



CEDS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

May 8, 2024

Committee Members Present

Roger Bolton, Williams College (Retired)
A.J. Enchill, Berkshire Black Economic Council
Malcolm Fick, BRPC Chair (ex-officio non-voting member)
Lesley Herzberg, Berkshire County Historical Society
Ben Lamb, 1Berkshire
Bryana Malloy, MassHire Berkshires
Tom Matuszko, BRPC Executive Director
Laurie Mick, PERC (Pittsfield Economic Development Corporation)
Mike Nuvalle, City of North Adams
Shannon Smith, Berkshire Agricultural Ventures
Chris Rembold, Town of Great Barrington
Ben Sosne, Berkshire Innovation Center

Committee Alternates Present

Maureen McLaughlin, BCC
Kevin Pink, 1Berkshire

Committee Members Absent

George Ambriz, BCC
Linda Clairmont, BCC
Michael Coakley, City of Pittsfield
Keith Girouard, Massachusetts Small Business Development Network
Kyle Hanlon, BRPC, CEDS Chair
Ian Rasch, Alander Construction

BRPC Staff Present

Laura Brennan, Assistant Director & Economic Development Program Manager
Wylie Goodman, Senior Economic Development Planner

Guests Present

Morgan Everett, Head of Public Initiatives, MassMOCA
Alex LaValley, 1Berkshire
John Lewis, CEO of R3set and Founder of Blackshires Community Empowerment
Devin Shea, R3Set
Dubois Thomas, President of the Board of Blackshires Community Empowerment

1. Call to Order

Tom M. called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. after seeing there was a quorum. Laura B. conducted a roll call vote to confirm attendance.

2. Approval of Minutes from April 10, 2024

Ben L. made a motion to approve. Roger B. seconded. The motion was approved by a roll call vote.

Abstentions:

Chris Rembold

3. 2023-2027 Berkshire County CEDS – Year 1 PPR to EDA

- i. SWOT – discussion - Laura B. had previously asked CEDS Committee members to review the SWOT Analysis in the 2023-2027 CEDS. Two changes Laura B. noted being informed about the discontinuation of the Extreme Model Train Museum and lack of support for school district consolidation. Alternatively, she will be adding to the SWOT the re-opening of the North Adams Regional Hospital. There is also movement around rail activity and the appointment of an East-West Rail Director. Ben L. added the Reconnecting Communities grant which Laura B. confirmed had been included. She also noted the need to reinforce the lack of medical specialists as a weakness/threat in the region. Tom M. noted the shortage of municipal staff and volunteers to run for local offices. A suggested swap for the Extreme Model Railroad Museum was the expansion to the Williams College Museum of Art. Lesley H. suggested the recent designation of Pittsfield by Southern Methodist University’s Arts List as the top “middle-range arts vibrant city” nationally (based on artists, grants, and other per capita data) should be added. Pittsfield has made the SMU list for two of the past five years.

- ii. **Priority Projects – 2024 potential additions:**

1. **New submission 2 – Blackshires Success Impact Initiative:** Dubois T. summarized the work of Team R3Set and the Blackshires Community Empowerment Foundation that built from an Idea Jam held in 2020 which identified community priorities and spurred close to \$2M in investments. He described the next steps as a set of discussions to solve issues raised by those priorities, which include health and wellness, neighborhood revitalization, technology innovations / digital equity, and more. The work will engage community partners already doing this work in various sectors with the aim of hosting facilitated community design sessions with stakeholders to devise solutions to community issues. John L. added that further details about work upcoming or in progress will be shared soon, such as updates to the website, with accompanying videos and marketing materials. The new website is Succ3ss.org.

Ben L. made a motion to adopt submission 2. Chris R. seconded the motion. Laura B. conducted a roll call vote. The motion was approved by a majority of CEDS Committee members by roll call vote.

2. **New submission 3 – MASS MoCA Creative Campus:** Morgan E. spoke about this project that has been developing over the last several months with support initially from the Barr Foundation and related to broader placemaking work MASS MoCA has undertaken. The focus of this project is sustainable revenue generation and developing a dedicated leasing strategy for the 140K s.f. of the campus. MASS MoCA sees the building unused by the museum itself as a sustainable revenue source and a way to catalyze broader economic growth in the region around creativity and technology. They hope to be intentional in who they attract to the campus, but this will require a redesign to maximize the leasable space and prioritize amenities to draw in new tenants and retain them. Morgan E. drew attention to recent new tenants such as the BIC, an AI company from Vermont, and a screen-printing company from New Jersey, while adding that they will need more infrastructure to support further tenancies. Tom M. noted the CEDS Committee members’ questions in the last meeting about the proposed budget. Roger B. asked for more information about this, and Morgan E. noted that they are working with consultants through the Barr Foundation to inform a phased rollout.

Roger B. made a motion to approve new submission 3. Ben S. seconded the motion. Laura B. conducted a roll call vote. The motion was approved by a majority of CEDS Committee members by roll call vote.

iii. **Priority Projects – potential removals** – *Laura B. noted that these do not require votes.*

1. Union Block Redevelopment – Proponents have not been able to find funding and will not be moving forward. The project was located in Dalton.
 2. BAMTEC Inc. – Proponents informed Laura B. that they have decided to cease attempts and will be liquidating their assets.
 3. Berkshire Family YMCA – Laura B. indicated that their fundraising and associated renovations are complete, so they can likely be removed. She will follow up with the Executive Director.
4. **Next Steps for 2024 Report** – Laura B. and Tom M. noted that the full CEDS Annual Report submission is due to EDA by June 30. EDA does not expect the Committee to go through a full approval process, but BRPC sees endorsement as valuable. Roger B. thought that this yearly endorsement by the full CEDS Committee is worth noting to EDA. Tom M. stated that the process is helpful in gathering new information. Chris B. made a move to endorse the Annual Report. Ben L. seconded the motion. Laura B. took a roll call vote. The motion was approved unanimously.
- a. Committee Endorsement (May 8)
 - b. Commission Endorsement (May 16)
5. **Discussion of 2024 Meetings – guest speakers/topics** - Tom M. shared that BRPC welcomes ideas from the Committee about suggestions for guest speakers. Ben L. thought it would be valuable to hear from Priority Projects more regularly. Roger B. reinforced Ben L.'s suggestions and also thought it might be interesting to hear from people who have written CEDS in other regions. Laura B. stated that she could reach out to BRPC's counterparts to see if that might be possible. Ben L. suggested a one-question survey to Committee members with a list of Priority Projects people would like updates from could be sent out for a vote. Roger B. suggested the Eagle Mill project in Lee as one project he would like to hear more about. Wylie G. suggested housing as a topic for future meetings as well as bringing in a representative from the Boston Fed. Laura B. will send out a two-question survey to capture Committee members' preferences for both dates and speakers. Roger B. asked if he was the Vice Chair of the Committee in Kyle Hanlon's absence, but stated he was comfortable stepping away from that role. Malcolm F. asked if anyone else would like to serve as Vice Chair. Chris R. offered to take the position.
6. **Adjournment** - Roger B. made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ben L. seconded the motion. Laura B. took a roll call vote. The meeting adjourned at 1:47 pm.

Documents and Exhibits Used:

DRAFT meeting minutes – April 10, 2024
Blackshires Success Impact Initiative – Priority Project submission
MASS MoCA Creative Campus – Priority Project submission
DRAFT 2024 CEDS Performance Progress Report

Next Meeting – TBD