

# **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

May 13, 2014  
Meeting Summary

Chair Beard called the meeting to order at 1:04 PM. All members were present except Lawless, Mossotti and Myers.

## 1. March 6, 2014 Committee Summary

On a motion by Ellinger second Myers the summary of the 3.6.14 Special Economic Development Committee of the Whole meeting was approved unanimously.

## 2. Economic Development Partner Agencies: Visit Lex

James Browder described Visit Lex (Formerly Lexington Convention & Visitors Bureau).

He stated that tourism is a major employer and economic driver. Tourism accounts for \$ 12.5 billion in direct and indirect expenditures in the Commonwealth. It also accounted for 175,000 jobs statewide. In the Bluegrass Region tourism accounts for \$ 2.8 billion in direct and indirect expenditures. In Fayette County tourism accounts for \$ 1.8 million in direct and indirect expenditures. In Fayette County 15,000 are employed in the tourism field.

Browder discussed five (5) components of the Visit Lex operations including: Destination Marketing; Visitor Services; Destination Sales; Destination Services; and Integrated Marketing.

Browder stated that during this past year Lexington hotels/motels had an occupancy rate of 62% which was higher than normal. He also discussed the Visitor Center, the Bluegrass brewery trail; and the Beyond Grits restaurant week.

Browder discussed future initiatives including a mobile visitor presence at Keeneland and the Kentucky Horse Park; a garden & architectural tour; the Destination Institute a local training program; an economic calculator for conventions; the development of a tourism mobile app; the Horse Country farm tours that received assistance from the Disney Corporation; and further utilization of Big Lex as a marketing tool.

Clarke discussed plans to collaborate with the University of Kentucky including the development of a visitor center on Coldstream along I-75.

In response to a question from Kay, Browder provided more detailed information

On the Horse Country tours.

In response to a question from Gorton, Browder stated that the national hotel occupancy rate was 58%. He would forward information about occupancy rates in Louisville and Cincinnati.

Lane asked about the impact of Rupp Arena/Convention Center renovation would have on convention business. In response Browder stated that only about 1/3 of the convention groups utilize the Convention Center. Others use the Horse Park, hotel meeting space or other venues.

In response to a question from Lane, Browder discussed the process of competing for the World Equestrian Games and the Breeders Cup.

## 2. Economic Development Partner Agencies: LexArts

Jim Clarke discussed the importance that the arts contribute to economic development. Clarke discussed fiscal impact of the arts, the arts impact on quality of life and the connection between the arts and the creative class.

He stated that a 2012 study found that the arts had direct and indirect expenditures of \$ 18 million annually in Fayette County.

Clarke discussed how the arts impact quality of life and the recruitment of the creative class.

Gorton thanked Clarke for his service. In response to a question from Gorton, Clarke and Broward discussed the collaboration between arts/cultural and tourism.

Clarke thanked Clark for his service. He discussed the arts impact on the gown-town relationships in Lexington as well as the impact arts have on public school education.

Both Lane and Beard thanked Clarke and stated that the arts have advanced in Lexington under his leadership.

## 3. Partner Agency Quarterly Reports

Kevin Atkins discussed the quarterly reports. In response to a question from Scutchfield Atkins discussed potential changes to the reports to more accurately reflect the partners' contribution to economic development activities.

In response to a question from Lane, Atkins briefly commented on the economic health of Lexington. In addition he discussed the status of the 21c Hotel project.

## 4. Items Referred to Committee

A motion by Jenson, second Scutchfield to remove the insurance tax to support an Affordable Housing Trust Fund from the Committee referral list was approved unanimously.

A motion by Henson, second Ellinger to remove the food truck review from the Committee referral list was approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 2:25 PM.

PAS 06.03.2014