Regional Council Public Forum
June 5, 2012 at 4:30 pm
Farmingdale State University
Gleason Hall- multi-purpose theatre
Meeting Notes

Meeting started at 5 pm and followed the CFA workshops held from 2 to 4:30.

Regional Council Co-Chair Stuart Rabinowitz was seated at front table with the following representatives and work group staff:

Peter Scully representing the Natural Assets work group
Des Ryan representing the Infrastructure work group
Steve Savage representing the Innovation and Industry Cluster work group
Maryanne Garvin representing the Writers work group

Andrea Lohneiss and Barry Greenspan from Empire State Development were present as well but did not speak.

Each work group co-chair made brief remarks about their workgroup activities in the current funding round.

Peter Scully describes some funded projects from round one and talked about Agri-Park and bay scallop project Workgroup has met twice and he discussed a focus on agri tourism and enhancing the ability of fisherman to land more catch on LI.

Stuart Rabinowitz spoke about work group's important role in measuring project performance on every round one project and keeping an open pipeline of new projects.

Stephen Savage spoke about the Innovation work group and its one meeting to discuss and solicit potential projects. A 2nd meeting will be held on June 11 at 9 am at the Empire State Development office to review and discuss potential projects. Stephen discussed the Accelerate LI project and other collaborative efforts.

Des Ryan from Infrastructure discussed his work group's efforts in evaluating project.

Marianne Garvin discussed the writers work group efforts and acknowledged Larry Levy's and Chris Neidt's role. She spoke on the regional competition which could award at least $25 million in addition to other state agency funding. She discussed how a rep from the writers' group is assigned to every work group and they are compiling data on every round one project to measure true performance. The Regional Council is also evaluating all strategies to see if they need modifications.

Stuart Rabinowitz indicated that tonight's public forum is to hear from the public and take questions. He opened the discussions for audience questions.

One person asked about how successful the Regional Council has been in funding start-up companies. Her company is 2 years old. Marianne Garvin responded about venture capital funds and her organization, Community Development Corporation of Long Island which has funding from ESD. Steve Savage also talked about the Thoughbox project funded by the Regional Council in round one. Thoughtbox will evaluating start up funding and received $500,000 in round one to be matched by $750,000 in private VC funding.

An audience member asked about Arts funding and how important the arts are to LI's economy. She described a project she is working on to restore a blighted theater in Bay Shore. Her vision is to have a professionally run theatre with strong input from the performance community as she felt other theatre projects without strong professional performer inputs have not been successful. She felt that the strategy had left arts out of the plan.

Stuart Rabinowitz noted he thought this was a good point and that there was $4 million in arts funding (NYS Council on the Arts) in the CFA for this round.

There were no further comments or questions and the meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm.