

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Economic Development Committee met on February 28, 2018 at 2:01 p.m. with Mayor Christiansen presiding. Members present were Mr. Hudson (City Manager's designee) and Mr. Hugg. Mr. Hare, Mr. Cole, Mrs. Mitchell, Ms. Evans, and Mr. Hammond were absent.

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Due to the lack of a quorum, the agenda was not adopted.

Mayor Christiansen stated that the meeting would be informational only and no action would be required.

Wilmington University Contribution for Economic Development (Dr. Clinton Robertson)

Dr. Clinton Robertson, Assistant Dean and Professor, College of Business, Wilmington University, advised members that he had been at Wilmington University as a full-time employee for 22 years following his employment as an engineer with Dupont. Ms. Jean Davis, Assistant Professor and Regional Chair, College of Business, Wilmington University, stated that she had approximately 30 years of accounting experience, is a Certified Public Account (CPA), and had been with Wilmington University approximately 10 years.

Dr. Robertson stated that Wilmington University had met with Mayor Christiansen several times to discuss opportunities for cooperative efforts and partnerships for economic development with the City of Dover and Kent County. He advised that a meeting was held last week to brainstorm ideas and was attended by himself; Ms. Davis; Mayor Christiansen; Dr. Don Stuhlman, Wilmington University, Chair, Finance Programs; Mr. Mike Karia, Chair, Wilmington University, Adjunct Program Coordinator; Mr. Jim Waddington, Economic Development Director, Kent County Levy Court/Kent Economic Partnership; and Mr. Kirk Johnson, Professor of Economics, Goldey Beacom College. Dr. Robertson indicated that participants' ideas quickly solidified regarding major industries and growth expected in Dover and Central Delaware, and he provided and reviewed a handout, entitled "Wilmington University Contribution for Economic Development" (**Attachment #1**).

Dr. Robertson indicated that the major industries in Delaware are food and restaurant, agriculture, healthcare services, and manufacturing. He explained that Wilmington University had recently been working with the Delaware Restaurant Association and noted that the food and restaurant business is the biggest employer in the State, with more than 500 restaurants and 50,000 employees. He indicated that they were looking at a number of training and educational programs to get into and had hired Mr. Van Hampton, a Wilmington University graduate and Executive Director, First State Community Loan Association, as a part-time adjunct instructor. Dr. Robertson stated that Mr. Clinton Tymes, Small Business Development Center, was working with Mr. Hampton.

Dr. Robertson advised that there had been discussion regarding food service in downtown Dover, particularly Loockerman Street. He asked members what they would picture on Loockerman Street in three (3) to five (5) years, noting that millennials are drawn to bars and restaurants. Dr. Robertson stated that Delaware Technical and Community College (Del Tech) and Polytech have culinary arts facilities and, if they were pulled together with business and management programs, there could be a culinary institute at a place like the Loockerman Exchange. He advised that he went to upstate

New York and saw how these culinary institutes work. Dr. Robertson stated that an institute in Canandaigua, New York shows students how to form a table and make preparations, and even has culinary retail outlets. He suggested that local colleges and universities could work together to do something new and innovative like this, noting that these institutions have articulation agreements but had never taken an active role in partnering to move ahead toward a common goal.

Dr. Robertson informed members that healthcare had also been discussed, noting that this field was growing in the local area. He explained that the engine for growth was not just the increase in technology and healthcare but also demographics, since hundreds of retirees are moving into the area because of the taxes, climate, and great active adult communities. Dr. Robertson advised that he had been in this type of community for 17 years and it had drawn his neighbors from Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey. He noted that baby boomers would need healthcare, including long-term care, more and more. Dr. Robertson stated that Wilmington University has a nursing program and its business program offers a master's in healthcare administration, which had been very popular, and a number of their graduates work at Bayhealth Medical Center. He indicated that Del Tech also has a nursing program and suggested that these programs could be pulled together for a united front for economic development in Dover and Kent County.

Dr. Robertson advised that a number of manufacturing companies had left the area and it would be nice to have a concerted effort to bring manufacturing back. He stated that a good, educated, confident workforce is one (1) thing that would do this. Dr. Robertson noted that the Delaware Manufacturing Extension Partnership (DEMEP), formerly the Delaware Manufacturing Alliance, would be having an exposé in the area in a couple of weeks and expressed the desire to reconnect to see where education might fit in. He advised that Wilmington University has programs like project management, as well as a number of information systems and technology programs. Dr. Robertson explained that they also have a new and growing program in data analytics that involves analyzing different ways of putting together huge banks of data to see where opportunities might be. He stated that there is a need to look at where and in which types of jobs millennials will be working, and what those moving here to work in data centers would be looking for. Dr. Robertson noted that millennials are gregarious and like the idea of a central place for bars and restaurants, and a number of towns and cities are focusing on this in their downtown areas. He stated that there is also a need for jobs, noting that there was a question of whether jobs or this type of downtown activity would come first. Dr. Robertson stated that colleges and universities can bring data analysis and IT to Dover, online as well as in class, and get a feel for what the market is. He indicated that it would be nice if the City of Dover and the educational institutions could grow together.

Dr. Robertson stated that another area of discussion was firefighters and police, noting that people come from everywhere to Dover to attend the Delaware State Fire School. He advised that Mayor Christiansen had mentioned that perhaps fire chiefs should have a terminal degree of some kind in management or business. Dr. Robertson informed members that Mr. Frank Richardson, a mutual friend of his and Mayor Christiansen's who was once in charge of the Fire School, had worked as the head of the two-year fire and safety program at Del Tech. Dr. Robertson explained that Mr. Richardson had mentioned the possibility of having those who complete the Del Tech

program come to Wilmington University to finish a bachelor's or master's degree program in fire and safety, while having Del Tech take care of everything. He stated that they had never really gotten into this new idea of cooperation among the different schools at this level. Dr. Robertson also advised that Wilmington University has a very dynamic program in administration of justice, which they had been looking at in regard to the police force and security in Dover.

Dr. Robertson informed members that transportation is another field being discussed, noting that a short-line railroad operator had been mentioned because there are spurs off the Norfolk Southern line. He noted that the leasing of railroad lines was allowed after railroads were deregulated in 1980. Responding to Dr. Robertson, Mr. Dave Hugg, Director of Planning and Community Development, stated that the Delaware Coast Line Railroad had taken over a lot of the short-haul traffic on the lower part of the Peninsula and could be seen regularly on the west side of Dover using those tracks. He advised that he did not know who their primary customers are, but the railroad is clearly a fixed investment that is grossly underutilized for freight and is not being utilized for potential passenger services. Referring to the air cargo ramp at Dover Air Force Base (DAFB) mentioned in the handout, Mr. Hugg stated that there had been a renewed effort by Mr. Waddington and a committee that is trying hard to get a use agreement signed, and things were starting to happen again at DAFB.

Mr. Hugg informed members that a number of older industrial sites with great rail access were not being used, and there may be opportunities to use a site that had been developed and used for heavy activity as a freight transfer station or some other kind of railroading activity. He indicated that Dover is ideally situated to have a presence for both air and rail. Mr. Hugg stated that Mr. Waddington had discussed the logistics of civilian transportation in and out of DAFB and mentioned that cargo planes have to leave Dover and go to LaGuardia or JFK to be serviced and parked because they cannot be here for more than a specified number of hours. Mr. Hugg indicated that it would be great if there was local service and there was a lot of opportunity for growth in that area.

Dr. Robertson stated that 24/7 availability of the runway is needed for air cargo. He advised that there are opportunities for freight because Dover is centrally located with Baltimore, Washington, New York, and Philadelphia. Dr. Robertson stated that he had heard that fresh flowers from South American were being pursued some years ago, noting that approximately 20 planes come into Miami International Airport per day and unload flowers. He explained that the flowers are placed in trailers and come all the way here for \$1,400 per trailer, and he suggested the possibility of getting flowers closer and distributing them. Mr. Hugg indicated that a freight airline had been relaying fresh flowers from Miami to Dover using DAFB; however, they ran into the problem of not having anyplace to park or service the airplanes. He noted that planes have to fly to Dover, offload, and find somewhere to lay over until the flight back. Mr. Hugg advised that some pieces are missing and Dover could fulfill all those things. He stated that there are only one (1) or two (2) commercial or private jet servicing and rehabilitation companies in Delaware, including one (1) in New Castle County, and there is a huge market in private upscale commercial jets that have to be serviced, maintained, and rehabbed. Mr. Hugg noted that a friend who worked at the Greater Wilmington Airport for such a company advised that they were booked 24/7 and had a waiting list.

Dr. Robertson stated that Wilmington University has a number of students from Pats Aircraft in Georgetown who rehab aircraft. Mayor Christiansen noted that Pats Aircraft rehabs planes for the Saudi royal family. Mr. Hudson advised that Keystone Helicopters in Chester County, Pennsylvania rehabs helicopters and had also made specialized helicopters for Saudi Arabian families. He stated that four (4) years ago this company was trying to expand to close to 3,000 jobs, having a very difficult time trying to find qualified people, and starting to pull people from the DC and Maryland areas to come to Chester County, Pennsylvania. Mr. Hudson advised that planes would be another market.

Mr. Hudson informed members that there were culinary schools in Philadelphia that have school by day and sell the food they make to the public at night. He explained that they advertise their up-and-coming chefs and put out white tablecloths, and he stated his assumption that they were still doing well, noting that the community at-large wanted to help support them. Mr. Hudson suggested this as a possibility for Wilmington University and other schools at the Loockerman Exchange, noting that they could actually make money from people coming to eat and enjoy themselves. Ms. Davis noted that product sales would help with a lot of the costs. Mr. Hugg advised that the University of Delaware had done this successfully with their culinary program and had a fancy restaurant which was both a training and marketing opportunity.

Mr. Hugg indicated that, in recent discussions, the owner of the Loockerman Exchange had mentioned offering a variety of foods, such as a sushi bar and a barbecue, noting that this type of setting is increasingly being sought by millennials. He explained that, during the Downtown Dover Partnership (DDP) meeting of February 28, 2018, there had been discussion about how to make downtown Dover different. He suggested that one (1) way to do so would be to make it a foodie heaven and encourage a variety of small restaurants. Mr. Hugg noted that a block in New York may have 20 small restaurants, each with their own kind of specialty. He expressed his belief that there were real opportunities to take advantage of food innovation, from the standpoint of entrepreneurs ranging from those making jelly in their kitchens to those in farm-to-table enterprises. Mr. Hugg advised that there had been discussions about the potential for aquaponics or hydroponics in an urban location downtown because that area is a food desert with no places for people of modest income to get good and fresh foods. He stated that up-and-coming entrepreneurs need somebody to handhold and train them, noting that marketing requires a different skill set. Ms. Davis noted that this is where the bridge would come in with Wilmington University, which would teach entrepreneurs business skills.

Mr. Hugg advised that a university in Glassboro, New Jersey, has a joint innovative kitchen program that provides hands-on teaching on how to write a marketing plan, distribute a product, etc. He noted that this interesting model provides a kitchen that allows students to make a product, such as strawberry jam, in some quantity and with some assurance of meeting health codes and also provides advice about such things as product label design. Dr. Robertson indicated that this program was like an incubator and he believed that it was called a build-out.

Mr. Hugg stated that there are a lot of good business programs in the State but no one offers undergraduate and graduate level education aimed at public administration, and he was unsure if a degree in public administration is available. He noted that not all of those with bachelor's degrees in business are necessarily ready to step into public administration and do it well. Ms. Davis advised

that Wilmington University's undergraduate degree is not in public administration but has something to do with government; however, they offer master's degrees in management and public administration. She indicated that the numbers in this program had been dwindling a little and they may need to update it. Ms. Davis suggested that perhaps Wilmington University should meet with City staff who work in public administration to see what they are missing and promote their program better.

Mr. Hugg stated that the University of Delaware has an Institute for Public Administration that is focused largely on non-profit management and is not really preparing the next crop of managers that is needed. He advised that the International City Managers Association did some analysis not long ago on the graying face of city managers and concluded that more and more communities will be unable to find managers with any kind of focused training. He recalled that at one time there were a couple of thousand vacant city manager jobs across the country, and towns had been looking for years to fill them.

Dr. Robertson stated that the time might be right for an advisory board in Dover, and Wilmington University would welcome the City's participation. Ms. Davis advised that Wilmington University offers public administration classes for their master's degree at DAFB and had also offered them in Georgetown and Dover, noting that perhaps they were not marketing this well.

Mr. Hudson stated that, as a lot of the leadership in Delaware municipalities are getting older and retiring, people are being picked who may have on-the-job experience but not necessarily a degree. Ms. Davis expressed a desire to meet with staff to discuss Wilmington University's courses.

Ms. Davis asked if cities target individuals who have the ability to move up or if people with experience come from the outside. Responding, Mr. Hugg stated that many people come into this profession from the planning side, but a lot come out of the business environment and may or may not understand some of the subtleties.

Mr. Hudson stated that many job announcements for city managers or assistant city managers indicate that they are looking for advanced degrees. He advised that the field is starting to understand that it is okay to have book knowledge; however, those with worldly experience in conjunction with what they have learned will do a lot better. Dr. Robertson stated that he would like to meet with Mr. Hugg and Mr. Hudson in the next couple of months to discuss public administration and perhaps some ideas to develop a city manager.

Responding to Mr. Hudson, Ms. Davis stated that Wilmington University offers the face-to-face classes for the public administration program only at DAFB, noting that their numbers were dwindling a bit and there were only five (5) or six (6) students. She advised that their online programs were doing well. Dr. Robertson stated that the online program would not give students any practice interfacing with other people, as city managers and those in public administration must do.

Mr. Hudson advised that those in resource professions must be able to deal with people, which can not be taught by a book, and must also have a personality that can deal with constant change. Dr. Robertson stated that Wilmington University had started to include internships and co-ops, which

may be something they need to put into public administration. He noted that meeting with Mr. Hugg and Mr. Hudson as advisory staff would provide additional credibility for changing their program.

Mr. Hugg stated that universities could be beneficial to the City in the areas of data analytics and understanding what is going on out in the real world on a longer-term basis. Mr. Hugg advised that retail business models of 10 years ago are outdated and there are many new permutations of how people conduct business, whether face-to-face, over the internet, or both. He indicated, for example, that everyone had been told that big supermarkets were the way to go; however, smaller 15,000 square foot supermarkets were having success because some customers want convenience and value pricing and do not care about brands. Mr. Hugg cited additional trends, including chains like Starbucks, online banking, and walk-in medical care. He stated that he struggles every day to keep up with the new marketing norms, and this is an area where value could potentially be added from the academic side, suggesting that graduate students could be assigned research projects such as tracking the evolution of how people eat or why Wawa is so successful. Mr. Hugg indicated that the City needs to understand this better to know how to manage land use in a changing environment.

Ms. Davis stated that Wilmington University master's degree and doctoral students write theses and dissertations and suggested that City staff could come up with ideas. She noted that they also offer internships and co-ops, and if students could be matched to the City's needs, the University, the City, and the students would all win. Mr. Hugg stated that he would like the University to open an ongoing dialog with the City due to the changing demographics.

Mr. Hudson noted that the population in Delaware is changing, with many people coming from the northeast who are bringing or looking for changes and wanting to go somewhere small, quaint, and walkable. He stated that West Chester and Trolley Square in Wilmington are prime examples where there are new restaurants, eateries, and bars that are full all of the time. Dr. Robertson noted that a lot of people already live in these areas. Ms. Davis stated that Dover has a built-in clientele with the colleges in the area, noting that it is a college town without being a typical college town.

Mr. Hugg stated that a couple thousand college students live two (2) blocks from the downtown area and never go there. He advised that Wilmington University students are largely driven by car, pass by the downtown area, and the City does not know what their preferences are. Dr. Robertson noted that there were challenges when W.T. Smithers was catering to students and State Street became rowdy at 1:00 a.m. Mr. Hugg explained that there are trade-offs, and understanding what they are is important. He stated that university students are an integral part of the community in Newark and are not in Dover and the question is why they are not. Mr. Hugg advised that it was not because the institutions offer many great things on campus.

Mr. Hudson stated that Newark has a vibrant downtown, which Dover does not have but would like to have. He expressed the need for just one (1) big-name destination, like an Iron Hill Brewery, and advised that this was how West Chester started. Mr. Hudson indicated that Iron Hill took a chance, college students went, and the area started filling in overnight. He stated that Dover's downtown is beautiful, much better than other downtown areas he had seen, and close to Route 13, and he could not understand why people were not coming in. Mr. Hudson noted that he lives in Wilmington and his friends there do not know where the downtown area in Dover is. He advised that the City's

administration had talked about signage, but there is really not a lot downtown when people drive there.

Responding to Dr. Robertson, Mr. Hugg stated that there are incentives for downtown, such as waiving fees for building permits and business licenses, but it lacks a “wow.” He noted that there are a couple of dress shops, bars, etc., but not a restaurant row, entertainment strip, or boutique area. Mr. Hugg stated that a research project may be an opportunity to ask some of these questions. Ms. Davis suggested that perhaps they could survey the people and colleges in the area and ask what they would like to see and what would bring them downtown. Mr. Hugg explained there were four (4) new women’s boutiques downtown that seemed to stay open and in some places expand, but they are very much alone. He stated that he wondered how many of their customers are also buying a cup of coffee or lunch, and if they see their shopping experience as anything but a trip to a boutique.

Dr. Robertson stated that Wilmington University would like to partner with the City to help develop Dover and central Delaware.

Mr. Hugg suggested that Wilmington University get involved with the Kent Economic Partnership, Greater Kent Committee, DDP, and the food innovation program that the County is running. He noted that a lot of serious energy is being spent and people are being asked to come and join. Mr. Hugg explained that the Greater Kent Committee is a very focused group of about 80 or 90 key business leaders and Kent County has organized a plant managers group for manufacturing-related businesses that meets periodically.

Ms. Davis stated that Mr. Waddington had suggested that Wilmington University be part of the discussion and learn about it. Dr. Robertson noted that Wilmington University is also a stakeholder.

Mr. Hugg stated that education is one of the major components in Dover’s economy but he was not sure that this is recognized or promoted well. He noted that the average person would not think of Dover as a center of education or higher education, as they may think of Newark and Wilmington, and collectively this message is not being sent. Ms. Davis stated that if Wilmington University can work with the City to find out what jobs are available in this area, they can train students who will stay here.

Meeting adjourned at 2:59 p.m.

Robin R. Christiansen
Chairman

RRC/JS

Attachments

Attachment #1 - Handout entitled “Wilmington University Contribution for Economic Development,” provided by Dr. Clinton Robertson

Wilmington University Contribution for Economic Development

Presented by Dr. Clinton Robertson

Major industries/growth expected in Dover and Central Delaware: food/restaurant, agriculture, health care, service (professional fire fighters, police), manufacturing

Potential Program Offerings through Wilmington University:

Concentrate on degree, certificate and continuing education offerings to promote workforce development and work ethic

1. Food service/restaurant
 - a. Review pathways program for Polytech and DE Tech culinary students
 - i. Offer business courses specific to the food industry to bridge the gap between culinary expertise and business skills
 - ii. Clear path for continuing education keeps the students in DE, through school and hopefully beyond
 - b. Review ideas for a partnership with the DE Restaurant Association
 - c. Utilize agriculture industry in restaurant planning
 - i. Farm to table restaurants
 - ii. Food innovation
2. Health care
 - a. Market existing health care programs to new and existing health care organizations for continuing educations and work force development
3. Manufacturing
 - a. Review our current offerings and expand offerings (degrees/certificate programs) focusing on manufacturing
 - i. Production/logistics
 - ii. Project Management
 - iii. Maintenance
 - b. Opportunities – manufacturing firms
 - i. New short line operator for railroad – Carload Express
 - ii. Air cargo ramp at DAFB
4. Professional Fire Fighters/Police
 - a. Degree pathways for business degrees for public servants
 - i. Management skills, human resources, budgeting, leadership

Becoming Involved in Economic Development

1. Be a part of the ongoing economic development discussions
2. Join professional organizations
 - a. International Economic Development Council
 - b. Northeast Economic Developers Association