



VISTA 2025 Goal 4:

Establish an innovation culture that supports entrepreneurship and business growth

VISTA 2025 Goal 4 Team Meeting

September 28, 2016

Meeting Notes

Team Members Attending: Larry Brotzge, Chad Byers, Terence Farrell, Keith Goldan, Steven Hughes, Lou Kupperman, Stacy Martin, Mark Trabbold

Also Attending: Mary Fuchs, David Sciocchetti, Gary Smith, Marianne Stack

Terence Farrell

Opened the meeting and welcomed those in attendance and invited all to introduce themselves. Asked for comments on the meeting notes for the June 16, 2016, Goal Team 4 meeting. None were received.

David Sciocchetti

Introduced the concept of competitive advantage as something desirable to businesses and employees present to a greater degree in Chester County than other communities that provides us with an advantage in attracting and retaining them. Noted that Goal Team 3 had recently focused on this issue as it relates to Chester County broadly and asked what competitive advantages we might have for entrepreneurs.

Terence Farrell

Asked how this information was valuable and how it could be used.

David Sciocchetti

Commented that it would help us craft a marketing message directed at entrepreneurs.

Keith Goldan

Noted that one advantage was the critical mass of life sciences talent in Chester County and the region. Mentioned Teva and Endo and the ability to recycle talent as companies adjust their corporate strategies.

Also noted the presence of start-up leadership rising through the ranks and connected to the area as well as the presence of the top level Philadelphia academic institutions.

Mentioned one company that he was familiar with that was recruited to move to southern California that chose to stay here based on the strength of the local public school system. The availability of high quality public schools in Chester County is a competitive advantage for the County because the cost of educating their children is important to the management and the employees of companies.

Gary Smith

Agreed that life sciences companies recognize the talent available in Chester County.

Keith Goldan

Added that the Philadelphia area is one of the top 4 or 5 bio areas in the entire country.

Larry Brotzge

Noted that one approach is to emphasize the region and its strengths in universities and hospitals with a focus on the companies and the talent pool available in Chester County. This talent pool may be attractive to young companies looking for experienced talent to help them grow.

Chad Byers

Asked about the target for any marketing or outreach. Suggested that between “early stage” and “next stage” the “next stage” might be the right target for Chester County. Suggested that at that point in a company history key executives are starting to pay attention to family life style and the issues associated with raising a family which are strengths of Chester County.

David Sciocchetti

Noted that we were also interested in assistance with identifying potential targets for any marketing efforts.

Terence Farrell

Asked if there had been any surveys that asked why some of our newer companies had located here?

David Sciocchetti

Noted that some information on that topic had been obtained through the Take the Pulse survey.

Terence Farrell

Noted that we are not trying to compete with Philadelphia. Added that we want to build on the successes to date and focus on how to continue them.

Larry Brotzge

Suggested that transportation is one area where things are better here. Added that the Penn State Great Valley and West Chester University concept of making university equipment available to local entrepreneurs could also be a big plus.

Keith Goldan

Commented that the Keystone Corridor was an asset that provided a great way to access Philadelphia from Chester County. Added that the availability to access Uber was also a plus.

Steven Hughes

Noted that traditional bio-pharma targeted at people was not the only pharma in the County. Suggested that we should not overlook the opportunity presented by ag and animal pharma and that this area may not be part of the Pa Bio focus. Added that nutraceuticals are an emerging technology.

David Sciocchetti

Asked about identifying such companies in Chester County.

Keith Goldan

Commented that there may be an organizing association

Steven Hughes

Indicated that he would explore this issue further.

Gary Smith

Suggested PennAg as a possibility. Commented that life sciences skills are transferable to agricultural science and technology. Noted that this may be one way to differentiate the County.

David Sciocchetti

Commented that New Bolton and the presence of the mushroom industry already provide unique strengths for the County in this agricultural technology area.

Larry Brotzge

Agreed that this is a potentially strong area as most other areas are not focused on this aspect of bio-technology.

Terence Farrell

Questioned how we might market this opportunity. Suggested the VISTA 2025 website might be one possibility.

Keith Goldan

Added that the layoffs from DuPont might be a unique opportunity.

Larry Brotzge

Suggested that resources dedicated to agriculture bio-technology might be a wise investment for the County.

Mark Trabbold

Noted that the availability of the Penn State lab/maker space to entrepreneurs is something that nobody else offers.

Gary Smith

Noted that the CCEDC “Discover Chester County” initiative is providing profiles of entrepreneurs that showcase the opportunities in Chester County.

Terence Farrell

Noted that fact that VISTA.Today is also telling the story of Chester County businesses.

Chad Byers

Commented that we need to build our “value proposition” and make it as attractive as possible using pictures and sound.

Lou Kupperman

Added that we should continue to build on our list of “attractives”

David Sciocchetti

Transitioned discussion to a review of the availability of space for entrepreneurs in Chester County.

Stacy Martin

Briefly described the 12,000 square foot Innovation Center at Eagleview (ICE) and discussed the challenges of operating an incubator.

Indicated that many prospects come to ICE through I2n and the CCEDC website but noted that marketing could be more robust. Added that they are also working with PaBio.

Commented on the challenges of working with the township on building codes issues and the limitations they impose on shared spaces and how they are regulated. Noted creative approach of licensing space to users.

Described the real challenges of making the space work on a financial basis. Noted that that space is a significant financial negative for Hankin as currently structured.

Larry Brotzge

Asked about the leasing rate and was advised that it is currently at about 60%.

Chad Byers

Suggested that the ProTecs model might be of some interest and assistance and offered to make the connection.

Gary Smith

Asked if any incubator companies have expanded into other parks of the business park and was advised that that has not happened yet.

Larry Brotzge

Asked if ICE had looked to supplement income with equity in tenant companies.

Stacy Martin

Indicated that they had decided not to go in that direction for a number of reasons.

Mark Trabbold

Noted that Ben Franklin takes “warrants” which are different than equity but do provide an upside.

Stacy Martin

Noted that it was still a work in progress that they hoped would ultimately yield more companies for the park. She did add that a decision point was coming soon.

Mark Trabbold

Mentioned Amptech as another Chester County incubator that subsidizes space and seeks to commercialize university developed intellectual property, to take it to the next level and sell it.

David Sciocchetti

Noted the emphasis on Contract Research Organizations (CRO) in the VISTA 2025 strategy and suggested that more information was needed on this issue.

Keith Goldan

Noted that there were at least two types of CRO – pre-clinical and clinical.

Terence Farrell

Thanked all for participating and adjourned the meeting.