

Economic Development Taskforce
Oconee County Chamber of Commerce Office
September 17, 2019 – 9:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mark Saxon
Mark Thomas
Janet Jones
Brian Brodrick
Tim Burgess
Rick Waller
Tammy Gilland
Brad Tucker
Lisa Douglas
Sharon Maxey

OTHERS PRESENT:

Craig Lesser
Lee Becker
Michael Prochaska
Christine Tucker
Justin Kirouac
John Daniell
Courtney Bernardi

Craig Lesser, Pendleton Group, began the meeting by outlining economic development (ED) history in Georgia. He mentioned that Georgia is home to three main drivers in regard to ED: higher education, the ports and Hartsfield Jackson International Airport. Craig also mentioned that ED is a team effort. It takes collaboration to work effectively.

Craig shared that there are two main elements to ED, new business recruitment and business retention.

Craig outlined the four parts of a successful ED plan: leadership, strategy, community development and marketing. He then discussed several Oconee specific statistics regarding education, income, employment, etc.

Craig then opened the floor to the taskforce members who were able to share what they thought were Oconee's strengths, weaknesses and/or a vision for the future. Each participant had a chance to speak. Some of the topics brought up were: growth on 316; managing growth; architecturally appealing development; proximity to UGA; infrastructure improvements/needs; work, play, live environment; density – what is acceptable?; housing; local and regional collaboration; scale/balance; focus on entrepreneurs; business retention; workforce pipeline; connectivity; targeted industry sectors – what makes sense?; agricultural preservation; quality of life; identity/vision.

After discussion, Craig tasked the group to prepare for the next meeting by thinking of what types of business/industry sectors would fit in Oconee.

The meeting was adjourned.

Minutes submitted by:

Courtney Bernardi, President, Oconee Chamber of Commerce