, city collects on their behalf

Next Meeting:

Business Regulation – February 1, 2012

Parking Lot

- Recycling difficulties for businesses in Brooklyn Park (City to provide information February 1)
- Cost of implementing Business Forward recommendations