

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

March 17, 2009

4:00 P.M.

Councilman Page, Chairman, called the meeting of the Economic Development Committee to order, with Councilpersons Bennett, Robinson and Pierce present. Councilman Rico joined the meeting sporadically. City Attorney Michael McMahan and Shirley Crowover, Assistant Clerk to the Council, were also present.

Others present included Mark Keil, Dan Johnson and Daisy Madison.

DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY OF OCHS CENTER

Chairman Page asked Mr. David Eichenthal if he was ready to go.

Mr. Eichenthal presented a power point delivery, thanking all for allowing him to be here. He stated that he promised to talk about something less depressing this time; that this Report had been released (and made a part of this minute material) looking at demographic changes in the Chattanooga region and would attempt to answer the fundamental question related to demographic changes and population growth, which was the key point of this Study. He first talked about where we were in 2000 and where we were in 2007; that the metro region in population is up 8%; that Hamilton County is trailing and Chattanooga is up by 9%, reiterating that the city growth in population is leading. He noted that in 2000 we had growth for the first time in quite a bit of time, again stating that the City is the leader as opposed to the Metro Region and Hamilton County.

He next asked the question of how this is happening, mentioning the real impact of the Latino growth, noting that when you looked at the public schools, the number of Latinos had tripled and the number of Whites and African-Americans have declined.

Mr. Eichenthal then talked about Equal Employment in the time period of 2000-2006. In Hamilton County Latino employment was up by 2/3rds, noting that the majority of Latinos are 25 years or younger.

He proceeded to go into other factors explaining the growth rate, noting that the net of births and deaths accounts for 1/4th of the county's population; that in 2006 there were more births in Hamilton County and the fewest number of deaths. He mentioned a growing elderly population as can be seen by the Medicare Enrollment.

Mr. Eichenthal stated that what is really interesting is some of the population growth and turn around in Chattanooga—the turn around is unique and historic; that Chattanooga is the only one in ten cities used as benchmarks to increase and sustain population; that in creating a list of population losers in cities of over 100,000, only Chattanooga had retained their population. More people are living in Chattanooga than ever before, even with very limited annexation. This is the largest growth in Chattanooga since before World War II.

He next asked the question—Who are these people? The Latino population is there and based on the Census, Latinos are up 45%; Whites are up 9%; and African-Americans are up 9%. This crosses all ethnic groups. He stated that he thought this was the most important data and had also been discussed in an RPA Study. The age group of 45-64 is up 21.9%, which is a national phenomenon accounting for 3/4th of the total population in the City. Another group that is up is children under the age of 5.

Mr. Eichenthal next raised the question of how the population could be up when school enrollment is not up. There is not growth in our schools. He mentioned that RPA had presented data to the City Council of some of the growth areas, with new data about the downtown area. This is based on data from the U.S. Postal Service. He noted that the turn-around numbers are stunning and unique to Chattanooga.

He next showed their web site, noting that seven reports were available and this is the 8th that is available with lots of numbers. He stated that he wanted to present a relatively easy way to get to the data. He presented a map showing subsections and a detailed map of sub-regions. He noted that people could get this on line.

Councilwoman Robinson stated that she did not normally talk about her Real Estate business; however she did relate that her son had a link to the web site that Mr. Eichenthal was talking about, noting that it cannot explain crime.

Mr. Eichenthal responded that we had talked about this in other sessions; that \$1 million dollars is coming for crime reduction.

Councilwoman Robinson stated that the Council had been discussing this for five weeks and that Mr. Eichenthal was able to give us a footprint to be better able to address this.

Mr. Eichenthal stated that he felt that his map provided helpful statistics for the Council. (This map is a made a part of this minute material); that it shows areas with a lot of problems.

Councilwoman Robinson replied that this was great and that the Council could add to this—assuring Mr. Eichenthal that this was the map that the Council needed.

Chairman Page asked Mr. Eichenthal if he was now open to questions? He stated that he was curious about his comments regarding the Stimulus Package and wanted to know what was going on with this.

Mr. Eichenthal responded that a lot of people would like the answer to that; that he knew some of the stuff through his relations with the Department of Justice; that there were lots of resources; that he had worked with Bernadine Turner and also the County, and there is stimulus money for early childhood issues.

Chairman Page asked if Mr. Eichenthal could comment on the stimulus money as it relates to the Technical/Vocational Training School?

Mr. Eichenthal responded that there was a fair amount of money for education; however not a specific pot of money for school construction; that this would have to play out at the local level and somewhat at the federal level. He mentioned that the Benwood Initiative was out there; that there was lots there, but we had to get a handle on this; that it would be large as compared to other benchmark cities in wage and education attainment; that it was about getting kids into higher education—that there was a difference between someone with a high school diploma and a college degree—that the earning capacity was higher and the bar had been raised.

Councilwoman Robinson could only say “Wow”!

Chairman Page stated that he thought Chattanooga had more data than other cities and asked Mr. Eichenthal to comment on this.

Mr. Eichenthal responded that he was doing this for “you guys” (the Council), so that they would be able to make good decisions.

Councilwoman Robinson stated that this was great!

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 P.M.