

NC STEP Committee Meeting
Ned Delamar Center, Pamlico Community College
March 18, 2010 @ 5:30PM

Joseph Himbry, welcoming everyone, called the meeting to order. He thanked everyone for their participation in developing a good STEP process. Mr. Himbry stated that he applauds everyone's efforts at pulling together and working as a whole. He went on to say that he was impressed with the diversity of the committee in that it encompasses a wide variety of interest groups. He also stated that with regards to the Rural Center, Pamlico County is "on the map" and the committee did not let the County down. Mr. Himbry also reminded everyone that any projects that were "placed on the table" will not be coming off and will be pursued to the end. He stated that it may take a while, but it will happen. Mr. Himbry also went on to say that some projects that have not been given priority status are catching the eye of private investors and these projects may see implementation sooner. Refreshments were served prior to calling the meeting to order.

Chilton Rogers, STEP Coach from the NC Rural Center, took the floor and again welcomed everyone. She stated that this is her last leadership team working meeting with the STEP Committee. Firm decisions regarding the projects will be made tonight and then everything will be taken back to the Rural Center, where Ms. Rogers will spend April writing up the projects into a strategic plan and will run it by the NC Rural Center for their approval. It was decided that Ms. Rogers will present the final strategic plans to the entire STEP Committee as opposed to individual project subcommittees. The Committee will then present the strategic plans to the Town of Bayboro Town Council for approval.

Ms. Rogers handed out a mailing list form, so that the committee can get informational emails from the NC Rural Center that may be of benefit to the STEP Committee.

Ms. Rogers stated that it is important that the STEP Committee meet on a monthly basis and there is a need to assign a Chair and Co-chair to oversee the meetings. Ms. Rogers is looking to encourage citizen leadership. These meetings are to be looked at as a reporting time. Barbara Baker was voted as Chairperson. Alice Garrison was nominated as Co-chairperson. Ms. Baker will be in charge of the financial administration part as well as the monthly reports that have to be sent to the NC Rural Center and Ms. Garrison will take care of the organization of the meetings, such as setting date and time, preparing the agendas, sending notification to members, take meeting notes, and track project progress.

Per Ms. Rogers, the implementation process and procedures will be finalized at tonight's meeting. She stated that Misty or Art from the Rural Center will be attending the next meeting so that we may become familiar with the other people involved in the STEP Grant process.

Ms. Rogers proceeded to review the project evaluations, the first being the Tourism Subcommittee. Mr. Himbry gave a brief overview of the Tourism projects and passed out a projected picture of the Waterfront Project bathroom facilities.

Regarding the hotel complex project, Mr. Himbry stated that the hospitality industry is currently somewhat depressed and it is not considered feasible to build a hotel at the present time. He gave a brief rundown of consulting firms that could implement a feasibility study. Per Mr. Himbry, we would then take this study and present it to various investment groups. With a feasibility study in place, when the economy turns around, we could then go forward without any time loss. There was some discussion regarding the investment process. Ms. Dodds expressed concern regarding the changing demographics in terms of investors and up to date information.

Regarding the pavilion project, Ms. Dodds gave a brief review in that the proposed pavilion has evolved into a multipurpose facility. She spoke about setting guidelines as well as rules and regulations. There was some discussion regarding the various uses of the pavilion.

Ms. Rogers stated that the Rural Center would like for the STEP Committee to hold out 3,000 to 5,000 dollars from the planning fund for the purpose of travel and training seminars.

Before moving onto the rest of the project evaluations, Ms. Rogers introduced Ms. Yolanda Burwell. Ms. Burwell is with the Rural Center and is working on a project that is addressing the issue of getting certain types people engaged with their community planning. Per Ms. Burwell, these people are individuals who live on the economic margins such as the recently unemployed, dislocated workers, kids who just got out of college, people who may have been unemployed for a long period of time, or people who are seasonal in their employment. They are not consistently plugged into the community planning and Ms. Burwell is working to identify and engage these people so that they may benefit from this community economic planning.

Ms. Burwell stated that part of the STEP process is to engage everyone that is part of our demographics. She then offered to help Pamlico County reach these individuals and get them involved. Her role would be to help the Committee figure out ways to reach out and get the people involved enough to connect individuals to a planned activity. Ms. Burwell stated that unless we figure out ways to help the people that are on the economic margins, we will always have deep and abiding poverty. Ms. Burwell went on to say that she is not just talking about “folks on welfare”, she also wants to be able to reach brand new young teachers; individuals who have just graduated from high school and do not want to go on to college; and suffering business owners. Ms. Burwell stated that she wants everyone to realize that NC STEP is not just for a few individuals, but for everyone. She went on to say that in order to realize some of our projects, we are going to need “troops” and the people on the economic margins could fill that need. Ms. Burwell will come back at the next meeting and discuss this matter further.

Mr. Himbry stated that the Committee and their individual groups have done a great job of reaching out and involving other individuals as well as other groups, such as the school system and area farmers. Ms. Barwell responded that this is very impressive and Pamlico County is being used as a model for other STEP Communities to learn how to be inclusive. Ms. Rogers stated that we will have a healthy community because we are inclusive.

At this time the Business Subcommittee reviewed their project evaluations. Dee Sage spoke about the CBC Project, which is to identify potential core businesses, validate them, and bring them to fruition. The Project Committee will be working with the Eastern Carolina Council to

draft a strategic plan with tactical action steps for Pamlico County. She stated that Jayne Robb, Pamlico County Planner, had received a grant from East Carolina University and is willing to integrate her projects with the CBC. Ms. Sage stated that with all the factors that are involved, it is important to implement this project as soon as possible and with that being said, would like to use money from the planning funds and not the implementation funds. The cost of this project will be approximately \$5,700.00; of which \$700.00 will be for travel expenses and \$5,000.00 will be the cost of the contract with Eastern Carolina Council.

Ms. Rogers stated that this project could certainly be considered under the umbrella of planning. That being the case, the STEP Committee could use the planning funds to implement this project instead of using implementation funds. The STEP Committee voted to have Dee Sage and Candy Roberts present a proposal request for the use of \$5,700.00 of the planning funds to the Town of Bayboro Town Council on April 6, 2010. The general consensus being that it would be good to see some beginning results of the projects.

Ms. Rogers stated that if we do not use all of the planning funds, they could be forfeited simply because these funds are to be used for the planning phase. She went on to say that \$5,700.00 could be used for the CBC Project and the remainder could be used for the feasibility study with the balance being covered by the implementation funds. This would use up the planning funds with no forfeiture.

Mr. Himbry stated that Beth Bucksott met with the Pamlico County Commissioners and gave a presentation regarding the STEP Committee's efforts of creating a strategic plan for Pamlico County. Per Mr. Himbry, the County Commissioners were very receptive to this project. Ms. Rogers stated that the STEP Committee should be commended for evolving from just having Bayboro involved to having the entire County, and organizations within the County, involved.

Brian Dodds and Selva Staub spoke about their efforts to set up a Score Branch in Pamlico County as opposed to a Score Chapter. This has been a difficult project with regards to finding out information and establishing contacts. At this time, Mr. Dodds and Ms. Staub are presently trying to schedule a meeting with the New Bern Chapter of Score. There was some discussion regarding this matter. The cost of this project is estimated at \$20,000.

Jeremy Johnson gave a brief review of the NC REAL Curriculum project. The aim of this project is to incorporate the NC REAL Curriculum into the Pamlico County Educational Curriculum and the Community College level. Individuals will need to be sent to the NC REAL Institute for training during the week of June 21, 2010. The cost is \$1,600.00 per person to attend the Institute training. They are planning to send 9 teachers to the institute. Per Mr. Johnson, they are looking for some sort of financial assistance towards this goal. The total cost is projected to be \$25,450 which includes purchasing the NC REAL curriculum.

Ms. Rogers asked what amount of funding the project subcommittee is asking from STEP. Mr. Johnson responded that they had spoken to the Board of Education and they are hoping for a matching grant which is consistent with some of the other projects being considered. He went on to say that there are scholarships available and they will be applying for those.

Mr. Johnson went on to further state that there will be on site training given in Pamlico County, with a minimum of 15 teachers scheduled for this training. There was some discussion regarding the benefit of having other individuals attend this on site training.

Ms. Rogers asked Dr. Coon, Superintendent of Pamlico County Schools, whether or not the School system would match half the funding needed for this project. Mr. Coon responded that due to State cutbacks, it would be difficult but that there are various grants available and the funding could be found somewhere. There was some discussion regarding various ways to raise the matching funds. There was some discussion given to cutting the local training and still sending the individuals to the Institute for training if funding could not be found.

It was decided for STEP to put up half the money with priority given to sending individuals to the REAL Institute and work towards completing the second phase by having a training session in Pamlico County.

Regarding the Retirees Project, Ms. Rogers stated that the project is to complete a county-wide senior friendly community assessment to evaluate senior friendly attributes, and catalogue amenities and services. The cost of this project is approximately \$6,500.00. Mr. Himbry stated that certain aspects of this project blends in with the tourism project of an amenities inventory and the information will be shared. It was noted that as the amenities project will be gathering a large portion of the information that the retirees project will be using, the cost of the project should reflect the amount of actual work the retirees project will be doing. Ms. Bucksott and Mr. Himbry will be working with Larry Moolenaar with the hopes of fine tuning the cost of this project. Ms. Rogers stated that she does not have an updated project template and would need one as soon as possible.

Regarding the Commuters Projects, Ms. Rogers stated that there are two projects but that no STEP funds would be used. The first project is beautifying the Hwy.55 corridor by planting trees and shrubbery. NCDOT will help with this endeavor. The second project was having each town install a unique sign to identify their town, but have a unified branding to let people know that they are part of Pamlico County. These two projects are still under discussion.

A miscellaneous item of the website and under whose strategy it should fall was discussed. After some discussion, the website project was placed under the Tourism strategy. Ms. Rogers also asked if the Business Growth Facility should be removed from the STEP strategies altogether. As it will not be using any STEP funds, the decision was made to remove the Business Growth Facility project from the STEP project strategies.

The next STEP Committee Meeting will be determined at a later date, pending notification from NC STEP Coach, Chilton Rogers. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Baker, STEP Coordinator

In Attendance:

Yolanda Burwell-Guest
Chilton Rogers
Barbara Baker
Beth Bucksott
Carla Byrnes
James Coon
Cleve Cox
Clark Dimond
Brian Dodds
Jude Bloom/Dodds
Alice Garrison
Ahanna Garrison--Youth
Mathew Garrison--Youth
Joe Himbry
Vinnie Himbry
Mark Howell
Jeremy Johnson
Jerry Prescott
Pat Prescott
Misty Rasmussen
Bill Sage
Dee Sage
Kenya Servia
Selva Staub