



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

THRIVING SMALL BUSINESS KICK-OFF MEETING MINUTES

***DECEMBER 2, 2013***

*Present:* See attached Sign-in Sheet. NEFRC or RCI Staff: Brian Teeple, Margo Moehring, Ed Lehman, Michael Epstein, Lindsay Haga

*Next meeting:* January 9, 2014, 2:30 pm, NEFRC

*Future meetings:* 2/20, 3/20, 4/17, 5/15, 6/19, 7/17, 8/21, 9/11 (if required)

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**I. Announcements**

A. None

**II. Meeting Summary**

- A. RCI Overview: After a welcome and introduction from Art Graham, Brian Teeple described the Regional Community Institute (RCI). RCI is a separate entity from the NEFRC, created in 2005, to undertake policy recommendations important to the region. The membership of more than 186 leaders includes all graduates from the Regional Leadership Academy and the NEFRC Board of Directors. Of its achievements, the RCI partnered with the Urban Land Institute in 2009 for Reality Check and completed the 2011 First Coast Vision. NEFRC has adopted policies from these efforts into the Strategic Regional Policy Plan. Recently, the Emergency Management Committee examined Sea Level Rise as a policy area, which resulted in a Sea Level Rise Regional Action Plan approved by both the RCI and NEFRC Boards.
- B. Work Program: The Committee discussed the draft work program including a visioning meeting, volunteer sign up, tasks, and next steps to work toward policy recommendations.
- C. Presentation/Visioning Exercise: Margo Moehring opened the visioning meeting with examples of four issue areas where regionalism and small businesses might connect. Those concepts included joint marketing for small towns, reciprocity agreements between member local governments, buy local/buy regional campaigns and partnerships. The committee participants worked through "idea gathering" stations to answer questions about vision development, data needs, educational opportunities/best management practices, innovators, and alignment opportunities.
- D. Committee Discussion: Small businesses support the regional economy. The committee discussed what a small business was, whether a definition may eventually be needed, and the importance of metrics associated with any policy recommendations, to that success can be measured.

- E. Meeting Schedule: Meetings are to be the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month. Ultimately, a 2:30-4:00 pm time slot was agreed upon.

### **III. Action Items**

- A. The Committee expressed that the following information should be provided and considered in order to complete their work:
- i. Staff will document the results of the "idea gathering" exercise and develop questions for the committee to consider.
  - ii. People with knowledge of the context of each question will be invited to discussions on the nature of the issue. After this phase of work, the committee will discuss whether it wants to make policy recommendations related to the issues.
- B. Next meeting
- i. January 9 at 2:30pm at NEFRC.