

January 17, 2019



REGIONAL
BUSINESS
COUNCIL

Steve Stenger
County Executive
St. Louis County
41 South Central
9th Floor
Clayton, Missouri 63105

County Executive Stenger,

I have been a member of the Saint Louis Economic Development Partnership since its inception and in the succeeding years have committed numerous volunteer hours to this Partnership. Upon careful reflection of my time and commitments, I have decided not accept a renewal of my term on the Partnership Board.

My service on the Partnership Board was preceded by service on the St. Louis County Economic Council. I accepted the Economic Council appointment based solely on my desire to serve and help the region grow economically. After several years on that board it became increasingly clear that a single economic development entity, encompassing city and county, would best ensure a unified voice and better able us to compete in an increasingly competitive national and international economic development environment. When first asked by County Executive Dooley and former President of the St. Louis County Economic Council Denny Coleman if I would serve on the newly formed St. Louis Economic Partnership, I consented without the slightest hesitation because I believed then as I believe now that a unified voice is the best strategy for St. Louis to increase business opportunities thereby enhancing job growth. During those early days, I spent a considerable amount of time with Denny Coleman and Rodney Crim on how best to structure this new entity. Since that time many things have changed and it is perhaps time to relook at the organization to determine how best the Partnership can function going forward and how it should interact with the separate County Boards that are also charged with economic development.

I will share the following recommendations with my fellow Board members:

1. Mr. Crim has indicated he would like to do a top to bottom review of the staffing, positions and compensation of the Partnership staff. It might be advisable to give him the time to do that. Mr. Crim is an experienced economic development professional who has served with distinction.

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2. The County Council and the County Executive need to clarify for the board to whom they are responsible and how to best have staff and board members communicate with them. Good communication needs to be established and a structure needs to be in place so that happens.
3. A thorough review of the “auxiliary boards” should occur. They should be reviewed to assure there is appropriate oversight. Consideration should be given as how to distinguish strictly County only functions from the work of the Partnership. Otis Williams, Executive Director of the St. Louis Development Corp would be an excellent resource on this as he oversees these functions in the City.
4. The County needs to decide who appoints board members in the future and how best to recruit talented individuals to these roles.
5. The Mayor of the City of St. Louis needs to be consulted and have input into the future role of the Partnership, Partnership functions and communication vehicles.
6. The Board should consider a stronger committee structure.
7. The Partnership should develop a strong working relationship with other economic entities including those privately funded. Economic development is a team sport and close working relationships need to be established with clear lines of responsibility.

I am the CEO of the Regional Business Council and in that capacity, I find myself involved in a myriad of important community issues and projects, all of which have to be addressed in order to move the region forward. I would like to dedicate my time to those issues. In a volunteer capacity, I serve on the Executive Committee of United Way. There will soon be a new President and I would like to spend my volunteer time working with the United Way to continually find the resources to assist the neediest in our community.

I have enjoyed my time as a Board member and have tremendous respect for my fellow board members and their selfless work to help this region grow. If I can be helpful in any way during this time of evaluation, I stand willing to do so. I feel confident these issues will be addressed and we can work together for a stronger City and County economic development effort. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathy Osborn', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kathy Osborn
President and CEO
The Regional Business Council

c: Lyda Krewson, Mayor, City of St. Louis
Rodney Crim, Interim CEO, St. Louis Economic Development Partnership
Dr. Sam L. Page, Chair, St. Louis County Council
Saint Louis Economic Development Partnership Board of Directors