



**VISTA 2025 Goal 4:**

***Establish an innovation culture that supports entrepreneurship and business growth***

**VISTA 2025 Goal 4 Team Meeting**

**June 27, 2017**

**Meeting Notes**

**Team Members Attending:** Ed Breiner, Chad Byers, Larry Brotzge, Terence Farrell, Lou Kupperman

**Also Attending:** Marybeth DiVincenzo, Nancy Kunkle, David Sciocchetti, Gary Smith, Mark Trabbold

**Terence Farrell**

Welcome members to the meeting. Asked for comments on previous meeting notes. No comments received. Asked D. Sciocchetti to introduce the first agenda item.

**David Sciocchetti**

Described some of the challenges facing those providing space to entrepreneurs.

**Nancy Kunkle**

Provided a table of space dedicated to entrepreneurs in Chester and Delaware County. Described need to balance what we have with what we need. Noted that entrepreneurial space in Chester County has primarily been provided by the private sector. Commented that other communities have different models where space is provided by a university or by state or county initiatives.

Singled out the Innovation Center at Eagleview (ICE) as an example. Indicated that ICE was provided/supported by the Hankin Group and was the only facility with wet lab space for entrepreneurs. Added that it was only 40% occupied. Noted that there was significant risk that Hankin would be forced to allocate the space to non-entrepreneurs to generate rent from the space.

**Larry Brotzge**

Asked how likely it was that ICE would go away.

**Nancy Kunkle**

Responded that it could be imminent as Hankin needed to accommodate the arrival of Immunome which was moving from downtown to the suburbs.

**David Sciocchetti**

Asked why ICE was only 40% rented if it was the only source for small wet lab space.

**Marybeth DiVincenzo**

Responded that the space was not really inexpensive as much incubator space tended to be.

**Mark Trabbold**

Noted that shared space lowers the cost of operations for small companies

**Chad Byers**

Commented on Protechs, Inc. approach of shared space cross contamination and the ability to develop technologies that can generate revenue.

**Larry Brotzge**

Suggested that the lack of occupants raised the legitimate question of whether there was demand for that kind of space. Offered that outreach to BFTP should help answer that question.

**Lou Kupperman**

Commented that it may simply be that there is a lack of knowledge that the space is available.

**Mark Trabbold**

Reported that wet lab space was in demand.

**Ed Breiner**

Asked if Immunome would be using wet lab space and was informed that they would not.

**Larry Brotzge**

Suggested that this was a good example of how a specific type of space might appeal to a different segment of the market that wanted to be located in the suburbs.

**Nancy Kunkle**

Noted that there was a meeting with Immunome next week that could help clarify their intentions. Added that AmpTech did have some lab space at their location that could be a new home for companies that had to vacate ICE.

**Mark Trabbold**

Commented that BFTP manned an office at AmpTech two days a month and added that it was the most active center outside of Philadelphia.

**Larry Brotzge**

Asked about the potential impact of the state budget negotiations on BFTP and was advised that it was not clear at this time.

**Marybeth DiVincenzo**

Expressed concern that the state budget could eliminate KIZ tax credits, a major tool to help fund young companies in Chester County. Added that this would increase the challenges of meeting the needs of local entrepreneurs. Suggested that there was a need for additional collaboration of universities and others with the potential to be part of the entrepreneurial support network.

Argued that the space options for entrepreneurs in Chester County were fragmented and at risk. Agreed that engaging universities made sense. Suggested that this may be a way to capture value from technologies that universities develop. Added that there was no real accelerator in Chester County. Indicated that there was a need to come together as a consortium to address this overall challenge.

**Gary Smith**

Noted the need to have more engagement in the programming and marketing of these spaces.

**David Sciocchetti**

Commented that the Walnut Street Labs approach to marketing appeared to work, but their financial structure did not.

**Gary Smith**

Stated that we need to find a business model that works or these types of facilities can not be sustained. Added that CCEDC had some hard decisions to make regarding what it could continue to afford.

**Mark Trabbold**

Noted that AmpTech and Uncommon Individual were the most active providers of space that seemed to be sustainable.

**Chad Byers**

Asked if we care who provides the space.

**Nancy Kunkle**

Responded that the focus was on the needs of the companies and who provided the space was not critical.

**Larry Brotzge**

Questioned who sees young companies early and if they ask them if they need space and what kind of space they really need. Continued to suggest that we identify our sweet spot in Chester County and pursue that.

**Terence Farrell**

Noted that Nick Winkler was attempting to pursue some form of collaborative space in the Downingtown area.

**Marybeth DiVincenzo**

Agreed with the focus on space but added that support services and funding were two additional needs.

**Nancy Kunkle**

Noted that recent CCEDC outreach to 25 young companies has indicated that funding was their number one need.

**Mark Trabbold**

Suggested that Pittsburgh had a corporate funded approach that works. Added that St. Gobain was incubating companies in Boston. What would convince them to do that here.

**Terence Farrell**

Questioned who asked for and received the corporate funds in the Pittsburgh model.

**Mark Trabbold**

Responded that he did not have that specific information but was sure it was available.

**Larry Brotzge**

Reiterated that Chester County as a location to develop agri-ceutical still made good sense to him.

**David Sciocchetti**

Asked about the potential role of West Chester University in the innovation and entrepreneurship areas.

**Gary Smith**

Responded that CCEDC was building a strong relationship with WCU in these areas.

**Lou Kupperman**

Asked where an incubator might be located in Chester County of Chester

**Gary Smith**

Responded that an ideal location was uncertain at this time

**Ed Breiner**

Noted that WCU may be developing an engineering program that would expand their interest in applied sciences.

**Nancy Kunkle**

Pointed out that CCEDC and WCU were working on a start-up weekend event for next June. Event would bring in Tech Stars as part of the efforts. Added that it made sense for WCU to have more of a role. Commented that AmpTech has access to some Temple University technology through an agreement that have with Temple. Mentioned the upcoming i2n event with Bob Moore in July.

**Larry Brotzge**

Suggested that Bio-Strategies Partners may be another option for joint efforts rather than re-inventing the wheel.

**Lou Kupperman**

Suggested that Chester County needs an entrepreneurial center of gravity with a critical mass and that West Chester Borough and West Chester University come the closest to representing that in the County.

Added that there was a high likelihood of additional state budget cuts, that the County has budget pressures as well and that the corporate potential needs to be tapped.

**Nancy Kunkle**

Noted that Liberty Valley Initiative was one of the meet up partners and that they attempted to erase borders and have city and suburb entrepreneurs attend their events. Briefly reviewed the draft scorecard being developed related to entrepreneurial needs based on interviews with local entrepreneurs.

**David Sciocchetti**

Provided an overview of data assembled on Small Business Innovation and Research Grants received by Chester County companies from 2014 through 2016. Reported that more than 20 companies received more than \$40 million in grants. Commented that this was a major source of funding for Chester County entrepreneurs that had not received much attention – in some ways, equivalent to a \$40 million seed fund.

**Larry Brotzge**

Asked if all of the companies that received SBIR grants were part of i2n.

**Nancy Kunkle**

Responded that most, but not all of them, were part of i2n. Added that many companies were not fully aware of the SBIR program.

**Mark Trabbold**

Mentioned the Innovation Partnership program where the state pays a consultant to assist companies in securing an SBIR grant. Added that their assistance typically resulted in a 30% improved rate of getting a grant. Also noted that the state has SBIR

road shows to raise awareness of the program and to raise success rates. Suggested that Kelly Wylam who runs the program should be contacted.

**Larry Brotzge**

Suggested that for the next meeting we should put together a list of the things that we have considered at the Goal 4 team meetings and present a status report on those items.

**Lou Kupperman**

Commented that we will need to pick and choose soon in terms of what we can realistically work on meaning we will need to set priorities.

**David Sciocchetti**

Responded that the proposed analysis could be part of the September meeting.

**Gary Smith**

Commented that we need to better connect i2n and the role of the Goal 4 Team.

**Larry Brotzge**

Asked about the overlap in entrepreneurial efforts with Delaware County.

**Gary Smith**

Responded that a meeting with Delaware County was needed to address this issue.

**Lou Kupperman**

Referred to Guy Fardone's comment at a previous meeting that we need to rebrand our overall effort and suggested that this issue needs to be addressed. Added that the work of CCEDC is what is keeping the Goal team work happening.

**Chad Byers**

Stated that Chester County is one of the top counties in the country and will likely continue to be one regardless of the Goal 4 team efforts, but might not be everything we could be if our efforts are successful.



