

**Meeting of
Land of Sky Regional Council
September 17, 2014**

Minutes

- I. Call to Order - George Goosman called the meeting to order at 1:00pm.
- II. Invocation - Jonathan Kanipe gave the invocation.
- III. Pledge of Allegiance -
- IV. Roll Call – George Goosman called the roll and the following members were present: Denise Braine, Esther Manheimer, Jonathan Kanipe, Ryan Stone, Joe Moore, Anne Coletta, Bob Davy, Barbara Volk, Dona Mennella, Jack McCaskill, Gene Knoefel, Charles Dickens, Brenda Mills, Mark Burrows, and Jerry Plemmons. Also present was State Senator Terry Van Duyn and Colin McCormick. A quorum was announced.
- V. Modification and Approval of Agenda -
- VI. Public Comment -
- VII. Recognition of Special Guests – Mr. Goosman recognized Senator Terry Van Duyn by sharing that Council was glad to have the Senator in attendance. Senator Van Duyn shared with the Council that she was very interested in learning more about the work of LOSRC.
- VIII. Chairman's Comments and Roundtable – George Goosman- shared that Jonathan Kanipe has been officially appointed by the Town of Biltmore Forest to be their alternate Council member for LOSRC. Mr. Goosman also shared that Mr. Kanipe has been the Town Administrator for about three months now, replacing Nelson Smith who served the Town faithfully for over 25 years. Bob Davy- shared that the Town of Fletcher celebrated its 25th Anniversary with a real nice, all-day event which included live music and fireworks. Dona Mennella- shared that there would be an Ice Cream Social on the first Saturday in October in Laurel Park; Gene Knoefel- shared that this coming weekend in Weaverville the “Art is Autumn” featuring the artists’ studios in the Town would be held; regarding Town business, the UDO has turned into a real interesting situation which may take a while to figure out. Esther Manheimer- shared that Asheville has a lot of exciting things going on right now including the big announcement made last Friday with the US Transportation Secretary, of the \$14 million TIGER grant award for the River Arts’ District (RAD) RAD-TIP project providing about half of the funding necessary for that project with another chunk of funding hopefully coming in the next week or so from the MPO; she shared also that she and Gwen Wisler would be meeting with the Governor at the airport later today for another transportation related announcement. She mentioned, so that Council would be regionally aware, that the EDC has a couple of big economic development projects in the works which would be affected if the economic incentive funds available from the State (which expire in October) are not renewed by the Governor convening a special session of the NC Assembly. It is hoped that the Special Session will begin November 5th. Combined, the economic development projects could bring over 500 jobs to the area. Anne Coletta- shared that this morning the Village of Flat Rock hosted a reception for 28 new citizens, originally from 24 different countries. The swearing-in ceremony was held at the Carl Sandburg House. Denise Brain- shared that Buncombe County will be having an open house for its new Public-Sector Training Center Classroom Building which will be operated through AB Tech and will provide public sector and law enforcement training. The event will be held on October 7th with more information available on the County’s website. Barbara Volk- shared that Hendersonville’s Apple Festival was great and that it did not rain this year; she also shared that this Thursday is the last Rhythm & Brews for the season and everyone is invited.

- IX. Approval of Minutes from the August Regular Meeting – August Council meeting minutes were made available at the meeting. Bob Davy made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted and Gene Knoefel seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously and without further discussion.
- X. Consideration and Approval of Consent Agenda Items – Including Item - A. August FY2015 Treasurer’s Report and Item B. Community Resource Connections/Local Contract Agency Service Provider Contracts. Jerry Plemmons made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda items. Brenda Mills provided the second and the motion was approved without further discussion.
- XI. Presentations/Recognition --
- A. Project Updates – Craft Beverage & Advanced Ceramics Projects – Justin Hembree shared that Erica Anderson, Economic and Community Development (ECD) Director for LOSRC would be providing the updates on two exciting projects the agency is involved with currently.

Ms. Anderson provided Council with updates on the two projects. The Craft Beverage Value-Chain Analysis project has just been awarded a grant of \$32000 from the EDA to perform a value-chain analysis in order to assist breweries in the region (including Region A counties) in determining how to address infrastructure needs, focus on where room exists for additional growth and to determine how to spark that growth. The analysis will be conducted in conjunction with economic development entities and the brewing industry in the region. Ms. Anderson shared that there are 56 craft beverage businesses in the 11 county region which provides for a fairly robust job-force. The craft beverage industry includes beer, wine, hard cider, and kombucha, etc. and is a growing industry sector that has a lot of new opportunities including access to the Inland Port in Greer, SC for international distribution of its products.

Ms. Anderson informed Council that the other project is just emerging and concerns advanced ceramic composite materials projects developing the region. She shared that Phil Monk, LOSRC’s Director of Workforce Development (WFD) suggested the idea as there are new and existing manufacturers in the region including GE Aviation and Selee that will be utilizing these new ceramic composite materials and who will have very specific workforce needs. The initiative will be a collaboration of ECD and WFD. A pre-app has been submitted to the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) for the initiative and it is anticipated that an invitation to submit a full application for grant funding may be made in the near future.

- XII. Old Business –
- A. Performance Audit Recommendations Implementation – Justin Hembree shared that as a follow up to last month’s presentation of the findings and recommendations from the recently completed organizational performance audit, Council was today being asked to accept the Implementation Matrix developed to update, change and develop new processes for organizational efficiencies. These changes include reviewing Council’s bylaws, a review of the Executive Director’s job description to update the responsibilities of the position, along with some fairly broad organizational-wide improvements and changes that could be made. To that end, an implementation guide has been developed by LOSRC Administrative Staff which includes staff responsible for implementation and target completion dates. Mr. Hembree shared that the recommendations are divided into two areas: 1-those that are Board-driven, and 2-Staff driven recommendations, which are the majority of the recommendations planned to be implemented.

Mr. Hembree reviewed the major Board-driven items with Council which included modification of the Council’s bylaws to reflect current conditions and other changes from the current version which are no longer consistent with the agency’s way of work; revision of the job description for the Executive Director; the evaluation annually of the Executive Director of LOSRC; the development of a comprehensive five-year Strategic Plan for LOSRC; and, to determine a policy for merit increases and implement the policy effective July 1, 2015.

Mr. Hembree requested that Council accept the Implementation Matrix and direct him to begin implementation of the recommendations. Updates will be provided to Council along with revised completion dates should those be determined necessary. The Matrix was accepted as presented.

XIII. New Business –

A. US DOE Grant Application – Alternative Fueled Vehicles Pilot Demonstration – Bill Eaker, Senior Planner with LOSRC informed Council that the US Department of Energy's Clean Cities Program has issued a Request for Proposals to fund alternative fueled and advanced technology vehicle pilot demonstration projects. Approved projects will loan these vehicles to local government fleet managers and other officials to expose them to the benefits of these technologies. Vehicles include those that are fueled by natural gas, propane and electric drive. These vehicles while more expensive to purchase, save significantly on fuel costs and can save entities money over the life of the vehicles. Asheville, Hendersonville, Buncombe and Henderson counties, Mountain Mobility, Mission Hospital and other entities in the region are currently using such vehicles and hope to expand their fleets. Other partners for the grant application include the Triangle J and Centralina Council of Governments, NC Clean Energy Technology Center at NCSU and Advanced Energy. Industry partners may include ROUSH Clean Tech, Thomas Built Buses, the Nissan Corporation, and other vehicle manufacturers. Triangle J COG will be the grant applicant and subcontract with each partner on the demonstration project.

Mr. Eaker shared that grant funds would be used to purchase alternative fueled vehicles for the demonstration program. He requested approval from Council to participate in this program and for the Chairman or ED to execute all contracts if the proposal is awarded funding. Mark Burrows made a motion to approve LOSRC to participate in the proposal and for the Chairman or ED to execute all contracts if the proposal is awarded funding. Joe Moore seconded the motion which was approved without further discussion.

Jerry Plemmons took a moment and announced his retirement from Council after many years of service. Mr. Plemmons shared his desire for a replacement to be found as Council serves a very useful purpose and needs active representation from its member governments. Mr. Plemmons stated his appreciation for the friendships and working relationships with Council members and staff over the years. Mr. Goosman thanked Mr. Plemmons for his contributions.

Mr. Goosman took the opportunity to announce Peggy Barnes upcoming retirement on November 1st.

XIV. Executive Director's Report – Mr. Hembree announced that Linda Giltz who has been with LOSRC for 16 ½ years will be leaving her position as of September 26th. Mr. Hembree took the opportunity to publically thank Ms. Giltz for the work she has done through the Council over the years.

Mr. Hembree shared that the 9/11 Day of Service project was a good success. Items donated will be getting to the troops sometime around the holidays. He thanked Volunteer Services staff for their efforts.

Mr. Hembree shared that the Mountain Stormwater Summit would be coming up on October 14-15. He shared that this conference was developed as a result of hearing concerns from member jurisdictions that had trouble after the rains of last summer. The conference will provide best practices regarding stormwater issues specific to mountain communities.

Mr. Hembree shared that LOSRC would be hosting a bi-monthly Managers' Breakfast for all county/city managers in the region so information can be shared and LOSRC initiatives can be announced and updates provided. The bi-monthly meetings will move around the region.

Mr. Hembree shared that coming up this Thursday and Friday staff from the New River Valley Planning District Commission headquartered in Radford, Virginia will be coming for a peer exchange with LOSRC staff. The

agenda for the visit includes lunch in Hendersonville on Thursday with Mayor Volk and John Connet, City Manager for a conversation concerning successful downtown development. Also on Thursday, the peer to peer group will have dinner in Asheville with Betty Huskins, Executive Director of the NC Association of Regional Councils to share information on the NC Tomorrow economic development plan.

Mr. Hembree continued that the agenda for the peer-to-peer visit for Friday includes a breakfast meeting for continued conversations and an ideas exchange at LOSRC and a conversation concerning the re-development of Asheville's River Arts District with Sam Powers, City of Asheville Director of Economic Development. Also included in Friday's events will be a conversation concerning the operations and activities of the French Broad River MPO with LOSRC's ECD Director, Ms. Anderson.

Finally, Mr. Hembree mentioned the important dates contained at the end of the meeting packet for Council's information.

- XV. Important Dates – George Goosmann mentioned the date of the next council meeting which will be back on the fourth Wednesday of the month on October 22nd at 1pm with lunch provided prior to the meeting.
- XVI. Adjournment – Mr. Goosmann adjourned the meeting with no further business before the Council for consideration.