



STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTY OF FORT BEND

CITY OF RICHMOND

The Development Corporation of Richmond convened in a special meeting open to the public and pursuant to notice thereof duly given in accordance with Section 501.072, Local Government Code, Vernon's Texas Codes, 611 Jackson Street, Suite A2 within said City on June 3, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. Directors in attendance included the following:

President, Evalyn W. Moore	Vice President, Joe Bonham
Secretary, Verge Greenwood	Carl Drozd
Robert Haas	William B. Morefield, III--absent
Nancie Rain	Barry Beard, City Commissioner
Terri Vela – City Manager	City Attorney – Gary Smith
Cameron Goodman, Executive Director	

President Moore opened the meeting at 9:12 a.m.

Members of the Development Corporation of Richmond met with Mike Barnes in a one-day economic development training and strategic planning retreat.

Executive Director Goodman introduced Mike Barnes, Mike Barnes Group, Inc. Mr. Barnes outlined the goals for the meeting including a thorough understanding of economic development. He expected active participation from the attendees.

Economic development is a program of policies and activities to improve the economic well-being and quality of life by creating and retaining jobs, growing the tax base and providing a stable tax base. Economic development must be understood to exist and operate on a global basis.

Job creation is measured on quality and quantity and boost to the local income. A business retention and expansion program includes outreach with constant feedback. Quality of life requires safety, education, opportunity, poverty reduction, cultural and recreational amenities.

The entities involved in economic development are:

- Local government—taxes/zoning/infrastructure/business/commercial revitalization
- State government—funds, export, regulating compensation levels

Federal government—funding, technical assistance  
Special authorities—ports, airports, redevelopment authorities  
Public Private Partnerships—flexibility  
Chambers of Commerce  
Universities—Research institutions  
Community Colleges  
Workforce Development  
Neighborhood Groups  
Utilities  
Philanthropic organizations  
Others.

Mr. Barnes explained how a Type B corporation can be used consistent with economic development. The small city exception, for which Richmond qualifies, must be related to job creation or retention. Collaboration with other entities is encouraged to share the risk with all who will benefit, including the developer.

Mr. Barnes then led the discussion of Marketing and attraction. He encouraged frequent update of the strength/weakness/opportunity/threat analysis. The targeted markets should be reviewed to keep them current. Up-to-date and credible data is imperative on the website. The website and messaging of the DCR must address the targeted industries. It is important to improve the community to make it more appealing, i.e. infrastructure, education, sites.

Marketing success is measured through leads, site visits, prospects, finalists, and deals. All are important.

Growth often comes from existing businesses. If you do not pay attention to the existing businesses, another community will try to recruit the business away. A business retention and expansion program is important. The program should consist of meetings. The economic development director can serve as an ombudsman or problem-solver to help an existing business resolve any issues they are confronting in the community. Find out how to help the local businesses expand. Know what their concerns are. Know what they are saying.

Establish relationships with colleges and workforce development to help the local businesses and prospects find employees.

Quality of life means quality of place. Many prospects are looking for more than the site. They want a community that provides a place for their employees to enjoy and raise children.

Tourism is now economic development.

Social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) are important to convey the DCR's message to prospects. Face time is still important. Mr. Barnes recommended tours for site consultants, but mix the tour with an event. Find a good social/business mix.

The current trends require the following:

Be project specific on grants, don't just chase grants.

Balance the site with incentives.

Use the following test: if, but for the incentive, the deal will not happen.

Use regional approaches. The benefits to a deal are not limited to the city limits. Employees live, shop and play in neighboring communities.

Response is critical. Keep data updated. Ensure the validity of the data and tend the appearance of the website. Have a reliable and accurate source of up-to-date data. Use census projections. Utilize testimonials. Meet the deadlines. Companies assess the community's sense of urgency through meeting deadlines and providing responses.

Education is a major issue. The top cost of business is education.

Policy is a goal-directed course of action. Implementation or economic development activities must be in accordance and consistent with the policy.

The five mistakes of economic development:

1. Don't compare an apples economy to an orange economy.
2. It is not just the high-tech cluster.
3. Don't just ask the largest employer what to do.
4. Don't spend lots of money on complicated economic modeling.
5. Don't rush in.

Reasons for Success:

1. Plan for success.
2. Develop strong leaders.
3. Stability is important.
4. Cooperate, collaborate, innovate.

Utilize a realistic impact analysis of evaluate the total of incentives. Performance based incentives are safer, include claw-backs.

Mr. Barnes led the review of Richmond's activities.

The strategy is targeted, based on the strategic plan and targeted industries study.

Workforce activities have been employed.

The DCR works with The Houston Partnership for regional efforts.

DCR collaborates with all players.

The website is updated.

A break was taken at 11:25 a.m.

The meeting reconvened at 11:50 a.m.

Mr. Barnes introduces a realistic approach to economic development assessing the business climate; site/buildings/infrastructure; workforce/education; and quality of life.

The business climate was evaluated by comparing the local climate to the State. How easy is it to obtain a permit or have property rezoned/platted for commercial or business use?

A discussion of desired development ensued.

Empty buildings and available acres were discussed and evaluated to determine if the buildings were suitable for occupancy. Were the properties shovel-ready for development?

Wastewater capacity is available. Water capacity is available and the pressure is sufficient.

The tax base is level. The population is showing minor growth. The vacant bank buildings were discussed.

Lamar Consolidated ISD was determined to be an asset and should be touted in business retention and recruitment efforts.

Potential development in the Industrial area and in the ETJ were technology campuses, administration for business, and clean manufacturing.

Richmond has a low crime rate and it is safe to be in the business districts during late hours. City parks provide opportunities for recreation. There are events in town, restaurants, coffee shops, etc. and in close proximity in the greater Houston area.

The DCR Vision Statement was reviewed and determined to be sufficient. The goals were reviewed.

Success was defined as new and retained jobs and an expanded tax base. Review of the goals and strategies was encouraged. The leadership was found to be engaged. The critical issues facing Richmond are the lack of inventory of existing buildings and property not presently served by infrastructure.

Targeted industries include oil & gas, or the administrative functions; feeder clinics for healthcare and associated assisted living centers; engineering and professional offices; and business and financial services.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

ATTEST:



Laura Scarlato, City Secretary

APPROVED:



Evalyn W. Moore, President