



Richland County Council
Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee Meeting
MINUTES
December 12, 2023 – 4:00 PM
Council Chambers
2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29204

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Jesica Mackey, Chair, Paul Livingston, and Chakisse Newton (via Zoom)

OTHERS PRESENT: Gretchen Barron, Don Weaver, Anette Kyrlo, Patrick Wright, Tamar Black, Abhijit Deshpande, Jennifer Wladischkin, Ashiya Myers, Aric Jensen, Angela Weathersby, Kyle Holsclaw, Chelsea Bennett, Jeff Ruble, Michael Maloney, Michelle Onley, Lori Thomas, Darlene Gathers, Susan O’Cain, John Thompson, Dale Welch, Dante Roberts, Wayne Thornley, and Stacey Hamm

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

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

a. May 2, 2023 – Mr. Livingston moved to approve the minutes as distributed, seconded by Ms. Mackey.

In Favor: Livingston, Mackey, and Newton

The vote in favor was unanimous.

3. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** – Ms. Mackey requested to change the order of the agenda to take up the “Dashboard Update” first, followed by “Goal 2 – Investment in Economic Development (Objective 2.3).”

Mr. Livingston moved to approve the agenda as amended, 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 at the last meeting that staff provided updates regarding our consultant’s conducting surveys and workshops to hone in on the reporting metrics.

1. ***Dashboard Update*** – Mr. Abhijit Deshpande, Budget Director, reported that all department heads and goal owners have worked hard with the consultant for approximately 4-6 weeks to streamline the process. He noted staff is suggesting amendments to the current Strategic Plan.

- They have implemented 33% of the strategies and initiatives;
- Of the ninety-seven (97) initiatives, ten (10) have been completed, and fifty-two (52) are on track;
- There has been significant progress with Goal 1 - “Fostering Good Governance”;
- Consolidating or revising initiatives will require Council action;

Ms. Mackey inquired where and when the dashboard will be available to the public.

Mr. Deshpande responded that 20-25 performance majors will be available for Council to view in January 2024. The goal is for the consultant to make a presentation at the 2024 Strategic Planning Forum. The public-facing website could potentially go live in February 2024. The third part will be the knowledge transfer and user training, which will take place approximately three months after the dashboards go live.

2. **Goal 2 – Invest in Economic Development (Objective 2.3)** – Mr. Ray Jones, with Parker Poe, made a presentation regarding the Public-Private Partnership.

- In 2020, the County commissioned a strategic plan for Economic Development through TIP Strategies, a Texas-based economic development consulting firm;
- TIP Strategic delivered a work product to the county. Within the work product, the recommendation was that the county consider forming a public-private partnership (“P3”);
- Council visited Greenville County approximately a year ago; there are plans to visit Spartanburg County in 2024 to look at how economic development is done in other parts of the State;
- On December 13, 2022, Council adopted a resolution authorizing the County Administrator and Economic Development to explore creating a “P3”;
- Key Spheres of County Control:
 - Approval of Incentives
 - Funding and Budget
 - Operations
 - Appointment of the Board
 - Economic Development Director and Employees

Mr. Weaver inquired as to what the surrounding counties are doing.

Mr. Jones responded that Lexington and Kershaw counties have economic development departments. Orangeburg, Dorchester, Charleston, Horry, Greenville, Spartanburg counties have a “P3”. He noted that not all “P3s” operate the same way.

Appointment of the Board:

- 9 members
- Council Chair, Council Vice-Chair, and Economic Development Committee Chair
- 2 private sector appointments by County Council
- 4 private sector appointments made by the Board, one appointee per each “economic development zone.” *[The County would be divided into four (4) economic development zones, comprised of three (3) council districts each, except for 1 zone that would have two (2) council districts.]*
- County Administrator could serve ex officio

Mr. Livingston stated for clarification that the initial five (5) members of the Board would include at least three (3) Council members.

Mr. Jones responded in the affirmative.

Ms. Mackey indicated the “P3” would vote on something, but the recommendation would go to the Economic Development Committee before coming before Council.

Mr. Jones noted over the past five years, Council has had various kinds of commercial incentives that have been targeted and designed to generate additional multi-family projects. The request came from the outside; the Economic Development Committee considered it and drafted the policy around it. There has been a lot of discussion about whether it is still working or needs to be tweaked. The idea is that some of the feedback would come from the “P3” Board. He would view

the involvement of the “P3” as advisory, collaborative, and in partnership. Approval of the incentives would continue to rest with the Economic Development Committee and Council.

The County Attorney Patrick Wright expressed, in his experience, that what the county has now will still exist. The “P3” would add to and not take away. His recommendation is to move forward with the “P3”.

Ms. Mackey inquired about what other areas the Board could assist with.

Mr. Jones stated in an earlier conversation with Council, there was a discussion about how we envision the “P3” being funded. Most of the dollars that support these operations are public dollars. They also raise funds through various mechanisms. For example, if you want to serve on the Board, you could donate funds. The Board could solicit funds from the private sector. Those funds are intended to assist with travel and entertainment expenses associated with economic development. We would know we have succeeded if we established a stronger relationship with other private sectors willing to lend their time, expertise, and connections and invest in the County’s economic development efforts. In addition, the “P3” could help the County decide what not to do. Involving the private sector in economic development does not mean their input or relationships are contained to economic development.

Ms. Mackey inquired if we could modify the number of Board members once the Board has been established.

Mr. Jones responded we can provide for modifications to how the non-profit functions. For example, we could provide for a larger Board and start by appointing nine members.

Mr. Wright indicated one of the benefits of a “P3” is if you have a situation where things need to move quickly, the private entity may be able to procure things within days instead of months.

Ms. Newton inquired if the Council will always retain the ability to change the makeup of the Board.

Mr. Jones responded Council will always have input on five of the nine members. They envision the corporation's by-laws would provide for the terms of the members. The remaining four private sector members would be appointed by the Board versus Council. If Council retains too much control, it is not a separate organization. One of the reasons we want a “P3” is so that it is not exactly the county. We want the ability to be nimble. Likewise, we want the county to be separate enough so that the county itself is protected if the “P3” has a misstep. However, the County will always be the primary source of funding. The Chair, Vice-Chair, and the Economic Development Chair will always be on the Board.

Ms. Newton stated, for clarification, initially Council determines the structure. Later, the “P3” takes on the responsibilities, but a self-interested party would always receive input from the funding body.

Ms. Mackey suggested additional members could represent educational institutions or particular industries. She noted they do not have to be voting members but could serve in an ex officio capacity.

Ms. Newton inquired if the Board would be characterized as an advisory body.

Mr. Jones replied he did not believe it was solely an advisory body. It functions best in a partnership capacity. The report submitted to Council suggests a deeper relationship with the “P3” than an advisory committee. It suggests a relationship where the county and the “P3” work together.

Ms. Mackey requested a proposed map if the county were divided into four (4) development zones. She inquired if the committee needs to consider specific industries for the two (2) private sector appointments.

Mr. Jones asserted the thought has been business leaders whose relationship, opinions, and influence could be an asset to the county. He noted the projected timeline would have the committee providing a recommendation to Council in March 2024.

5. **OTHER ITEMS** – No items were discussed.

6. **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 5:00 PM.