

HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION
January 16, 2018
6:00 PM

Board Members Present: J. Harry Lange, Susan Andrews, Martha Chewing, Becky Langston, Jim Woods. Staff Present: Randy Dowling, County Manager; Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Lange called the meeting to order and said the purpose was to have discussion regarding the Valley Partnership Joint Development Authority (VPJDA). He said that in attendance were Colin Martin (President & CEO of Harris County Chamber of Commerce), Meghan Duke (Economic Development Director of West Point and soon-to-be President of the VPJDA), Brian Anderson (President & CEO of Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce), Brian Sillitto (Executive Vice President of Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce) and Gary Jones (Executive Vice President of Government and Military Affairs)

DISCUSSION

Brian Anderson, Brian Sillitto, and Gary Jones appeared before the Board to review what the VPJDA means, what it does for Harris County, and how the County benefits from being a member of the VPJDA.

Information regarding the Greater Columbus Region, which encompasses Chattahoochee, Harris, Marion and Muscogee counties in Georgia and Russell County in Alabama, was distributed. Mr. Anderson said that he was not happy with the communication over the last few years between the County and the VPJDA and he wants the VPJDA to do a better job in that regard. Mr. Sillitto reviewed the information handout and responded to various questions and comments from the Board. Discussion included the need for infrastructure availability on potential properties; mega-sites of 250+ acres; the high cost to move dirt; the potential assistance for new or existing business expansions; the lack of a regional state manager; links to and from the VPJDA and County websites; that public private partnerships get more mileage than stand-alone ventures; that a better job of understanding strategic planning is needed; guidance and assistance are available for the Development Authority; that designating a primary Point of Contact or two needs to be answered before moving forward, whether it is the Board of Commissioners, the Chamber of Commerce, the Development Authority, the County Manager, the West Point Development Authority, or the West Point City Manager. Mr. Jones reviewed the information regarding the military efforts to include regional economic impact, strategic plan, and implementation areas.

Chairman Lange thanked Mr. Anderson, Mr. Sillitto, and Mr. Jones for their time and discussion, and said that if the Board wants to meet again, contact will be made.

ADJOURNMENT