

Economic Recovery Branch – Lee County Recovery Task Force

Meeting Minutes

3:00 PM – 4:30 PM | AUGUST 17, 2023 | COLLABORATORY | 2031 JACKSON STREET,
SUITE 100, FORT MYERS, FL 33901 | PUBLIC MEETING

Call to Order

At 3:03 PM on August 17, 2023, Chad Criswell, Branch Co-Lead, convened the Economic Recovery Branch meeting. The following members were present:

- Chad Criswell, Co-lead
- Jim Magnus
- Kyle Moran
- Jonathan Gabel
- John Lai
- Jay Johnson
- Steven Weathers
- Ben Spence

County Liaison:

- Tatum Walker (On behalf of John Talmage)

Facilitator and Branch Support:

- Tessa LeSage, Collaboratory
- Robbie Heere, Hagerty Consulting
- Tracey Phillips, Hagerty Consulting

Introductions

Tessa LeSage, Branch Facilitator, provided a review of the work of the Recovery Task Force (RTF) and its Branches. Ms. LeSage reviewed the work of the RTF in the development of the ResilientLee Recovery and Resilience Plan (the Plan). Ms. LeSage outlined the timeline of the planning process and the next steps of the Branches. She stated that the purpose of

the meeting was to review and validate the Branch draft Initiative Profiles and begin to develop the Branch Action Plan.

Overview of RTF Members One-on-One Meetings

Ms. LeSage summarized the series of one-on-one meetings with the RTF Members and their jurisdictional leadership teams.

Draft Initiative Profiles and Branch Member Feedback

Ms. LeSage introduced the draft Initiative Profiles of the Economic Recovery Branch. Members were given a method to provide feedback through an online QR code and survey.

Ms. LeSage introduced the Business Resiliency draft Initiative Profile. Mr. Weathers stated that it is a heavier lift to start new businesses and an easier lift would be the retention and growth of existing businesses to sustain and add to the workforce. He suggested that a measure of success could be increased job creation in existing businesses. Another measure of success could be access to capital for businesses in assessment and an education process to provide access.

Ms. Walker stated that she works for the Small Business Development Council to help coordinate supplier diversity and supplies. She stated that the implementation steps would need to include communication. Mr. Weathers noted that bulk purchasing of materials to aid in purchasing adds value to organizational joint purchasing. He suggested that gaps could be identified for joint purchasing through the Chambers of Commerce to reduce costs. This would include an inventory of joint purchasing programs.

Ms. LeSage introduced the mixed-use zoning and facilities Draft Initiative Profile. Mr. Johnson stated that redevelopment should be included in the draft Initiative Profile. Mr. Moran suggested that the draft Initiative Profile focused on higher density and mixed-use communities and the conversation about infrastructure and regulation. He stated that a big lift would require dollars and significant investments in public infrastructure and substantial stormwater management. Ms. LeSage suggested that the draft Infrastructure Initiative Profiles support mixed-use in the right areas that can be supported by infrastructure. Mr. Magnus stated that downtown Bonita Springs utilized a form-based code to create opportunities for higher density.

Ms. LeSage introduced the Initiative that addresses insurance needs. Members discussed the feasibility of the Initiative for resilient building. Members suggested adding the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities as a

measure of success. Mr. Johnson asked if lessons learned in Bay County could be applied to the insurance draft Initiative Profile. Mr. Romine provided examples of resilient actions for lowering insurance rates. Mr. Johnson stated that these residential programs also need to include commercial insurance and suggested that the best practices could be considered in the implementation steps.

Ms. LeSage introduced the technological advancements draft Initiative Profile. Members suggested using the gap analysis as the baseline and as a measure. Members discussed the programs that are already in play for broadband and connectivity and how this increases economic recovery. Members suggested that this is more of an infrastructure-related Initiative. Mr. Gabel suggested that the recommendations for connectivity and broadband access should include how this encourages economic development. This would rely on communication infrastructure, other branches, and connectivity access. Mr. Gabel suggested that the draft Initiative Profile description and implementation should explain the economic importance of connectivity to the people in Lee County.

Questions and Next Steps

The next Branch meeting is scheduled for September 7, 2023, from 3:00 to 4:30 PM.

Public Comment

No request for public comment.

Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Ms. LeSage thanked the members for attending and then adjourned the meeting at 4:31 PM.