



VISTA 2025 Goal 3:

Expand business attraction and retention efforts with a focus on targeted industry clusters

Goal 3 Team Meeting

November 30, 2016

Meeting Notes

Team Members Attending: Chris Annas, Bill Bogle, Mike Bray, Derek Kimmel, Dan Miller, Mark Rupsis

Also Attending: Marybeth DiVincenzo, Jodi Gauker, Hillary Krumrich, Jim Lauckner, Mary Frances McGarrity, David Sciocchetti, Gary Smith

Mark Rupsis

Welcomed those in attendance and invited them to introduce themselves. Asked if there were any comments on the meeting notes from the previous meeting. None were presented.

David Sciocchetti

Briefly reviewed the draft VISTA 2025 progress report and invited and thoughts or comments.

Gary Smith

Noted the intention was to show the progress achieved in implementing the strategies identified in VISTA 2025. Noted that there was much more to do and that additional resources would need to be generated to accomplish more. Added that this was one of the key challenges going forward.

Mike Bray

Commented that when resources are constrained it is critical to prioritize what you want to accomplish.

David Sciocchetti

Explained that a limited number of priority strategies were originally identified and some priorities were established in terms of timeline for accomplishment. Added that while no strategy was deemed unimportant, some were not as significant as others. Gave example of reaching out to high school and college graduates as good idea but not as critical as many other strategies. Suggested it may be time to re-prioritize.

Mark Rupsis

Moved the meeting to the marketing themes portion of the agenda.

David Sciocchetti

Reported that the original list of competitive advantages developed by the Goal 3 team had been grouped into a set of six marketing themes with a brief statement of the purpose, nature and use of the themes. Invited comment on the six themes.

Chris Annas

Stated that transportation needed to be mentioned in the themes even if it is not a distinct advantage.

Mike Bray

Commented that this is a challenge for Vanguard in the sense that it is sometimes perceived as hard to get to. Added that it is critical that we change the narrative and find a way to position access as an asset.

Marybeth DiVincenzo

Reported that CCEDC had developed a new marketing piece to be used in marketing efforts a draft of which had been shared at the last meeting. She referred to a usable version of that document that was now available.

Mark Rupsis

Asked if the competitive advantages identified at the previous meeting had been incorporated into the new version and was advised that many of them had been.

David Sciocchetti

Noted that the VISTA 2025 concept was for a unified marketing theme for the county. Suggested that a next step might be to refine the themes and share them with the county chambers, real estate brokers and developers. Utilize the expanded network to tell a consistent “Chester County story”.

Chris Annas

Suggested that we find a way to get themes on the web to let others use them.

Mark Rupsis

Called for and thoughts or ideas on the marketing themes, as well as who should be aware of them, to get that information to Mr. Sciocchetti as soon as possible. The additional thoughts would be compiled and a collective strategy to disseminate them would be developed.

Mary Frances McGarrity

Commented that there was lots of shared data that could be used as part of our story that could be useful for multiple purposes.

Bill Bogle

Noted that where we are and where we intend to be in 2025 should be part of the message.

Chris Annas

Stated that infrastructure investment might be part of the message – where we are going with new roads, etc.

Mark Rupsis

Commented that DVRPC has that information and that the county participates in developing the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that prioritizes and schedules transportation improvement funding.

Mike Bray

Added that if we know where we plan to be let's take advantage of it.

Hillary Krumrich

Pointed out that the development of Landscapes 3 was underway and would be generating lots of information regarding the county and its future direction.

Mark Rupsis

Summarized discussion as add transportation to marketing themes, identify constituencies to share information with, review and comment on CCEDC brochure.

Gary Smith

Added that it will be important to encourage others to use the common themes.

Dan Miller

Commented that the equine industry in Chester County is one of the most valuable in the state and the country with a significant economic impact. Questioned how we can promote it.

Mark Rupsis

Moved the meeting to the agenda item on AgConnect.

Jodi Gauker

Described Ag Connect and highlighted some of its activities. Noted that 375 farmers had been trained in areas including workplace safety, food safety, agriculture business planning and other areas.

Noted that eight agriculture showcases had been held giving example of Octoraro students touring New Holland production facility.

Described challenges with Community Supported Agriculture and noted Ag Connect efforts to evaluate this approach and determine whether it is the best model for smaller farmers to generate essential revenue.

Described sustainable business model for farmers as one of the major challenges going forward. Commented that new farmers have great skills and knowledge but very limited equity. Added that teaching farmers to be businessmen and entrepreneurs was a key need. Questioned where the resources to help with that need would come from.

Gary Smith

Noted that preserving farm land was a very worthwhile cause, but added that if farmer's can't make a living on the preserved land that will be a significant problem.

Hillary Krumrich

Stated that what AgConnect and the Ag Council are doing is unlike anyone else in the state. Other efforts to bring all of the ag interests together elsewhere have generally not succeeded.

Jodie Gauker

Commented that building new connections (wholesalers, e.g.) for farms as businesses was becoming increasingly important. Noted that there was interest in starting a micro-loan program for start-up farmers.

Hillary Krumrich

Noted that LandLink was also helping connect new farmers with available land in Chester County.

Mark Rupsis

Thanked all for attending and participating and adjourned the meeting.