

**COMMISSIONERS' MINUTES
KITTTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON
COMMISSIONERS CONFERENCE ROOM
SPECIAL MEETING**

WEDNESDAY

11:00 A.M.

OCTOBER 31, 2007

Board members present: Alan Crankovich, David Bowen & Mark McClain.

Others: Julie Kjorsvik, Clerk of the Board; Debbie Strand, Executive Director of the Economic Development Group of Kittitas County; Lynn Jenison, EBG Board member and Jerry Decker, EBG Board member.

SPECIAL MEETING

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP

COMMISSIONERS

Debbie Strand, Executive Director of the Economic Development Group of Kittitas County, explained how economic development is in the forefront on all levels including the national, federal and local. She described the differences between the Economic Development Group (which is non-profit) and the Ellensburg Business Development Authority. She said they both played a role in bringing Suncadia (testifying at hearings, relationships with people within the organization) and the Wild Horse Wind Farm, which are two of the highest tax payers in Kittitas County. She distributed a copy of revenues they receive from the State ADO grant; the City of Ellensburg; Tenant Income; Private Sponsorship; Interest and Miscellaneous. She noted they maintain separate books and identities, but share the same staff and Boards. Although they would like to do additional marketing, economic analysis, etc. they do not have enough funding. She reviewed lands available and reviewed the binding site plan at the airport; the 90 acres in Cle Elum proposals for light industrial use; the 125 acres from the City of Ellensburg for development; land in Kittitas.

She proposed a contract with Kittitas County and suggested the Board to raise the .08 to .09 funds (Sales & Use Tax, Distressed Tax) as legislation allows enabling them to fund economic development offices. She explained they have gone to other EDC's and asked where their funding comes from and the non Port areas say it comes from their County. She distributed a draft contract with Kittitas County, in the amount of \$50,000.00 for deliverables. She said they would go out to the private sector for funding as well, and asked what the County would like from them.

Commissioner Bowen explained the importance of the County needing to have deliverables. He noted the next years Chair of the EDG currently has a recall petition against the Commissioners and questioned what

affects that would have and the relationship with the County and the overall Board.

Commissioner McClain said the Board of County Commissioners was not made aware until a couple of months later that Comtronics decided to pull out of the proposed site at the airport. He expressed his frustration due to the fact the County had been moving forward, spending a lot of effort and staff time and no notification was made to the County until much later.

Lynn Jenison explained that although he understands the Boards concerns about one of their Board members actions against the Commissioners, it's unfair to say it's the whole board. He explained they could not continue to try and make any progress with marketing only having one staff person. He said the Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) are supportive of their concepts. He said Debbie has kept him informed of companies that may be interested in property, but they want a building ready to go. He felt if there is one success more will come and although they are getting closer on land, they simply can't do it with a one person operation.

Ms. Strand said they need options for the property that's currently available. She noted that she can't control the Board members actions.

Chairman Crankovich said he understood they have no control over their Board members actions, but felt they were pointing fingers at the Commissioners alone for not being able to make progress. He explained he had not been aware of who the next President would be on their Board. He agreed there needs to be something done in the County to attract businesses to come.

Commissioner Bowen said although the design of building wasn't ready, and there's plenty of blame to go around, and felt it was public perception that the County was entirely to blame for Comtronics pulling out.

Mr. Decker asked the Board that if Desmond Knudson's presence was not there would it change mind about the organization and their funding request.

Commissioner McClain said it was not appropriate for them to make decisions for their Board, while noting they do have several great members on the Board.

Commissioner Bowen said they needed to be sure there is accountability and continuity for future Boards.

Ms. Strand explained their annual report is published and distributed each year and thought the Board had received a copy of it. The Board of Commissioners said they had not seen the report. She said the contracts for ADO's are sent through State, and they must have deliverables clearly outlined. She felt that although they have not been very good at marketing themselves they should begin doing so immediately.

Mr. Decker said the bottom line is they need to have money to get it off the ground.

Commissioner McClain felt they needed to see how their organization will strengthen itself before the County would consider a contract with them. He felt the Commissioners may be un-utilized for marketing purposes and they could be open to assisting in other ways.

Ms. Strand expressed the importance of working together and having a good relationship with the County. She said there is an advantage in keeping the two entities separate so grants can be obtained, etc. and up until this time they have not had the ability to do it. She noted the needs to have the private sector, public, and community work together to be unified.

Commissioner Bowen asked what their plan and desired outcome was if the \$50,000 is given to them. Mr. Jenison said that was still under discussion but some of those funds would go to staffing so Debbie can focus on larger issues. He said first the sites need to be ready and then they would need the money to market them.

Mr. Decker said all the hay companies have expressed an interest in a port claiming it would be a large benefit for them. He said due to the University being here they have several people involved from their entity.

The Board agreed to continue the discussion at a later date. Commissioner McClain wanted to see the language relating to deliverables tightened up and offered to work on the language.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

CLERK OF THE BOARD

**KITTITAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
KITTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

Julie A. Kjorsvik

Alan Crankovich, Chairman