

Business Plan Team for Center for Community Agriculture (CCA)

Agriculture Commission AD HOC

November 21, 2013- 10:00 to 1:00

Session FIVE

Attending: Linda Stuhlman; Marianne Halpin; Peter Dean

Session FOUR minutes /notes were approved.

AD HOC updated home research activity.

Market Research. Several CT processing kitchens were contacted. The purpose was a fact-finding plan to understand competition and viability of processing kitchen business in each given area. While a few listed were no longer functioning, good information from two kitchen owners was obtained. Agenda items such as: cost for rental; difficulty finding rental clients; licensing issues; bureaucracy in the building process; scheduling and managing was helpful discussion. AD HOC reviewed these findings.

Web sweeps: AD HOC is doing on-going research on the web to locate kitchens throughout the country and doing comparisons. A front page copy of web sites is copied for the B/Plan book. Several processing kitchen websites offer much information that helps CCA planning especially regarding Business models.

Field Trips: Ad HOC will be attending Franklyn kitchen and processing center on Dec. 4, 2013. AD HOC will drive together to Greenville, MA. Dec. 9th, AD HOC will visit Palmeri's kitchen in NH and will meet with Diane Hirsh from Food Safety, UCONN. Dec.11th, the AD HOC will visit with Pauline Lourd, owner of White Gate Farm in Old Lyme. Diane will tour the processing kitchen and learn about her organic farm business.

The following agencies were called regarding regulations and licensing issues:

Public Health Food Protection Program, Hartford. Linda spoke with Rhona Wisneiwsky, 860-509-8169. A cordial and helpful discussion prevailed regarding duties and responsibilities at this stage of development and what to expect in the future. A copy of regulations will be inserted into the B/Plan. AD HOC was referred to **Chatham Health** which will have jurisdiction over the project. Also referred was the **Department of Consumer Protection**, 860 -713-6161 or 7237, ct.gov.dcp. Contact person, Virginia (), discussed the responsibility differences between wholesale, retail, and farmer in regards to the kitchen.

The DCP is an integral part of the kitchen planning and this was stressed throughout the conversation. Also reviewed was licensing procedures, equipment needs, storage needs for each client, rental and kitchen manager responsibility. The inspector would inspect each client user. Virginia recommended the architect should be much updated on this department requirements and that all plans can be reviewed

by DCP. If reviewed prior to building, many problems will be alleviated. AD HOC will bring this to the attention of Peter Simmons.

AD HOC reviewed the Business Plan Attributes and will add to the list on-going.

Peter Dean talked with the Ray Board and relayed information about possible participation in the CCA. This dialog is on-going.

Marianne discussed concern regarding farm businesses in East Haddam and how these businesses could benefit from CCA and not be viewed as competition. It was agreed that the CCA must not compete, but collaborate under the East Haddam umbrella. Also in question was the American Legion Hall and periodic rental of their kitchen.

The **MISSION STATEMENT**: Each AD HOC member wrote a mission statement based on the work from previous sessions. They compared their statements and worked arduously to combine succinct information into a short paragraph. Much word study prevailed as AD HOC agreed that care must be given to such an important paragraph. AD HOC will review the draft and work on a short, catchy phrase to be used as a marketing tool for CCA.

The AD HOC spent several minutes discussing the need for **tight communication** between other CCA development members and that the B/Plan must have up to date info from the Selectman office. No one wants to “re-invent the wheel” or spend time on issues that others are working on simultaneously. Likewise, AD HOC is learning important info that will benefit other planners. It was agreed to discuss this issue at the upcoming Agriculture Commission meeting to come to agreement on how to keep the progress from all sides current.

Upcoming events: Massaro Farm will be scheduled for January following the holidays; AD HOC will not meet Thanksgiving week; Risk Management will be discussed at the next meeting; everyone should keep a record of time toward development of CCA for B/Plan. Linda will call Diane Hirsh to discuss other kitchen business failures in CT.

AD HOC decided to continue the weekly meeting(s) past 11:30am, as needed, and as schedules allow.

Attached is the **Special Attributes of (CCA) Business** based on Joe Bonelli’s B/Plan outline. Readers are asked to send additions to succor@snet.net.

Submitted by: Linda Stuhlman

Special Attributes of Business

(Please add to this list and send additions to succor@snet.net)

Why was this business started?

To provide incubator agriculture which includes a commercial processing kitchen and support farming facilities? To create jobs/business through Agriculture.

Other reasons:

No commercial kitchen rentable in region and lacking in CT

Client is able to process, package, and distribute from one location under State Regulations.

Allowing the individual to increase income and turn their idea into a new business experience.

To increase venue and availability as personal businesses grow—spin outs.

Availability of resources.

By-pass multiple hardships.

What is special about the business or products?

To assist farmers during start-up phase.

To create a one stop farming experience to those in need.

Why should the customer be excited?

A new, young farmer has ability to grow because of the support of the CCA facility.

Existing farmers and grow in various directions.

Excellent soil for farming available.

Good location for regional clients.

Property for farming is available for rental.

It's An opportunity to learn/practice Organics.

Part of a team experience, not working alone-has support.

Part of a Ground Floor Opportunity.

It's Learning and growing experience.

New business venture doesn't get caught in the weeds with necessary Regulations.

Each client has hands on guidance if needed.

Water testing is done regularly which saves the client expense.

Why should the reader of this plan be excited?

(Hint: You want the reader excited if you are trying to get something from them such as a loan)

Reader sees they could have an input in such a great idea.

There is a need determined by Market Analysis.

Emotional attachment to specific offerings the facility provides or the overall project itself.

The plan connects the reader to the overall project.

The reader (financial participants) can see the project is support of many and there is a vested interest in the planning.

Care has been taken to provide a thorough business plan covering all pertinent aspects.

The plan demonstrates the planners are committed to the project and are putting their time and ---energy toward its success.

The plan has vision and the vision is obvious through the details provided in the plan. The planners did their homework.

The planners did marketing research, problem solving, and performed a large parameter of study.

The planners investigated why other kitchens/agri-business failed.

The long range plan demonstrates the CCA will be strong in the future and is not a whim.

Who are your customers?

Schools

Home Economics

Vo-Ag

Vocation Technical wing

Young Farmer

Scouts

Families/individuals

Cooking Classes

Scheduled cooking events

Farm to table Dinners

Rental to business such as Hill Top Barbeque

Home Baker – to retail market

(Marianne will bring a list from Magazine)

Where are they located?

Are they single visit or repeat?