

Business & Economic Development (BED) Planning Team
Meeting Notes
February 12, 2019 @ 4:30-6:00 p.m.
Peru City Hall

Present: Dr. Hanson, Justin Douglas, Barb Decker, Christopher Nwafor, Zach Reeves, Phil Wemhoff, Rob Walker, Ruth Heywood, Marty Peregoy

1. Welcome & Introductions - Official welcome to all from Planning Team conveners Justin Douglas, Christopher Nwafor and Dan Hanson
2. The minutes of the last meeting (Jan. 31) and the ImPERUing as oNE process-to-date were reviewed. The first goal of the BED Planning Team is that "Current businesses are prosperous and meeting the needs of the community".
3. Meeting Discussion – The question was asked: How do we move ahead, working together as one, to improve the opportunities for business owners in Peru? The conversation included many different issues/concerns/ideas with the following feedback noted:
 - Students need to know what is downtown and encouraged to go there. There used to be events held downtown during new student weekend. Students would come downtown in a group. Scavenger hunt? Revisit this? Students tend to leave town instead of visiting Peru businesses.
 - There used to be watermelon and ice cream feeds at beginning of school year – could PCIG do something like this?
 - Coaches tell athletes not to go to the bar, which hasn't helped with College/Business relations. Students drive to Auburn for alcohol so their coaches don't see them at Casey's or Zach's.
 - Students with meal plans do not have motivation to eat off campus – parents want them to eat on campus since they have paid for the meal plan. Off-campus students are not mandated to have meal plans. Students are required to live on campus the first two years.
 - Students have not known they could go to the 5th Avenue Post, but soon they will be informed.
 - Students used to come downtown when the gas station was there. Now they go to Casey's instead.
 - Safer for students to stay in town off highways.
 - College and City need better communication with each other.
 - Alumni in town help boost business transactions. Football game days used to be biggest profits of the year, but not anymore. Tailgating hurts business! In addition, there is a double standard that alcohol is okay for that event and not downtown.
 - Biggest profits used to be spring game with alumni. MANY alumni in town and many business transactions. The College stopped hosting this event with alumni. There is still a spring game, however.
 - Would be nice to have a city police officer – the county covers Peru regularly. Cops posted regularly in town keep students away. Some students feel targeted. Have Connelly talk to the BED group about what cops prefer or need in terms of controlling parties.

- Grocery store used to be able to sell some items to organizations & concessions. When Creative Dining came, that was prohibited.
- Following the Homecoming parade, people used to stay downtown to eat and visit booths on Main Street. This was changed to have the tailgate on campus. Homecoming bonfire used to be downtown and it brought many students and town people. Used to have a chili feed with the bonfire. (now chili feed is with OMRD)
- Students leave town on weekends to go home and to work jobs. They also have vision that need to leave Peru to have fun.
- Work study – could a student work at the grocery store?
- Old Man Rivers Days is scheduled at a time students are not around. It is more successful when OMRD is scheduled the same weekend as other events so there are many different activities in which people can participate. PCIG is not focusing on OMRD this year.
- Perhaps have special town days more than once per year?
- Coupon book? Discounts for food, discounts to games, etc.
- Try to get more local students to play on athletic teams – they bring in more spectators, etc.
- Businesses should meet with students to find out what they want. Some students will come down in groups (non-sports). BED Group should meet in evenings so college students will come (not in competition with games, etc.). Getting students to join the next meeting is a priority.
- Marquee sign at city limits would help greet people and inform them as to what is in town.
- Businesses can advertise activities on campus as long as there is no alcohol involved. There is a double standard here...tailgating has alcohol.
- There used to be advertising on channel 4.
- Boo Bash is the best partnership event. Need more activities like Boo Bash that partner the College with the City.
- Wild game feed used to be in Peru at the VFW Club, but it has been moved. Would the Boosters consider bringing it back to Peru? There was also a fish feed the Boosters did every year but that was moved also.
- Businesses need to work together so they are not hurting each other's profit.
- PCIG vs. Chamber – do we still need a mini Chamber? Some of the big drivers from the Chamber are missing.
- Meeting once per month is too infrequently. Need to meet more often to make progress.

4. Next steps

- . Report back on information requested
 - a. Prepare a survey for students
 - b. Invite students to provide feedback
 - c. Develop a communication link between the three businesses and the college.

5. Next meeting – Feb. 26 at 7:30-9:00 p.m. at City Hall