



Richland County Council
Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee Meeting
MINUTES
February 27, 2024 – 4:00 PM
Council Chambers
2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29204

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Jesica Mackey, Chair, Paul Livingston, and Chakisse Newton

OTHERS PRESENT: Allison Terracio, Cheryl English, Gretchen Barron, Derrek Pugh, Jason Branham, Anette Kyrlo, Patrick Wright, Tamar Black, Ashiya Myers, Aric Jensen, Angela Weathersby, Kyle Holsclaw, Michelle Onley, Lori Thomas, Susan O’Cain, Dale Welch, Dante Roberts, Leonardo Brown, Maddison Wilkerson, Kate Bugby, Jackie Hancock, Jeff Ruble, Jennifer Wladischkin, Carrie Turner, and Stacey Hamm

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chairwoman Jesica Mackey called the meeting to order at approximately 4:00 PM.

Ms. Mackey noted that Ms. Newton had notified her that she would participate virtually, per Council Rules.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. February 13, 2024 – Mr. Livingston moved to approve the minutes as submitted, seconded by Ms. Newton.

In Favor: Livingston, Mackey, and Newton

The vote in favor was unanimous.

3. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** – Mr. Livingston moved to adopt the agenda as published, seconded by Ms. Mackey.

In Favor: Livingston, Mackey, and Newton

The vote in favor was unanimous.

4. **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/ACTION**

- a. Strategic Planning Update – Ms. Mackey stated that we discussed the Public-Private Partnership at the last Strategic Planning meeting. This is tied to Goal 2 in the Strategic Plan to increase economic development and create a public-private partnership (P3). We had additional discussions at the Strategic Planning Forum in Spartanburg. Representatives from One Spartanburg spoke at the forum about their model.

1. Public-Private Partnership – Mr. Ray Jones, Parker Poe, stated when you look around the state at “P3s,” there are certain staples. For instance, most talk about workforce development, product development, marketing, advertising/highlighting lifestyle elements, and prospect recruitment.

He noted they looked at Florence Progress, The Link (Sumter and Lee counties), Advance Dorchester, Greenville Area Development Corporation, Development Corporation of Anderson County, York County’s Economic Development Corporation, Georgetown County’s Economic Development Corporation, Aiken-Edgefield Partnership, One Spartanburg, and Myrtle Beach Regional Economic Development Corporation.

Florence Progress – Hosts a Florence County Legislative Day where they invite the businesses in Florence County to come to the State House to meet the Legislative Delegation and connect the industries with the decision-makers.

The Link (Sumter and Lee counties) – Has its own branded “Site Certification.”

Development Corporation of Anderson County – They take workforce development to the next level. They have a program where they take student apprenticeship programs from the high school level and help connect them to businesses/industries in Anderson County.

Georgetown County Economic Development Corporation – Hold a bi-annual CEO roundtable to bring the community's business leaders to meet with the local elected officials.

York County Economic Development Corporation – Conducts a bi-annual survey of the businesses, where they ask them what it is like to do business in York County.

One Spartanburg – They are known for bringing people together in different settings. A specialty on their “menu” is being a connector for businesses within the community.

Myrtle Beach Regional Economic Development Corporation – An element of their “P3” is focused on the development of affordable housing.

One of the things observed in other areas was a deliberate effort to connect local businesses with businesses investing in a particular county and, understanding what specific products or services are available locally, and connect those vendors with the industry coming in.

Mr. Jones indicated that one of the ideas for Richland County’s “menu” is to coordinate economic development efforts with the City of Columbia and other local municipalities. He noted we have a unique opportunity with Scout Motors coming to the county. We need to ensure that we have the workforce to serve the industry. When we talk about product development, we need to make sure we have sufficient areas for businesses, big and small, that would serve the Scout ecosystem. For example, in the Upstate, they have been working on a BMW-specific strategy for years, ensuring that if BMW has someone that makes the smallest part in Germany, they are willing to come here, and it is made easy for them to come here and make the part.

In other parts of the country, there are special programs that lay over top of typical transportation programs that are designed to make it easier for people to commute to work (i.e., ride-shares). The idea is that those programs would get deeper into the community and provide more varied routes than typical public transportation. Perhaps we should place modes of transportation on our “menu.”

Another considerable issue is childcare. One of the things suggested for our “P3” is to look closely at the childcare options available in our community and to see if we can do a service to the workforce in our community to potentially ensure the development of additional childcare opportunities. When the county provided childcare provisions at Scout, it was one of the first times a county had stepped into that issue. It appears this is something that could be placed on our “menu” for the “P3.

In addition, we have talked about a number of workforce sectors that are the “knowledge-based economy.” The types of businesses for which certain types of educational training would make it a lot easier to recruit. The pipeline of students to take those kinds of jobs has to start early; therefore, one of the things on our “menu” could be working sooner with high schools and technical schools to ensure the skill-level building is happening much earlier and to provide practical opportunities for students in our community to interact with large industries and employers in the county.

One of the ideas from conversations within our group is making a place to exchange ideas and promote ambassadorship. The idea of hosting receptions for investors in our “P3” that highlights success, fosters a feedback loop between Council, local governments, and the private investment community to effectively help them be better ambassadors for other types of recruitment in the community.

Finally, we aim to target young professional groups by promoting opportunities, ensuring they know what the jobs are, and ensuring that employers understand the caliber of students we have locally.

If we decide as a County what we want on our “P3” menu, we can back into the details. In other words, if you suggest we want certain types of programs on our “menu,” then that is something we can sit down

with the County Attorney and the Economic Development Office to start working on the ingredients necessary to achieve that “menu” item.

Mr. Jones indicated he has a good bit of information that could be provided to the committee and Council; he needs to know what aspects Council would like to focus on in their “menu” before he provides the information.

Ms. Newton inquired, of the options provided, which could we not do now? She noted that many of the options seem to be par for the course for economic development.

Mr. Jones responded that the County's consultants stated, “The Economic Development Office has operated within the department and has functioned effectively as a public entity. It has done so in a highly competitive environment in South Carolina and the Southeast. This plan recommends a new independent public-private partnership should be established to house the economic development function. A new “P3” will allow Richland County to fully partner with the private sector and better utilize the resources, relationships, and expertise of the business community. County leadership will have the opportunity to work with a rising class of business leaders on growth-related matters critical to the County’s future.”

The County Attorney Patrick Wright stated that having a private organization that works alongside the County is beneficial. For example, when Scout came to the County, we had a strict timeline to get something done. Luckily, we had a firm we were utilizing that could adjust their scope. That will not work every time. One benefit of having a public-private partnership is when you have situations where going through County procedures and processes could take months; if you direct it through the private entity, they do not have those restrictions.

Ms. Barron requested the “menu” options Mr. Jones presented to the committee.

Ms. Mackey acknowledged the purpose of this meeting was to determine how the committee and Council members felt. The next step can be Mr. Jones sending information to Council and having Council members provide feedback on things they like or if anything is missing. She asked that the “P3” assist with connecting communities and filling the gaps with private businesses.

Mr. Livingston mentioned that he sees the “P3” as a resource to assist, direct, and guide us.

Ms. Barron indicated she has not seen any movement and would like to see some progress.

Ms. Mackey responded we heard from several Council members about slowing down the process and breaking it down. Mr. Jones suggested starting with the basics of how we would look at developing the roles and responsibilities. Council was concerned about losing ownership of the “P3.” At the last committee meeting, we discussed the ownership breakdown, including how Council would still have a certain number of seats and how we could select specific people and control those seats. We also discussed creating regions within the county to ensure we had individuals from all parts of the county on the board. During the Strategic Planning Forum, Councilmembers received additional information on how another “P3” is set up. At today’s meeting, we are providing Mr. Jones feedback about items Councilmembers like. Once we receive input, the committee will meet to move to the next step of the process. She noted feedback will be accepted at any time.

Mr. Livingston indicated he believes we started with too much emphasis on structure and the group's makeup.

Ms. English expressed that she would like them to also recognize Service Solutions as an example of economic development in the county.

Ms. Mackey thanked the Councilmembers who could attend the committee meeting and provided their input on the “P3 menu.”

5. **ADJOURNMENT** – Mr. Livingston moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Mackey.

In Favor: Livingston, Mackey, and Newton

The vote in favor was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:40 PM.