

**DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION OF ABILENE, INC.  
JOINT MEETING WITH ABILENE CITY COUNCIL  
MINUTES  
October 8, 2015**

**DCOA MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Dave Copeland          John Beckham          Marelyn Shedd          Dani Ramsay

**CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Norm Archibald          Shane Price          Bruce Kreitler          Anthony Williams  
Jay Hardaway          Steve Savage          Kyle McAlister

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Kent Sharp          Kim Tarrant          Akane Thaxton          Stanley Smith  
Robert Hanna          Chase Craig          Danette Dunlap          Cheryl Sawyers  
Mindy Patterson          Tommy O'Brien

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Tom Stellman, Alex Cooke - TIP Strategies; Ray Ferguson, Scott Senter, Tucker Bridwell, Yvonne Batts – Strategic Planning Committee members; Brooke Crum - Abilene Reporter News; Judy Wilhelm-SBDC; Scott Hibbs, Justin Jaworski, Iris Kammerdiener, Charles Black, Joe Crawford, Joseph Crowe, Mike Dunnahoo, Billy Edwards, Larry Gill, Gail Gregg, Russell Guthrie, Sandra Harper, Seaton Higginbotham, Fred Lee Hughes, Erik Johnson, Joe Kimble, Kelly Kinard, Gail Lawrence, Dee Moore, DonMark Nickson, Jack Rentz, Ben Russell, Mary Ross, Jimmy Tittle, Adam Turner, David Young, H.C. Zachary - Abilene Industrial Foundation board members; Gary Grubbs, Abilene Chamber of Commerce, Brian Yates, Abilene Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs, Sheila Clark

**1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER:** Mayor Norm Archibald announced the City Council had been in session since 8:30 am and was still in session. DCOA President Dave Copeland called the meeting to order for the DCOA at 12:00 noon, 555 Walnut St., 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, council chambers, Abilene, TX. Mr. Copeland turned the meeting over to Ray Ferguson, Chairman of the DCOA's Strategic Planning Committee, who announced this was also a joint meeting with the Strategic Planning committee and the Abilene Industrial Foundation. Scott Hibbs, President of the AIF Board, then opened the meeting of the AIF.

**2. PRESENTATION AND UPDATE FROM TIP STRATEGIES:** Mr. Ferguson gave a short review of the joint meeting on May 12, 2015, where an outline was given on performance goals for the strategic plan, which includes 1) Community Asset Report; 2) Target Industry Report & Service Delivery Evaluation; and 3) Strategic Goals and Objectives. A service delivery evaluation will then take place explaining what structure and process need to be in place for the best chance of success with the strategies identified. Finally, there will be the annual performance scorecard, wherein an evaluation will take place once a year for a five-year period to see how the plan is progressing. The first two phases have been completed by TIP Strategies and are ready to move forward to the next stage. Last phase will be developing specific strategies and processes to support the goals.


Mr. Ferguson turned the meeting over to Tom Stellman with TIP Strategies. Mr. Stellman touched on employment history in a recession. Abilene's rate of unemployment was low in 2007 compared to other metro areas. By 2013, Abilene had recovered 100% of the employment lost since 2007. The complaints from current employers include; 1) Finding and keeping the people needed to grow a business and remain competitive, and 2) Maintaining and growing a customer base. TIP looks at three areas in a community to see what opportunities are available, population growth, total employment and innovation index.

Strengths of the community are, 1) Abilene Christian University, McMurry University, Hardin Simmons University and Texas Tech University, 2) healthcare facilities, 3) Chamber's Military Affairs committee, which supports Dyess and is the strongest in the country, 4) sales tax revenue, 5) private sector groups, 6) downtown infrastructure, and 7) transportation links. With recent school and infrastructure bond elections Abilene is making investments in the future. Weaknesses include; 1) attracting and retaining talent, 2) low unemployment rate, 3) low wages, 4) empty buildings, 5) underdeveloped entrepreneurial culture, 6) lack of amenities, 7) small industrial manufacturing base, and 8) being an isolated geographic location. Threats include; 1) not moving beyond low cost business location, 2) future support for public funding of economic development, 3) BRAC, sequestration, and defense spending uncertainty, 4) long-term water resources, and 5) sustained low oil prices.

Opportunities for the community to grow include; 1) leveraging higher education, 2) promoting the Pine Street corridor for medical and education uses, 3) making the downtown area an employment center, 4) talent attraction, 5) development and retention, 6) building an entrepreneurship base, 7) using the presence of Dyess to help grow the economy, and 8) adding to the local talent selection. Abilene needs to think outside the box for opportunities but also press harder and be more aggressive on the traditional methods of economic development. The goal is to become a well-rounded community that attracts and keeps its talent.

After the presentation Mr. Stellman opened up a session of questions and comments from members of the audience to see if TIP had missed anything or if more specific information was needed on a particular topic discussed.

**3. ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business the meeting was adjourned by both Mayor Norm Archibald and DCOA President Dave Copeland.

  
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Dave Copeland, President