

Boulder Transition Advisory Committee (BTAC)
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 3, 2015

The first Boulder Transition Advisory Committee (BTAC) was held at the Boulder City Hall on 9/3/15 at 2:00 pm. Jefferson County Commissioner Cory Kirsch opened the meeting by welcoming the attendee's and going around the room for introductions. There were 30 people in attendance. An email directory will be developed for interested parties to receive upcoming BTAC information.

1. Commissioner Kirsch discussed the Montana Development Center (MDC) pending closure and the impact it would have on the community of Boulder. He indicated this BTAC process was a way to get local residents involved in a planning process that could help shape the future of Boulder. He turned the meeting over to Tom Harrington from MSU Extension and the Jefferson Local Development Corporation (JLDC).
2. Tom H. discussed the importance of getting community residents involved with planning the future of Boulder as the MDC moves toward closure. He discussed the state committee appointed to oversee the closure was represented by many, to include a Jefferson County Commissioner, yet the Boulder community most impacted didn't have a representative. This committee will oversee resident placement and look at possible facility reutilization and BTAC could play a role by making facility reuse recommendations and be a direct information conduit to the community during these dynamic times of change.
3. He discussed some case studies of other communities that had lost major employers along with the process used by the military when communities experience base closures. The common thread with successful communities meeting the many challenges of change was proactive leadership, community working together for a common goal/vision, positive "Can Do" attitude, think broadly about future community options and good communications. There is a report titled Rural Community Response to Closure/Downsizing of a major Employer, at <http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/23383/1/aer422.pdf> that has similar case of a developmental center closure in North Dakota. The lessons learned from these communities could be helpful as Boulder moves forward. He discussed the community process being used in Whitehall that was started when the mine was pending closure and that is still being used as an excellent information conduit between the major employer and the community.
4. The purpose of the BTAC process would be to engage the community about the future of Boulder and help develop a plan that identifies actions and resources needed to move the community forward. There was discussion about MCA 39-2-1001 that requires an impact statement be provided to local governments on the upcoming closure. This impact statement is important as Boulder looks for resources it will need to transition from MDC as the major community employer and will be a distressed community until it overcomes the economic development impacts. Open discussion followed and the following items were addressed as possible topics at future BTAC meetings:
 - a. What are the MDC closure impacts to the community?
 - b. What if the community does nothing?
 - c. What are the infrastructure impacts?
 - d. What is the communications process with other agencies and state resources?
 - e. What and how would the BTAC's relationship be with other organizations?

- f. Looking forward at the next legislative session what does Boulder need?
 - g. What are the stat obligations to the community with the MDC closure?
 - h. What are some possible facility reutilization options?
 - i. Look at future employment opportunities having a livable wage.
 - j. Is the past veteran home proposal still an option?
5. The discussion moved into thoughts about if a BTAC process would be beneficial and the consensus was that it should be pursued. The process was discussed as being open meetings with agendas, minutes and potential committee positions identified who would have routine contact with Boulder residents. Suggested positions were as follows and will be refined as the process progresses:
- a. Boulder City Representative
 - b. Boulder Chamber of Commerce
 - c. MDC Leadership Representative (*Help keep the community informed about the current status of the organization and ongoing actions*)
 - d. Boulder School Leadership Representative
 - e. Boulder Business Owner Representative
 - f. Retired MDC Representative
 - g. Jefferson County Commission Representative
 - h. MSU Madison-Jefferson Extension Office Representative
 - i. Jefferson Local Development Corporation Representative
 - j. Elkhorn Community Foundation Representative
 - k. Volunteer Board Member Representative
 - l. Health Board Representative
 - m. 1st Boulder Valley Bank representative
 - n. Natural Resource Representative
 - o. Agriculture Representative
 - p. Ministerial Representative
 - q. Senior Center Representative
 - r. High School Student Representative
 - s. Current Legislative Representative
6. Discussion on the administrative support needed to manage the process and if JLDC has the capacity to do the initial staff support. It was discussed JLDC would be the BTAC contact and do the agenda's, meeting notices, coordination of meeting location and minutes that would be posted on the JLDC or other website. It was discussed the JLDC Board sees Boulder support and assistance as a priority due to the upcoming MDC closure. Projects and other staff support that may develop from the meetings would be evaluated on a case by case basis to determine if additional support resources are required.
7. The meeting was very informative and there was a lot of enthusiasm from the participants. The meeting time was discussed and participants felt a meeting earlier in the day may be better so the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 1, 2015 at 8:00 am at the Boulder City Hall.