



VISTA 2025 Goal 1:

Maintain and enhance “quality of place” as a key component of economic health

Goal 1 Team Meeting

November 19, 2015

Meeting Notes

Team Members Attending: Bo Alexander, Nancy Corson, Sherri Evans-Stanton, Mimi Gleason, Don Hannum, Regina Horton-Lewis, Michelle Kichline, Susan Marshall, Molly Morrison, Craig Styer

Also Attending: Pat Bokovitz, Marybeth DiVincenzo, Mike Grigalonis, Brian O’Leary, David Sciocchetti

Michelle Kichline

- Opened the meeting at 8:15 AM
- Welcomed all attendees
- Invited general introductions
- Asked for comments on meeting notes from last meeting

Nancy Corson

- Asked about lists of all five goal team members
- Advised that they were online – www.vista2025.com

Michelle Kichline

- Noted that goal team meeting would likely be quarterly in 2016
- Schedule for entire year will be developed

Bo Alexander

- Asked about minutes from other goal teams
- Advised that they will be posted on website

David Sciocchetti

- Provided examples of implementation progress on other VISTA 2025 goals
- For Goal 2 - Noted that a successful Workforce Summit had been held that focused on the critical workforce issues facing Chester County
- For Goal 1 – Described an Urban Centers Forum attended by representatives of all Chester County urban communities
- For Goal 4 – Reported that the first entrepreneurial ecosystem map in the Philadelphia region was created to assist entrepreneurs in identifying available resources

Don Hannum

- Asked if there would be a written summary of the workforce summit
- Advised that it would be available in early 2016

Don Hannum

- Asked about public nature of goal team meetings

Michelle Kichline

- Noted that goal team meetings were intended primarily for goal team members
- Indicated that meeting notes would be publicly available on website

Pat Bokovitz

- Noted that the Workforce Summit was targeted to businesses and educators

Michelle Kichline

- Commented on Daily Local News article on Chester County farmland preservation

Brian O’Leary

- Noted that they were the highest levels in southeastern Pa

Molly Morrison

- Noted that the Commissioners were committed to preservation
- Commented that County funds leverage other preservation funding
- Pointed out that the fact that 26% of Chester County is preserved contributed to the VISTA 2025 focus on quality of place

Sherri Evans Stanton

- Stated that Chester County’s preservation activities were a great model
- Noted that farmers were recognized as part of the County economy
- Commended the Commissioners for their support of preservation

Michelle Kichline

- Noted that Chester County is one of the top counties in the country in farmland preservation

David Sciocchetti:

- Discussed the need to review the status of the VISTA 2025 Goal 1 Year One strategies and make decisions regarding them.
- Noted that the information package included a status report and a recommendation for each of the Year One strategies.
- Noted that implementation of Strategy 1.4.1 was successfully begun

Michelle Kichline

- Noted the importance of this issue to East Whiteland

- Discussed the need to re-purpose buildings to meet changing demands and to market a new look and feel
- Pointed out the idea of reusing what you have

Don Hannum

- Asked if this effort would require any changes to the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC)

Brian O’Leary

- Advised that no changes to the MPC would be needed

David Sciocchetti:

- Noted that implementation of Strategy 1.5.1, to establish a countywide calendar of events, was being worked on by the Chester County Conference and Visitors Bureau who was working on an approach to making information on all Chester County events and activities available in one location
- Commented that the recommendation was to continue those efforts in Year 2

Pat Bokovitz

- Commented that the CCCVB had a focus on visitors and filling hotel rooms

David Sciocchetti

- Agreed with the CCCVB primary role but noted there was an opportunity to leverage their efforts with broader marketing effort

Mike Grigalonis

- Recognized the business focus of VISTA.Today as an important part of the overall marketing of Chester County

Marybeth DiVincenzo

- Described the theme of VISTA.TODAY as Commerce, Culture and Community

Molly Morrison

- Commented that marketing a city is easier than marketing a county

Craig Styer

- Stated that it was important to focus marketing on visitors but we also needed to make sure that County residents and businesses get the message as well

Nancy Corson

- Asked about plans to obtain and disseminate the information on events and activities

Michelle Kichline

- Explained that agencies and organization holding events would need to send information to CCCVB to help them reach a broader audience

David Sciocchetti:

- Commented that implementation of Strategy 1.8.1 to establish an urban area economic development strategy for the County was successfully begun with a well-received Urban Centers Forum event
- He added that representatives of all 16 Chester County urban centers had representatives at the event

Pat Bokovitz

- Pointed out that one of the key objectives of the forum was to get the urban areas to think economic development
- Stated that the Forum was a joint effort of the Department of Community Development, the Chester County Planning Commission and the Chester County Economic Development Council
- Described the targeted audience as elected officials/main street managers/borough managers
- Noted that the County has invested \$57 million into the urban centers to support a wide array of infrastructure needs and that the Forum was a way to help the communities leverage that investment
- Described the two consultants who gave presentation at the Forum. Todd Poole of 4Ward Planning provided an overview of the issues impacting urban area economic development and Rick Ferrell of Retail Answers discussed economic development issues at the local level

- Noted that the event included a work session that highlighted several issues of concern to the urban areas and added that the follow up to the event was to be two events a year focused on those issues of concern
- Pointed out that each urban center was free to follow their own economic development approach that fit their circumstances and the County was prepared to help
- Summarized by describing the event as a good start that brought new faces to the discussion

Regina Horton Lewis

- Commented that some areas may resist and that more education may be needed
- Noted that in Coatesville it will be important that people understand the value of the efforts

David Sciocchetti

- Commented that the major County investment in the urban areas has positioned them well for the renewed interest in walkable downtowns
- Noted that one of the key objectives of the Forum was to empower the County's urban areas to take a more significant role in economic development in their communities

Michelle Kichline

- Commented that this was an excellent segue to strategy 1.9.1

David Sciocchetti:

- Noted that Strategy 1.9.1 was the need to implement a city economic strategy focused on the revitalization of Coatesville
- Commented that implementation was underway with County funding to support a major new retail project in downtown and a new partnership between the Coatesville Area Partners for Progress (CAPP) and the County to bring full time economic development services to the City.

- Added that the recommendation was to continue these and other efforts in Year 2

Regina Horton Lewis

- Commented that the City lacked the resources to undertake their own economic development efforts
- Described the CAPP driven effort as the best way to help hire a new economic development person
- Praised the County for partnering with CAPP and providing County funds

Michelle Kichline

- Described the partnership with CAPP as unique
- Noted that the County was committed to the revitalization of Coatesville

Pat Bokovitz

- Pointed out that the County had issued two Community Revitalization Program grants to Coatesville to support its revitalization efforts – a \$700,000 2014 grant for significant improvements to the major downtown intersection and a \$500,000 2015 grant for a parking structure to support the new downtown retail project
- Noted that the two projects supported each other and the efforts to revitalize downtown Coatesville

Michelle Kichline

- Commented on the complementary nature of the proposed Iron and steel museum complex

Don Hannum

- Asked what's different with this effort to revitalize Coatesville

Pat Bokovitz

- Responded that there was a developer who has made a significant financial commitment to the project including the acquisition of several properties

- Added that PennDOT remained committed to the new train station project that will support further revitalization of the community

Regina Horton Lewis

- Reported that one of the challenges was to help the community understand that they have a role in the revitalization process

Michelle Kichline

- Directed attention to the Year 2 strategies
- Noted that strategies 1.4.2 and 1.5.2 had been generally discussed

Brian O’Leary

- Stated that the County’s Vision Partnership Planning Program (VPP) could play a role in strategy 1.7.1 in terms of providing new sources of funding for economic development strategies

Molly Morrison

- Commented on the incentive for multi-municipal efforts in the VPP

Brian O’Leary

- Noted that multi-municipal efforts received a higher score in the proposal evaluation process

Molly Morrison

- Commented that regional planning efforts were more robust in Montgomery County
- Noted the need to educate and elevate local government

Sherri Evans Stanton

- Commented that the VISTA 2025 strategies were a good start
- Pointed out the importance of the effort to be consistent with Landscapes 2
- Suggested that the public was not fully aware of how the two efforts aligned

Michelle Kichline

- Stated that VISTA 2025 was an ongoing process that can be updated

Sherri Evans Stanton

- Noted that it was important how you explained the whole initiative
- Commented that this was the best way to respond to questions about inconsistencies with Landscapes 2

Bo Alexander

- Asked if VISTA 2025 was consistent with Landscapes 2

Pat Bokovitz

- Stated that it was consistent with Landscapes 2

Michelle Kichline

- Emphasized that VISTA 2025 does not, in any way, override Landscapes 2

David Sciocchetti

- Suggested that these questions pointed out the need to do a better job of telling the VISTA 2025 story

Molly Morrison

- Noted that an ongoing review of VISTA 2025 was intended to be part of the process

Sherri Evans Stanton

- Commented that this was a good approach
- Offered to meet to assist with the process

Bo Alexander

- Noted concerns about development in the Route 1 corridor

Michelle Kichline

- Affirmed the County's commitment to continued efforts at preservation in the Route 1 corridor

Don Hannum

- Commented that perception is often reality

Brian O’Leary

- Noted that the Planning Commission was gearing up for the process of preparing a new County comprehensive plan that would look at these types of issues

Molly Morrison

- Commented that VISTA 2025 needs to be considered as a whole

David Sciocchetti

- Asked that any additional comments on Year 2 strategies be sent to him

Michelle Kichline

- Closed the meeting at 10:35 AM