



VIEA

VANCOUVER ISLAND
ECONOMIC ALLIANCE

Welcoming Communities Dialogue

Hosted by:

Vancouver Island Economic Alliance

April 29, 2008

Parksville Community and Conference Centre

Notes from Meeting

Attendance

Alice Les Strange – ETHOS Career Management
Angela Manley – ETHOS Career Management
Austin Gilbert- CFDC Central Vancouver Island
Brad Bradbury- CR Economic Development
Bruce Brautigan-Creative Employment Access
Christine Fagan- Cowichan Intercultural
Cyndy Bresden Ireland- Parksville Career Centre
Dave Petryk- Tourism Vancouver Island
Douglas Campbell- North Island College
Gifty Serbeh-Dunn- Cowichan Valley
Gilles Villeneuve – MBA Student MUC
Hilde Schlossar- Central Vancouver Island Multi-Cultural Society
Jodi L. Sturge – Community Council
Joy Andrews- Parksville Career Centre
Kathy Landry-New Employee Wage Subsidy
Leanne Brunt- CR Economic Development
Peter Doukakis- Parksville Chamber of Commerce
Sasha Angus- Greater Victoria Development Agency
Tek Manhas- Future Corp
Tod Godlien- BC Ferries
Wayne Ralph – BC Ferries
Rick Roberts – VIEA
Brook Pearce- MUC
Jean McRae- Inter Cultural Association of Greater Victoria
Sherree Walter- CFDC Central Vancouver Island
Dennis Silvestrone- Dean MUC
Ron Trepanier- Facilitator- CFDC of British Columbia
Cori Lynn Carlson- VIEA

Host Sasha Angus called the meeting to order at 10:10 am and welcomed everyone to the dialogue. Following the welcome Mr. Ron Trepanier was introduced as the facilitator of the day's session.

Ron Trepanier provided an overview of the Welcoming Communities initiative and clarified the objectives of the meeting.

Jean McRae provided a presentation on the labour and immigration trends for Vancouver Island as of 2006.

Discussion:

Question

Is there interest in pursuing the development of an immigrant integration strategy for Vancouver Island?

Responses

1. We need to be culturally aware and respectful of all diverse groups if we are successful in our retention efforts.
2. Are we addressing foreign immigration only? What was about the migration from other provinces?
3. We need a multi layered approach which includes all partners and stakeholders on Vancouver Island. VIHA, School Districts, Real Estate, Transportation etc
4. We need one "go to" organization that is the main source of information and networking on Vancouver Island. We need a central repository of all information for Vancouver Island.
5. We need effective policies in place which are immigration friendly. Having 900,000 in the queue for entry to Canada is unacceptable.
6. We need to brand Vancouver Island as a place to live.
7. We need to ask immigrants what they need and what they do not get.
8. We need employers and employees to be open to diversity.
9. The smaller communities do not have access to the same resources as larger centers like Victoria and Nanaimo. There needs to be an equitable division of resources.
10. Community readiness is a factor. Communities are not ready for attracting an immigrant workforce.
11. We need to approach this strategically as an Island not individual communities
12. Need to include the Gulf Islands
13. Need to consider including Powell River/Sunshine Coast
14. Together as an Island we are better overall
15. We can share best practices throughout the Island
16. Concern expressed regarding the regional approach as the individual communities needs are different.
17. Need to change the mindset of Employees and Employers

It was determined that following the discussion that there is interest in pursuing a regional integration strategy.

Next step will be a full day session where a team building exercise will determine the services already available on Vancouver Island, and who and what other organizations need to be involved to advance this initiative.

Representatives from other regions will be invited to discuss their models.

A terms of reference will be created for the initiative.

Following that session, a strategic planning session will be held to develop a strategic plan for the delivery of a Regional Immigration Integration Initiative followed by an implementation plan and budget.

This work to be completed by June 30, 2008

The Vancouver Island Economic Alliance will continue to host the dialogues.

Leadership for the initiative will come from within the team.

All interested parties in taking a leadership role as chair are to contact Cori Lynn prior to the next meeting.

Next meeting to be held May 20, 2008 Venue to be confirmed 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

The strategic planning session to be held June 12, 2008 Parksville Community and Conference Centre, 9:00 am – 4:00pm