



SouthEast Regional Directors Institute

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Minutes
Fall 2008 Council of Peers Meeting
September 9, 2008

Members Present

Mike Norton, Chair (AR)	Terry Sherwood (AR)	Carolyn Dekle (FL)
Chick Krautler (GA)	Wendell Lawrence (KY)	Lenny Stoltz (KY)
Joe McKinney (NC)	Tim Ware (NC)	Greg Godard (NC)
Norman Whitaker (SC)	Wendy Askins (TN)	Wayne Strickland (VA)
Mike Burress (Super Delegate) (KY)		

Others Present

Chris Miller (AL)	Renee Dycus (AR)	Mike Patrick (KY)
Danna Stansbury (NC)	Benny Hamilton (KY)	Randy Imler (SC)
Donna Diaz (KY)	Glenda Dye (NC)	Al Sharp (NC)

Staff Present

Jim Youngquist	Langford Holbrook	Skip Teaster
Danny Bivins		

Call to Order

Chair Mike Norton called the Fall 2008 Planning Meeting of the SERDI Council of Peers to order. He welcomed everyone to the meeting and called on Al Sharp, Executive Director, Centralina Council of Governments, Charlotte for a few comments. Al welcomed all of the participants. He touched upon the growth of the region and Centralina's role in some of the key issues and initiatives taking place in the region. Participants talked about how impressed they were with Uptown Charlotte (downtown) and the vibrant mixed of business, shopping, and restaurants/bars, and upscale living. Al also answered questions regarding Charlotte's light rail system that connects south Charlotte to uptown.

Recap of New Directors Training

Mike Norton acknowledged that a number of the attendees for the Fall Planning Meeting had gone through the New Directors Training session the day before. He told the Council that there were 17 new, so-to-be, and potential executive directors that registered for the training. Fifteen (15) participants from Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee participated. Kentucky will have a third of its districts with new directors by the spring. Mike told the Council that Matt Chase of NADO and Jim Youngquist, Executive Director of SERDI conducted the training. Matt and Jim shared their insight and the session contained a lot of questions and answers between them and the participants. In the formal portion of the training, Jim reviewed the Seven Significant Issues Facing Regional Councils which were first identified through a 10-state analysis of regional councils in 1995 was revisited in 2000 and 2004, and is still true today. The seven significant issues are: (1) Relevance (2) Convener of the Region (3) Ownership (4) Relationships with Local Governments (5) Relationships with State Officials (6) Lack of Uniformity and Capacity and, (7) Public Relations and Image. Matt provided insight on the federal budget mechanics and the step-by-step process calendar that all regional councils and their local governments need to keep in mind for their overall administration and for federal projects and program opportunities. He also provided a detailed step-by-step overview of the importance of grassroots lobbying and the dos and don'ts of working with your congressional delegation the importance of specific message and the importance of building a strong relationship with congressional staff. Mike noted that with the ever-growing turnover rate in the profession that it will be important that SERDI provide on-going training for not only new directors but veteran directors as well.

FY 2009 Staffing Contract

Chair Norton called upon Jim Youngquist to review the FY2009 staffing contract. An electronic copy had been sent to the council members prior to their arrival in Charlotte. Jim also gave a hard copy to each for review. He pointed out that as discussed at the Council of Peers Spring Meeting at Naples, FL the staffing contract has been structured to continue to base SERDI staffing at The Fanning Institute in Athens, GA, but that sub-staffing would be provided by The Carl Vinson Institute in Athens and The Institute for Economic Advancement in Little Rock, AR. Furthermore it delineates that Jim Youngquist will be the Executive Director of SERDI and will approved all proposed actions that will impact the contract between the Council of Peers and the three institutes.

It was also noted that Paul Hardy would soon be relinquishing his secretary-treasurer duties to Skip Teaster. Skip will become the secretary-treasurer to the Council effective September 15, 2008.

Council member Wendy Askins asked Jim how long it had been since there had been a dues increase of the current level of \$400. Jim stated that it had been at least eight years since dues had been increased. Wendy stated that considering all the services and assistance that are provided through SERDI, that an increase in dues should be considered at the annual meeting in May in Baltimore.

After a thorough discussion regarding the contract, a motion was made by Chick Krautler and seconded by Wendell Lawrence to approve the FY 2009 contract. Motion carried.

FY 2009 Membership

Danny Bivins distributed a copy of the new membership brochure that was mailed to all executive directors in the 11-state SERDI region. Danny noted that the brochure highlights the various programs and offerings of SERDI to its members, councils, and state associations. The brochure includes a registration and dues form for FY 2009. Danny noted that SERDI had 92 members last year, the second highest total ever. He congratulated the Council of their efforts to encourage memberships in their states and stated that he hoped that they would do the same this year. He noted that the staff stands ready to assist in the membership drive in anyway the Council deems appropriate.

A motion was made by Joe McKinney and seconded by Wayne Strickland to request that the SERDI staff send out an electronic copy of the invoice to each council so that their finance offices could download and have a hard copy to pay their FY 2009 dues. Motion carried.

Executive Searches

Mike Norton called on Langford Holbrook to provide an update on SERDI Executive Searches and the program in general. Langford informed the Council that two searches, one at the Purchase Area Development District in Mayfield, KY, and the other at Buffalo Trace Area Development District in Maysville, KY had recently been completed with both new directors attending the new directors training the day before. Langford described both processes that were different and designed to meet the specific needs and wants of each district's board. The process costs SERDI members \$6500 plus travel expenses. He encouraged the Council and its state associations to promote the system. Jim Youngquist added that through the number of searches that had been conducted via the SERDI process, that it was clear that the desire of the design by the Council of Peers to cause the Board's of councils to pause long enough to contemplate the current state of their organization and to contemplate what they wanted the future of their council to be, was being accomplished; and, thus was helping boards develop a job profile and recruitment of candidates that met the needs to move the council in a desired direction.

Executive Development and Regional Leadership Program

Skip Teaster reviewed his recent presentation to the Development Districts Association of Appalachia pertaining to the SERDI Executive Development and Regional Leadership Program as the Appalachian Regional Commission's local development districts try to identify professional development opportunities for their members. Skip noted that SERDI was working with ARC and NADO to further refine the program that has been led through the leadership of Carolyn Dekle who chaired the committee that has developed the projected program with SERDI staff. SERDI staff and Carolyn will continue to work with NADO, ARC, and other interested entities in developing the program.

As a side note, Skip informed the Council that several West Virginia districts attending his presentation indicated an interest in having the SERDI Council of Peers consider allowing West Virginia's districts to become SERDI members. Jim Mylott, of the Mid-Ohio Valley Regional Council in Parkersburg made the request through Skip for this consideration and if approved wanted to join SERDI for FY 2009. A motion was made by Wayne Strickland and seconded by Lenny Stoltz to accept West Virginia as the 12th SERDI state and to welcome Jim Mylott and his council as SERDI's first member from West Virginia.

During the discussion of training, several Council members brought up whether it would be a good idea for the SERDI staff to offer regional council orientation training sessions to newly elected officials and/or policy board members through state association meetings. No action was taken on the idea, but it is something that the staff will look into and discuss with Council for consideration.

Finally, there was a brief discussion on the executive development program leading to certification. Jim Youngquist stated that this had been an issue since 1994 on and off and the most recent discussion of that issue had led to the design of the Executive Development and Regional Leadership program. He stated that the majority of the Council of Peers members had most recently addressed the issue in 2006. While there was and continues to be support for a certification program the majority have stood firm that professional certification can be obtained via APA or ICMA if desired. The debate will never end.

Corridor Studies

Danny Bivins spent a few minutes talking to the Council about the multi-state, multi-regional council corridor studies that the SERDI staff in conjunction with the University of Georgia's College of Environment Design have conducted over the last several years including the current Riverway South project that focuses in on the Chattahoochee River/Apalachicola River corridor from Columbus, Georgia/Phenix City, AL to the Gulf of Mexico and has effected towns in the Lower Chattahoochee RDC, Lee-Russell COG, Southeast Alabama RP&DC, Southwest Georgia RDC, and the Appalchee RPC. The focus of the project has been on the river and eco-tourism /downtown development.

Danny noted that several years ago, that SERDI had conducted a Kings Highway tourism initiative that involved the U.S. Highway 17 corridor between Charleston, SC and St. Augustine, FL involving BCD COG, Lowcountry COG, Coastal Georgia RDC, and the Northeast Florida Regional Council. The project focused on tourism development for the small towns on U.S. 17 that are often missed as a result of the development of I-95 between the urban areas and tourist draws of Charleston, Savannah, and Jacksonville.

Danny encouraged the Council to consider such projects.

SERDI Assessments

Jim Youngquist informed the Council that SERDI was currently conducting an assessment process for the Southwest Arkansas Planning and Development District in Magnolia. The assessment is focused on personnel and ways to enhance the provision of assistance to member governments in the region. The process is a part of the overall transition of executive management changes occurring over the next year. Jim stated that there were no other assessments scheduled for the year, but that staff could with its current workloads engage in one or two assessments in FY 2009.

2009 Annual Professional Development Conference

Mike Norton noted that the FY 2009 SERDI Professional Development Conference would be in Baltimore May 16-18 and opened the floor for suggestions for potential topics. The possible topics discussed included non-traditional organization structures, the changing world of regional councils and how roles are different now than in the past (very important with all the new directors), growing rural communities, mega regions, transportation, intergovernmental agreements, workforce, using

the new media, non-traditional compensation and benefits, “things we ought to consider” asking former regional council directors or others who had ties to regional councils to share their views on the industry now that they are in or out of it directly; and, a mobile workshop.

Staff will be working with the Council of Peers with input from the SERDI membership via ListServe communication to build the agenda.

Future SERDI Professional Development Sites

Jim Youngquist noted that after Baltimore, the 2010 conference was to be at Key West, FL. He asked the Council to identify sites for 2011, 2012, and 2013. After a spirited discussion the following sites were chosen: 2011 – Wilmington, NC 2012 – Williamsburg, VA 2013 – Point Clear, AL

Adjournment

A motion was made by Carolyn Dekle and seconded by Terry Sherwood to adjourn the Fall Planning Meeting of the Council of Peers.