



April 22, 2021

TO: SOUTH EAST TEXAS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT
LUNCHEON MEETING

FROM: BOB DICKINSON, DIRECTOR
TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES
SOUTH EAST TEXAS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT: SOUTH EAST TEXAS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT LUNCHEON
MEETING

A lunch meeting will be held on **Tuesday, May 11, 2021** at the Industrial Safety Training Council Office at **11:00 a.m.** The purpose for this meeting is to get feedback from non-profit organizations. In turn, it will help define work elements that our Economic Development Consultant, Mike Barnes, will utilize to develop our short- and long-term Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan in response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic.

**Industrial Safety Training Council
3749 Highway 69 North
Beaumont, Texas 77705**

At 11:00 a.m.

SEE ATTACHED FOR DISCUSSION TOPICS

If any questions arise, please do not hesitate to contact me at bdickinson@setrpc.org or (409) 899-8444 ext. 7520.



DISCUSSION TOPICS

I am looking forward to meeting with some of the “non-profit organizations” within the South East Texas Region to discuss how a COVID-19 Economic Development Strategy could enhance your businesses. I would specifically like to get your input regarding the following topics:

1. Has the Corona Virus (COVID-19) pandemic placed a strain on your operating and charitable budgets?
2. What types of requests are most common resulting from the Corona Virus (COVID-19) pandemic?
3. What types of assistance could be in place to prepare for another pandemic and/or catastrophic occurrence? (major stress inducing events)
4. Were your agencies able to use PPP? Was it helpful?
5. Did you find allies in government or the private sector during this period?
6. Suggestions/Comments.

Our Plan

2 Prepare a Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic Short & Long Term Economic Recovery & Resiliency Plan to address the pandemic through a strategic approach directly.

Mike Barnes Group, Inc. was the economic development firm chosen to develop a short and long-term Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan. Also, to create a Resiliency component for our SETRPC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to deal with future pandemics.

- Stakeholder roundtables to discuss opportunities and challenges. Including disruptions to the supply chain and workforce, and highlight those aspects of the regional economy most likely to be under stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Important participation from:
 - Small Business
 - Major Employers
 - Elected Officials
 - Real Estate Commercial & Residential
- Identify opportunities for accelerating SETX rebound. Including expansion & modernization of manufacturing and commercial & retail opportunities.

SOUTH EAST TEXAS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT (SETEDD) BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MEETING MINUTES

DATE: May 11, 2021

TIME: 11:00 a.m.

LOCATION: Industrial Safety Training Council Office
3749 Highway 69 North, Beaumont, Texas 77705

Mr. Bob Dickinson, Director, SETRPC, Transportation & Environmental Resources Division introduced and welcomed members for attending the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

This was an open discussion meeting, these are the main topics/responses discussed:

Mr. Mike Barnes, President and CEO, Mike Barnes Group, kicked off the meeting by asking the group to comment on how COVID-19 had affected their funding donations and budget.

Ms. Maureen McAllister, President & CEO of the United Way of Orange County, responded by stating that it had dramatically affected their finances. The most obvious reason was that they could no longer hold any fund raisers. She also stated that it has affected the 20 or so partner agencies that United Way supports. They tried to find alternative ways to collect money, but there are certain events you must do in person.

Ms. Janci Kimball, Executive Director, NSS, stated that for their organization, they also had to cancel fundraisers, but then, more donations came in. The two smaller fundraisers that were held, broke records on sponsorships and sales. She continued, stating that the community has been a large part for the recent success as they have rallied around them. They have a direct mail campaign that has been a great way to get the word out as to what is happening.

Mr. Jimmy Sparks, Development Director, South East Texas Food Bank, stated they also had a record year. They have a direct mail program that did very well. They do not depend on special events. Their national partners stepped up with a larger amount of donations.

Ms. Sara Torres-Garcia, CSBG Operations Manager, stated that they received more federal funding to help households. Unfortunately, in this area, when natural disasters happen, it usually means they receive more funding. COVID relief was no different, so funding has not been an issue.

Mr. Barnes asked if the demand had also increased.

Ms. Torres-Garcia replied definitely yes. The need is by far greater than the funding. Previously, they would help individual pay for that month's rent. Now, they are helping individuals with 6 months of rent and no way for future pay.

Mr. Barnes asked what kind of recipients qualify for funding? Are they employed, under-employed, unemployed, aged or a mix of all the above.

Ms. Torres-Garcia responded saying that they are a mix. In order to qualify for funding you must be in the 200th percentile of the federal poverty level. This level has been raised as it used to be 125th percentile. The State decided there is a greater need, so they adjusted the poverty level. This means that those who didn't qualify before, can now apply for assistance.

Ms. Vernetta Spivey, Manager - Community Relations, Legacy Community Health, stated that their clientele has picked up. They accept all patients whether they have insurance, Medicare, Medicaid or even those who can't pay at all. The funding is available, but the need for funding has increased.

Mr. Barnes asked the group what could we have had in place to be better prepared?

Ms. Ranekia Ward, Unit Director, Salvation Army stated that children usually miss school after a hurricane hits the area. If a system would have been in place for virtual learning, it would have made it an easier transition into virtual learning.

Ms. Spivey stated that it would be beneficial to have cost effective internet services as it is a necessity.

Ms. Torres-Garcia stated that they have a need to allocate funds to the immediate need rather than go through the long waiting process given by the State.

Mr. Barnes asked the group if they used PPP.

Ms. Kimball stated that they did use it. This allowed them to free up other funds and use it in certain areas like the rising food cost prices. It also allowed them to offer premium pay for our employees as they had to shoulder the load of the volunteer drivers who were suspended.

Mr. Barnes asked if the receiving the PPP was a fairly easy process. The consensus from the group was that it was.

Mr. Barnes asked if the contributions from your go-to person were having a tough time themselves and in turn affected how much they donated.

Ms. Kimball responded stating that they do not necessarily rely on monetary donations, they rely mostly on volunteers as they make up approximately 70% of their staff. Having to limit the exposure and losing that many people was a big hit on how to manage everyday tasks. Even now, they are having issues trying to get volunteers to come back

Mr. Barnes asked what other things could have been improved as a State, Nation or region.

Ms. McAlister responded stating that due to past natural disasters and learning from them, not knowing what to do, and how to get things done, they now have a networking system set in place to acquire resources from other partners that has helped tremendously.

Ms. Shanna Burke, Executive Director, SETRPC stated, it is crucial to know who are the key people around you, to know where your resources are because every disaster that has hit this area has been different and it's a matter of adapting to survive.

The meeting adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Janci Kimball	Executive Director, NSS
Jimmy Sparks	Development Director, Southeast Texas Foodbank
Maureen McAlister	President & CEO, United Way of Orange County
Mike Barnes	President & CEO, The Mike Barnes Group
Ranekia Ward	Unit Director, Salvation Army
Vernetta Spivey	Manager Community Relations, Legacy Community Health

SETRPC STAFF PRESENT

Bob Dickinson	Director, T&ER Division, SETRPC
Shanna Burke	Executive Director, SETRPC
Sara Torres-Garcia	CSBG Operations Manager, SETRPC
Lucie Michaud	Administrative Assistant, SETRPC