

Meeting notes from the LI Regional Council Public Participation meeting
September 7, 2011
LIA meeting room Melville

Regional Council members in attendance were Vice Chair Kevin Law, Joe Cabral, Dr. Sam Stanley, Dr. Sam Aronson, Marianne Garvin, Tracey Edwards, and Belinda Pagdanganan as well as Andrea Lohneiss, Council Exec. Director.

Regional Council Staff attending were Barry Greenspan, Carol Mead and Peter Scully
Approximately 50 public participants attended.

The meeting began at 5 pm.

Kevin Law, Regional Council Vice Chairman noted that this is the first of several public forums to solicit input from the public. He and Vice Chair Stuart Rabinowitz are charged with leading a council of 30 members and must develop and submit a regional strategic plan by November 14. This bottom-up approach needs public input.

Kevin Law discussed the structure of the workgroups noting that a representative of each was in attendance to provide a summary of their work to date.

At the head table were Kevin Law, Andrea Lohneiss, Joe Cabral (Workforce and Education Work Group), Carrie Meek-Gallagher (Natural Assets), Dr. Sam Stanley (Innovation and Industry Clusters), Dr. Sam Aronson (Innovation and Industry Clusters), Jim Morgo (Infrastructure) and Marianne Garvin (Writers' group)

Andrea Lohneiss then made a 15 minute power point presentation regarding the mission of the regional councils. The majority of this slide presentation can be found on the Governor's "Open for Business website. Andrea also discussed the council's public participation strategy of which these forums are the central elements. The Public Participation Strategy, as approved by the RC members on August 23, 2011, is also on the website at <http://nyworks.ny.gov/content/long-island>.

Kevin then asked each Work Group leader to make a brief presentation.

Dr. Sam Stanley, President of Stony Brook University and representing the Innovation and Industry Clusters work group (co-chaired by Stephen Savage) noted that the group started with an inventory of regional assets and drivers. The clusters chosen include bio tech and life sciences which include healthcare, defense and homeland security, energy and clean tech (driven in part by the need to provide reliable lower cost electric power) and software and IT. This group is looking for bold ideas and opportunities. One thought was whether this group can develop ideas to drive lowering the cost of healthcare on LI thus supporting and creating new industries and jobs. The group is focused on the Innovation Highway, accelerating innovation and identifying ideas and projects including public and private partnerships.

Dr. Sam Aronson, Director, BNL, and a member of the Innovation and Industry Clusters work group, then spoke about connecting innovation assets and setting bold goals. Needing to address the cost of energy on LI could be developed into a bold goal to make LI a national leader in low cost electricity. Electric reliability is an issue that must be addressed in order to succeed in developing new industries. He noted that our assets include our research institutions, advanced mfg, software and educated workforce.

Jim Morgo representing the Infrastructure work group (co-chaired by Desmond Ryan) noted that the second meeting would be held on September 8. He spoke about Long Island's underutilized MacArthur airport and strong rail system. His group will examine TOD (Transit Oriented Development) projects and noted that a major challenge will be the need to upgrade and add sewage treatment capacity and treatment and that the funding of such projects is a challenge.

Carrie Meek Gallagher, Suffolk County Water Authority, is chair of the Natural Assets work group co chaired by Belinda Pagdanganan (who attended the public forum). Carrie noted the importance of our water-based activities, coastline, aqua and agribusinesses, historical assets and protecting the environment and ground water. Eco tourism and the LI fishing industry are also a focus of the committee.

Joe Cabral of North Shore LIJ Hospital co-chairs the Workforce and Education work group with Dr. Hubert Keen, President of SUNY Farmingdale, who was also present. Joe spoke about how to improve education and workforce as well as the K-12 issues noting the need to align education with workforce needs. He spoke of the economic drivers and workforce gaps.

Kevin Law noted that the Nassau Hub Committee is a sub-group of the Infrastructure work group, is headed by Dr. Stuart Rabinowitz, and will make recommendations to the county regarding proposed redevelopment of the coliseum area.

Marianne Garvin, CEO of CDCLI co-chairs the Writers' committee with Hofstra's Larry Levy. A member of the writers' committee is assigned to each workgroup to be sure they are integrating all work groups into the final regional strategy. She noted the need to support our strategy with data and that the writers' group is fortunate to have two economists participating.

Kevin Law then asked to hear from the audience (approx. 50 public attendees) requesting they each speak for 3-4 minutes.

Public speakers:

David Crane. Originally from Minnesota and 25 year's experience in starting and running businesses, suggested a government investment fund that could make investments in private companies- possibly by convertible notes. This investment fund should be supported by a way to provide tax benefits.

Mike Borsuk, As the retired managing partner with Price Waterhouse Cooper and an involved LIA member since the 1970s, his concern was to not let the competition for the funding overshadow the need for a strong planning effort. Mike was concerned with the tax implications of any funding suggestions and noted that NYS's Alternative Minimum Tax is a big impediment to investment and development on LI. The federal R and D credit is an unstable one in that businesses cannot count on its continued existence and that impacts their ability to invest in research. He offered his help if we want to incorporate a CPA's input into our plan.

Kevin Spelman teaches at Dowling and SBU and owns commercial property. His issue was how to keep LI's young people on LI and how workforce housing impacts our economy. He feels zoning modifications and tax incentives and addressing sewer issues will help with workforce housing.

Joe Scaduto of the Stony Brook Center for Bio Technology liked the venture fund idea and noted that there is a gap between basic research and funds available. He asked how we can add value down the commercial pipeline to support new companies and supports an Entrepreneurship-in-Residence program.

Ben Jankowski, Chairman of the Oyster Bay Railroad museum, focused on tourism and stated that we are missing an element to train young people and suggested that tourism jobs could be part of an effort to train our youth by linking the education element of tourism and museums with a training effort that could also provide good jobs in tourism.

Jen Sappell of the North Shore Heritage group asked the council to consider cultural historic treasures and cultural tourism as a fast-growing industry an important industry and connect LI's not for profits.

Pat Aitken of the Friends of the Bay spoke about LI's shell fish industry and the LI Sound Vision Project which is a 10+ year plan for the LI Sound. She spoke about a blueway trail to encourage tourism in Oyster Bay and a goal of protecting water quality.

Peter Quinn, a transportation and activist, spoke about his idea to build an elevated rail system from Babylon to MacArthur Airport which would then divert to other north and south routes such as Dowling and Great River. He noted that while the project is expensive, federal funds might pay for much of the cost and then state and local funds could be added. He noted NJ received \$450 million for a 20-mile stretch of rail. His other idea was to build a series of solar arrays throughout LI such as they have in CA. He noted both his ideas would reduce car pollution and road congestion.

Theresa Statz-Smith of the LI Arts Alliance asked that the council consider arts in its plan and spoke about an arts festival and supporting arts tourism.

Gus Wade, a commercial landscape contractor noted 2 million people have left LI for better economic opportunities and noted brain drain issues we need to address. LI college student are educated here and then move off LI because of lack of housing. He noted Olympus Corp

left Melville because the company could not attract execs who did not want to pay LI housing prices. We need more affordable housing.

Carol Lucca who runs a day trip tour company noted we should focus on attracting LI day trippers and not only focus on visitors who stay in our hotels because she is able to attract day trip visitors who see LI by bus and spend locally. She also suggested creating a South Shore heritage alliance to support our tourism industry.

Steven Taub, a member of the Suffolk County Film commission and a local TV producer was surprised that no workgroup had mentioned the importance of the film industry on LI. He noted that a recent 3-day film shoot on LI generated thousands in local purchases. He was disappointed that NYS does not attract more film work and CT. attracts more.

Bob Basso, who runs a payroll company suggested that we need to address govt regulations and mentioned his business is in an Empire Zone and he needs to pay a specialist to deal with regulations. NYS has lots of programs but they are difficult to administer, he claimed.

Neil Lewis, representing the Molloy College Sustainability Institute, noted the need to build a smart utility grid on LI and the recent major storm highlights the need to put some of LI's utility infrastructure underground. Smart meters would have helped with communication and storm repair assessment. LI's electric infrastructure is 100 years old and needs work and developing smart grids could also promote new industries and jobs on LI.

Robert Kratzke who runs an IT business spoke about the need to help companies save money by using technology more efficiently. He is working with local schools to bring training to high schools to foster technology helping students use that to get jobs.

Kevin Law summarized the Regional Council's charge which is to come up with clear priorities, ideas and a strategy but it is not to deal with legislative challenges. The council has a very tight deadline of November 14. He noted the next public participation forum would be Monday, September 12 at Hofstra University's Mack Student Center from 5 to 7 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 6:50 pm