

Economic Development

A Project 20/20 Leadership Meeting

January 28, 2009

United Way, 7:30 a.m.



Welcome and Opening Comments

Talia Champlin updated the members on meeting formats and the calendar for 2009.

Following introductions, Nelson Karre spoke on the differences between the monthly leadership meetings and the community events.

Doug Voshell – United Solar Ovonic

Doug Voshell, Marketing Director, B.C. Unlimited, spoke on how United Solar Ovonic made the decision to build their plant in Battle Creek. Doug shared the history of the company and described the product they will be manufacturing. United Solar has been growing quickly and they had been considering multiple locations for additional production facilities. The biggest reasons they chose Battle Creek was because we were willing to work with them and we had a site that was “shovel ready.” The City worked with them to speed the approval process (time was money), and the Kellogg Community College collaboration via the RMTTC training facility was a perfect fit for their training needs. Battle Creek was ready, willing and able!

Group Discussion and Input

Following Doug’s presentation, the members were asked to work in small groups and answer two questions: Based on what we heard, what are the biggest opportunities in the Battle Creek community? As leaders, what do we need to start doing, stop doing, or change in the Battle Creek community?

Opportunities (the record of all notes are at the end of this document)

Summary bullet points:

1. Promote Battle Creek with confidence and build on successes.
2. Promote educational and training opportunities.
3. Promote innovation and encourage entrepreneurs.
4. Pay attention to infrastructure, housing, buildings that need improvement.
5. Take a look at a new educational model and apply innovation.
6. Create a new, positive self-image and behave as one community.
7. Be positive in our reactions to change and not wait for the “nay-sayers.”
8. Diversify our workforce and our economy in new technology area.
9. Teach entrepreneurship.
10. Learn more about how to build on Kellogg plans.
11. Eliminate the perception that downtown is not safe.

Things to Stop, Start or Begin Doing (the record of all notes are at the end of this document)

Summary bullet points:

1. Understand what will help retain and inspire youth and millennials (25-35 year olds).
2. Plan better to recognize the impact of changes to roads/public landscape and the affect on citizens. Anticipate opposition and be proactive.
3. Develop community leadership.
4. Start getting more investment from people who work in B.C. but don't live here.
5. Improve the appearance of Battle Creek.
6. Tout Battle Creek's strengths.
7. Create a climate where cooperation is rewarded.
8. Target areas identified as "poor" for improvement.
9. Provide hope for all youth to have access to a variety of educational options.
10. Find ways to plug youth in early on Youth Leadership Challenge.
11. Promote ways to get more people involved in commissions, school boards and just being involved in the community.
12. Stop thinking of public service in terms of personal gain.
13. Stop letting 1-2% of dissenters affect key outcomes.
14. STOP TALKING NEGATIVELY ABOUT B.C.

Closing Comments

All members are encouraged to attend the next Project 2020 community event scheduled for February 17 at Burnham Brook. The topic will be "Building on Recent Success" with a focus on collaboration between the business community and education. This event is a great follow-up to what we worked on at this meeting. Come and see where Battle Creek is already taking positive steps to promote investment here.

Members were asked to complete a survey, invite others to join us and pass along contact information to Alice.

The next Monthly Group Leadership meeting is March 25, 7:30 – 9:00 at the United Way Board Room. A notice and agenda will be distributed prior to that meeting.

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Notes from Small Group Discussion Flip-Charts

Opportunities

Promote, capitalize on success. Reframe local economy around opportunity –
CONFIDENCE

Market our success!!!

Tout educational/training opportunities – gain community support

Encourage people/entrepreneurs to take risks/invest

Promote our work ethic

Challenge status quo – be willing to change the way we operate

Change our image – for better

Closer relationship with realtors – place to live/raise family

Learn more about how we can build on plans at Kellogg

Do we need to take a look at our educational model?

Expand upon educational innovation – innovate more!

Focus on problem areas in our town – find solutions - housing stock

Infrastructure improvements in areas that need our attention

New cultural/community norms

Educational Readiness

Entrepreneurial Spirit

Charitable spirit – inclination to give back

Community connection & support (this program)

Opportunity to improve our self-image – talk about entire community

Opportunity to start with a fresh slate with new companies

Opportunity to behave as one community

Look at what company is looking for in workers and be ready

Location is important

Having an organization like BCU, Foundations, non-profits

Access to Highways

Shovel-ready labor

Skilled work force (underutilized)

Math & Science Center (feeder to workforce)

New downtown plan (Kellogg expansion & food research, etc.)

Have safety perception issues downtown (youth do not stay downtown after 4 pm)

More buildings? More job creation

Community resources

Residential growth – promote our community

Success in 1st project? – continue with up to 5 buildings – more jobs

Build confidence in our community membership for more projects like this

Create a positive environment in our community for growth – a culture chance

In our leadership, be positive in our reactions to change, don't wait for the naysayers

Opportunity to diversify our workforce & our economy in a new technology area

Teaching entrepreneurship

Promote a new group of a work area – food, automotive, pharm – now energy

Start, Stop, Change

Start

Gathering info on what millennials want (25-35 year olds)
Collaborate more – intergovernmental and orgs
Be willing to step out and be prepared to take risks and invest \$
KCC's willingness/readiness to have flexible training formats
Leadership in place to make some tough decisions (i.e. prevailing wage)
Do things that make sense – not just because we have always done it one way
Capture gifts and talents of all kids
The electorate being more supportive of key community decisions – get involved
Bring more planful of changes to roads/public landscapes etc. How will it impact citizens? Anticipate the opposition.
Developing community leadership within organizations that is part of the person's job (Including private industry)
Identify and develop future leadership
Target improvements to areas identified as "poor."
People need to serve on commissions and school boards.
Climate where cooperation is rewarded.
Planning ahead to staff key vacancies.
Training people: Job ready
Our appearance in B.C. - curbside view
Our reputation
Getting a bigger investment from people who work but don't live in B.C.
Determine BC's strengths and begin to tout them
Provide hope for all youth to have access to a variety of education opportunities (traditional and non-traditional)
Look (be open to) all options (i.e. middle college/high school)
Change the look of BC (we look "frumpy") – need to hold young people's attention.
Infrastructure in advance of capital willingness
Cultivating an atmosphere of entrepreneurial attitude.
Specialized training (RMTC model) do more of
Lack of an entitlement sense – willingness to take responsibility
Make sure that schools are seen as assets & they produce intended results
Mobilize leadership – ability to work together quickly
Set up teams of people in advance for supporting other recruitment efforts
Infrastructures for cohesive support and positive aspects – organized or shared effort to accentuate the positive aspects – Be there to support projects.
Leadership class if discovering it's a great time to be in B.C.
Find ways to plug youth in early on Youth Leadership Challenge.
Tapping large population of home schools

Stop

Thinking of public service in terms of personal gain.
Letting 1-2% of dissenters affect key outcomes and start showing public support
Stop talking negatively about Battle Creek
Migration of talent and tax revenues to Kazoo and other cities/states
The mentality of "I've got to get mine" over being open minded/cooperative