

Niagara Regional Newcomer Employment Council

Thursday November 24, 2005

1:00-3:00 PM at NTAB

One St. Paul Street, Suite 605, St. Catharines

MINUTES

1. Welcome - Catherine

New members introduced: Pat Sayles – Service Canada, Jonathon Jurmaine – Jurmaine Law Office

Present: Kate Acs, Fiona Allan, Miriam Cooper, Deanna D'Elia, Larry Dolan, Jonathon Jurmaine, Heather Kilty, Duncan MacDuff, Catherine Mindorff, Janina Olechna, Ted Palmer, Trudy Parsons, Lynn Stewart, Nancy Sutton, Lori Watson, Pat Sayles

Absent: Theresa Anzovino, Judith Binder, Tim Foster, Claire Gerenscer-Masswohl, Lucie Huot, Claudia Montan, David Redmond, Rick Rochon, Diane Sanderson, Deb Simpson

Regrets: Micheal Bauer, Troy Brooks, Eva Goodyer, Brian Hutchings, Sue Morrison, Michele Tiffney

2. Review of Minutes of the September 13th, 2005 meeting (5 minutes)

No additions or changes

3. Additions to Agenda

Addition - Trudy Parsons: Federal announcement

Labour market partnership agreement and labour market development agreement signed Nov 23/05 between Government of Canada and Government of Ontario - switch over date January 1, 2007. ..

Janina Olechna – had first view of agreement on Monday, a number of projects are involved, it is a layout of expectations, how, when, cost, allocations etc. tbd. Agreement is the process, additional details are forthcoming. Janina will let committee know as soon as more information is available.

Pat Sayles – very happy with signing of agreement with province, Partnerships - \$1.3 billion, Development - \$1.4 billion, over next 13 months.

4. Niagara Newcomer Employment Council Strategy Brief 1:1 - discussion and adoption

Draft Model – Composed by Duncan MacDuff. Discussion ensued re: components of strategy for Niagara.

Council is coordinating efforts to implement the strategy. Compiling evidence and experiences to develop a strategy.

Pg 2 – bullet points reviewed

Language consistency important – “attracting” and “retaining”, shift from term “settlement”, more inclusive. Term integration is not really negative, assimilation very negative, use positive terms in the community, be sensitive to language, use more invitational terms. Committee is in tune with current issues. Stress social and economic value of diverse workforce.

Bullet points are framework of committee.

Encompasses the bigger picture, gives clear directions. Good for new committee members, community, supporters. Email thoughts to Catherine or Trudy with any concerns, requested changes.

The question of relevancy of the document to a member of the business committee was addressed. It was felt that it was addressed in the document, that businesses are aware of issues. This particular document was not written expressly for business community, promotion per se, another document would be created. This is from an employers' benefits perspective (addressed in green text), still good to review document with that in mind, also with employers in mind.

John Nichols, Chair of Region group of HR leaders, spoke with Catherine Mindorff earlier this fall, and indicated he would attempt to achieve an invitation to the NNEC to address the HR group.

The Council agreed that it is time in terms of the development of the NNEC to focus on engaging key employers in the work of the Council.

- Beneficial to put together a communiqué – Duncan to write.

It was agreed that it is Important now to agree on the concept/content/purpose, language for various audiences so that it can be adjusted to fit the audience.

Clarification of Pg 4 – summary in 3rd paragraph.

Intention is to summarize objectives - develop employability of newcomers, ensuring/facilitating opportunities for learning and experience, building employer's awareness, they in turn provide mentoring and hiring.

Group is facilitating a coordinated effort, not directly delivering service, bringing people together to coordinate projects, establish common goals, create continuum of access for individuals. Build a service delivery model, then decide on implementation - how, when, funding etc.

The research sets the stage for the projects to follow.

Q: Where is funding coming from? Intent of document is to describe what the committee is doing, K. Acs will assist with identifying funding, research is on-going from various areas, and more is needed. The Council agreed on an "Action Research" approach,

designed to improve existing systems, involves all stakeholders (individuals and community organizations).

Q: How does council make these projects happen? Is this overlapping existing funded projects? Concerns were voiced regarding the way we present to government. - some organizations already funded to provide services to individuals from start to end. Monitoring progress of individuals, wrap around not working to fullest, purpose of the Council's work is not to recreate but to work to focus on how the regional efforts can work better for the newcomer, employer and employment organizations by working together in a fluid way.

K. Acs commented that it is difficult to be aware of every single organization's program delivery, committee will help to coordinate community efforts, enhance collaboration. Gov't. is aware of needs for more collaboration, how existing service providers can share info, focus on moving client through all services, referrals. Overview of practical reality of systems is needed, networking etc. to be developed.

D MacDuff and H. Kilty identified that we need to identify gaps, have centralized model, but not interfere with community model - model in motion, brings all concerned partners to the table to assist newcomers, linking organizations.

D. MacDuff poised the question and comments - How will prospective funders look at the committee's objectives?

The objective is to achieve the outlined items, but also to develop an integrated model, a continuum of services and put this into practice.

Is there funding for gaps in service? What elements are missing from current services? What are the assets we already have? What is the capacity of the community to make this happen? Recent gov't. funding shift to capacity building - does the community plan match with gov't ideas.

Committee not creating something new - purpose is to enhance what we already have. Underlying structure is there, with enhanced funding services can improve. Also benefit of working with others, utilizing others' skills, resources, sharing knowledge and experience.

K. Ace suggested that the committee write a letter to the Ministers (Chris Bentley, Mike Colle) to let them know of the committee's intentions, follow up with proposal by end of February (ex.), seek funds to develop a model, seek supports now.

D. MacDuff asked for outline requirements of such a proposal, criteria. K. Ace mentioned that committee is applying for something that has no established criteria, building a new community wide system. Letter to be written by C. Mindorff, D. MacDuff, H. Kilty, J. Olechna, T. Parsons, K.Acs.

Other projects:

What are the basic elements of an internet portal?

Presentation by J. Olechna will cover elements of internet portal.

5. Mentoring Draft

- discussion and adoption

H.Kilty is wrapping up \$960,000 Provincial project re mentoring for nurses. The project is intended to identify how and if mentoring works in this population. The information gained is transferable to our work with mentoring of newcomers and employers. We can begin to investigate with a focus on skills, professional development, and what is the impact of mentoring on the newcomer and mentor?

Others on NNEC committee are working in this area, knowledge is at the table, several successful projects in the Region. What is most effective? Mentors helping with language and workplace technology were very beneficial to newcomers. Direct support on the job, work place experience was of great benefit to both. Best practices being used, need to clarify and enhance. Important to interface with employers.

Request for others to help with mentoring portion, The intent is to use local expertise. Sub-committee can meet separately on mentoring. NTAB – potential project - mentoring for women. Knowledge sharing will be beneficial. Email H. Kilty if interested in working on this.

Also request by C. Mindorff for feedback on model, from individual committee members' perspectives.

6. International Immigration Portal

- discussion of concept

Internet portal of province very useful, information on the site is good to prepare people for immigration while at home. Official launch of site delayed, J. Olechna will bring Provincial site designers in for presentation.

7. Establishment of working groups and time lines related to strategy

Not Discussed

8. New business

Next meeting: Wednesday, February 8, 2006, 1-3 PM, at NTAB