



Serving Boone, DeKalb, and Ogle Counties

**Minutes of meeting of
Community and Economic Development (CED) Advisory Subcommittee for Unit 2
May 5, 2025, at 5:15 pm – Virtual format**

Agenda

1. Call to Order, Roll Call
2. Review and approval of minutes from Jul 30, 2024 meeting
3. Items for discussion:
 - A. Review of the current activities of CED in our 3-county area.
 - B. Input on Community and Economy elements of Extension Strategic Planning process
4. Save the Date: Annual Extension Council Meeting: Monday, September 29, 2025, 6 pm-8 pm, location in Ogle County to be determined.
5. Adjourn

Minutes

Present: Gina Caronna, Heather Wick, Sherrie Taylor, Mike Delany.

Absent: Luis Gonzalez, Dan Dietrich

1. Meeting called to order at 5:16 pm, CST. Sherrie Taylor and Heather Wick were present at that time.
2. The first order of business was to review and approve the minutes from the previous meeting but, as there was not yet a quorum present, review was tabled until the next meeting.
3. Delany had provided the Council members the previous Friday with the portions of the Extension strategic plan's priority items and related action steps under the topics of Community and Economy (See Attachment A to the Minutes). Initially, Delany spent a few minutes describing the strategic-planning process and where Extension currently finds itself in that process.

As Delany noted the need for more international elements in the strategic plan, Heather asked him to review some of the international possibilities. He noted new mini-grants from campus for international events. Heather will raise this with ESAC.

Gina Caronna joined the meeting at about 5:23 pm. The gathered Council members then proceeded to explore possible answers to the question, "do these action steps seem



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appropriate, given what we know about CED activities in the BDO region, and do we any see any gaps or omissions?”

Heather Wick commented that, as she reviewed the action items, she did not see anything in the Economy section related to growth or providing expertise to small businesses in support of those businesses. Her question was, what role might Extension play in providing such support?

Gina Caronna followed by observing that, in her work, clean-energy jobs pursuant to CEJA is a big focus. However, there is a huge gap in capacity among the enterprises with which her organization, Workforce Connection, deals, with respect to understanding accounting principles as they apply to more complex financial structures that include grant funding. She sees a tremendous need for educational programming designed to build the capacity of these grant recipients, including procurement policies, finance and compliance awareness, and board policies. She feels there's a real deficit on the market currently of accounting assistance and certainly specifically in support of these kinds of organizations.

Discussion turned to the Community section of the action items, which included reference to the need to curate programs related to development of civic engagement, leadership and volunteerism. Heather noted that she did not feel there was much opportunity in this regard in existence for youth, except for 4-H itself. She did not have the sense that these capabilities were being sufficiently developed in the schools. Gina noted that, for many in the general population, they don't have the privilege that we Council members may have and are simply too occupied with the daily task of earning a living to have extra time to focus on volunteerism or other types of civic engagement. Gina did also note, however, that her work on judging the “My Hometown Is Cool” projects showed her that this program was doing exactly that work of building youth capacity in civic engagement, leadership and volunteerism.

4. As we reached the one-hour mark of the meeting, Gina inadvertently dropped off when she lost the signal. Delany, Sherrie and Heather continued briefly to talk about dates for the next meeting. Delany proposed something in late July and Heather suggested that perhaps we could make it an in-person meeting. They agreed that Delany would send out a Doodle poll to determine a date. Possible locations included Double-O Grill, at 5555 Clark St, Monroe Center, IL 61052.

5. Delany also reminded all of the upcoming Advisory Council annual meeting, to be held this year on September 29, in a location to be determined. Heather Wick expressed her regret that she might not be able to attend again this year. Delany noted that, even though Sherrie, Gina and Heather are all reaching the end of their tenure on the Advisory Council in August, they will still be very welcome at this dinner event.

5. The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:28 PM.



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Attachment A to Minutes

Community

1. Program Inventory and Reach
 - a. Complete a program review of learning opportunities for youth, families, volunteers, and community organizations. Identify key characteristics through outcomes of these learning opportunities to move towards holistic community engagement.
 - b. Catalog existing Extension civic engagement programs (statewide and unit) by comprehensively and systematically characterizing these curricula.
 - c. Catalog existing Extension volunteerism programs (statewide and unit) by comprehensively and systematically characterizing these curricula.
 - d. Catalog existing Extension leadership programs (statewide and unit) by comprehensively and systematically characterizing these curricula.
 - e. Develop a review process to go through identified program catalogs to look for gaps and strengths. Also, ensure the process includes identifying programs that have had success with diverse audiences.
 - f. Review research and peer-reviewed publications to underpin revisions to cataloged programs, along with new program development to fill gaps.
 - g. Update and revise cataloged educational and training programs to promote civic engagement, leadership, and volunteering. Identify programs that should be archived or reprioritized and which should be scaled/expanded.
2. Continued Evaluation and Assessment
 - a. Evaluate redundancies in civic engagement, volunteerism, and leadership programming to enhance collaboration internally for systems, programs, and policies.
 - b. Identify internal & external stakeholders to engage with feedback loops to inform program review and development, as well as policies.
 - c. Identify what the feedback loops will look like to inform programs and policies.
 - d. Engage internal and external stakeholders in feedback loops/mechanisms to inform decisions related to learning opportunities and policies.



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3. Provide Resources

- a. Provide resources for local and statewide environmental scans and futuristic planning to assist in healthy and holistic engagement for youth, families, volunteers, and community organizations.
- b. Create and distribute a final portfolio of targeted programs in the areas of civic engagement, volunteerism, and leadership for staff to reference and use to guide local work. Within the portfolio, identify a set of featured programs within each area (civic engagement, volunteerism, and leadership) that are adaptable and impactful. Make curriculum and materials (including evaluation tools) for featured programs accessible to staff via virtual distribution methods (like Box or Teams)
- c. Provide in-person or virtual training to staff on featured programs within the program portfolio via Zoom, and in-person events like the Extension Annual Conference.

4. Program Delivery

- a. Deliver enhanced and expanded featured programs (from the identified portfolio) across the state that support community leadership, civic engagement, and volunteerism.

5. Extension Volunteer Groups

- a. Assess Existing Extension Volunteer Tracking systems are in place (particularly to track volunteer training/development, and impact and outcomes) to ensure Extension volunteers are getting skills to impact their communities beyond their Extension work.
- b. Look for opportunities to standardize Extension volunteer training and impact tracking across the system.
- c. Review the created portfolio of Extension leadership, volunteerism, and civic engagement programs to identify programs that would be beneficial to and successful with existing Extension volunteer corps.
- d. Create accessible resources to enhance tracking and educational opportunities for learning for Extension volunteers.
- e. Develop an evaluation system to ensure training for volunteers is building skills they can use outside of their volunteer work with Extension.



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Economy

1. Research and Analysis
 - a. Conduct environmental scans, gap analyses, and existing Extension program scans to direct future-focused educational programs.
 - b. Develop guidelines for what efforts support workforce development and financial capability.
 - c. Identify new opportunities for programming.
2. Curricula Development
 - a. Identify, revise, and update existing programs that meet (or can meet) the criteria for a workforce development program and support the findings from environmental scans, gap analyses, and existing Extension program scans.
 - b. Identify, revise, and update existing programs that advance financial capability.
 - c. Support entrepreneurship of youth and adult audiences through skill building and training in business planning, marketing, and personnel development.
 - d. Develop/purchase new curricula to support findings of environmental scans.
3. Delivery Methods, Resources, and Technologies
 - a. Update and improve educational tools and platforms to facilitate learning, credentialing, and skills matching.
 - b. Build capacity among staff to facilitate financial wellness and workforce development education.
 - c. Develop partnerships and relationships with internal and external entities to support and further financial capability and workforce development efforts.
 - d. Curate and share information, training, and resources related to skills and employment pathways.
 - e. Curate and share information, training, and resources related to federal small business program grants for rural and urban start-ups.
4. Access
 - a. Work with other priority groups (technology and discovery, partnerships) to ensure digital access across the state.
 - b. Ensure digital and language access for diverse audiences.