



VISTA 2025 Goal 3:

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

Goal 3 Team Meeting

June 28, 2016

Meeting Notes

Team Members Attending: Chris Alonzo, Chris Annas, Mike Bray, Bill Bogle, Edwin Brownley, Tom Fillippo, Derek Kimmel

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

Mike Bray

Welcomed those attending. Invited comments or questions regarding the meeting notes from the previous meeting. None were offered.

Commented on the robust agenda and noted the intended focus on actions and implementation.

Mike Grigalonis

Provided overview of the Take the Pulse survey conducted January through March of 2016. Described multiple distribution channels and noted that 419 responses were received.

Described respondent geography and noted it was consistent with main business and development corridors.

Described survey results:

Business is here because it started here or the CEO lives here

9 of 10 respondents expect to maintain or grow their business

9 of 10 think the business climate in Chester County is stable or improving

Mixed message on difficulty of talent recruitment

Quality of life issues key positive factors affecting business in the County

Only negatives were limited public transportation and traffic congestion

Highest ranked challenges – New business growth and qualified workforce

Major opportunities – Growing local economy and favorable market trends

Mike Bray

Overall results are key for marketing the county. Important to manage the message on challenges like public transportation and traffic congestion.

Chris Annas

Results support notion of staying here and growing here. Raised question of logistics impact on companies in the county

Bill Bogle

Responded while in and out of the county can sometimes be slow, traffic is not a critical issue impacting business. Noted that workforce is top issue for the county.

Tom Fillippo

Noted that a quality workforce is key.

Ed Brownley

Responded that logistics can be critical depending on the type of business and where they need to move their product. Added that economy growing faster in the south and west but that there was still a huge amount of business in the northeast.

Chris Alonzo

Noted that mushroom industry has a very high number of shipping movements in southern Chester County and this can lead to community concerns regarding traffic volumes.

Gary Smith

Responded that the Route 1 initiative is looking at a range of these types of issues in southern Chester County.

Mike Grigalonis

Added that the results of the survey received good press coverage. He noted that the results had been shared with the chambers who had helped distribute the survey.

Hillary Krumrich

Asked about cross-tabulation of the survey data to get a higher level of detail and was advised that that was possible.

Mike Bray

Commented that it was a good idea to slice data in different ways to get more information.

Marybeth DiVincenzo

Added that this would be additional data to draw on as we plan programs or assess activities. Noted the consideration being given to an economic demographer concept.

Mike Bray

Moved the discussion to marketing. Noted the many VISTA 2025 strategies associated with marketing. Raised the question of what is the key message to market Chester County.

Mike Grigalonis

Suggested there are several messages already being used – Chesco Best, Live Your Legacy, Discover Chester County to name a few.

Gary Smith

Asked who is our audience noting that historically and internal message focused on growing businesses has been key. Added that external marketing has not been a CCEDC focus given the historical concern over growth in the county.

Hillary Krumrich

Suggested that this approach worked in the past but wondered if it will work in the future. Asked what are we trying to accomplish.

Marybeth DiVincenzo

Reminded that Quality of Place stood out in the Take the Pulse survey as a county attribute that businesses found attractive.

David Sciocchetti

Commented that one theme that was emerging was that Chester County is one of the elite counties in the country based on the various rankings for various attributes of the county and its institutions.

Chris Alonzo

Commented millennials tend to want to acquire more experiences and less stuff that prior generations and that small towns like those in Chester County provide a city like experience without some of the larger urban area problems.

Bill Bogle

Suggested a theme along the lines of “grow your business where you live”.

Chris Alonzo

Asked is the target for marketing new workers or new companies and was advised that it was probably both.

Mike Bray

Asked if it was feasible to get a group together to work on some of the issues related to a county marketing effort.

Gary Smith

Commented that that was a logical first step. Added that much of our future growth is going to come from those who are already here.

Ed Brownley

Suggested tying marketing to productivity in terms of workers and companies to build on the current strengths of the county.

David Sciocchetti

Introduced the concept of “competitive advantage” which is what one area has to offer that other areas do not.

Hillary Krumrich

Suggested a theme of “Chester County for Life”.

Bill Bogle

Noted that an approach in Singapore was investment per employee.

Chris Alonzo

Argued that we should define targets that match our attributes.

Ed Brownley

Suggested that we should set a task to articulate Chester County's competitive advantages at the next meeting.

Derek Kimmel

Noted that safety and security should be in the mix of the discussion in terms of their positive impact on employers and workers.

Mike Bray

Suggested that homework for the group might be to identify three themes related to competitive advantage for discussion at our next meeting.

Chris Alonzo

Commented that a part of the discussion should be on accessing the information on advantages and resources. Noted that there are 1,700 farms in Chester County many of whom lack knowledge of the resources available to them. Added that part of the message should focus on available resources.

Mike Bray

Restated the focus of homework for the members of the committee to be both ideas of competitive advantage and whether we should be targeting employers, workers or both. Noted that the cost of finding a new employee can be three times that of keeping an existing one.

Chris Annas

Called attention to the issue of current trends and possible reasons for future growth in the county. Asked what should we be striving to be.

David Sciocchetti

Noted that trends are important but sometimes they are overstated. Suggested that not all millennials are moving to the cities.

Chris Alonzo

Suggested that more research may be needed to understand millennial patterns in the county adding that we want to be able to compete for the best employees.

Mike Bray

Suggested a thought exercise of imagining that it was 2025 and describing what Chester County might look like then and what should we be doing today to make it that way.

David Sciocchetti

Briefly introduced the Emerging Markets Initiative to reach out to a more diverse business community. Noted that Vince Liuzzi from DNB was leading this effort and that two initial meetings had been held.

Gary Smith

Added that this was part of a broader community focus. Noted that a good committee had been established and it was growing.

Chris Alonzo

Noted that the Hispanic community tended to be close knit and that they respond best to messages from groups they are familiar with.

Mary Frances McGarrity

Noted that that was definitely a part of the process.

Mike Bray

Thanked all for coming. Reminded all of the focus on competitive advantage for the next meeting.