

**Creative Corridor Speaker Program**  
**Meeting Minutes: Chiang Mai Creative City Dev. Committee**  
**2pm-4:15pm, 30 September 2010**  
**Office of the President, Chiang Mai University**

Attachments: List of Participants

**1 Introduction:**

Asst. Prof. Nat Vorayos, CMU

**2. Introduction of Speaker**

Ms. Susan Stevenson, US Consul General Chiang Mai

**3. Presentation:**

Ben Ramirez, International Program Manager, City of Austin, Texas. Economic Growth & Redevelopment Services Office, City of Austin, Texas ([www.WorldWideAustin.org](http://www.WorldWideAustin.org))

**Austin, TX attributes**

Primary employers: University of Texas and State Government. IT focus and manufacturing began 50 years ago (Tracor Corp. in the 1950s.), Texas Instruments, IBM). In 1980s, technology sector began to take off (MCC, Sematech). Main drivers were personal efforts driving collaboration between public, university, and private. Ground up or top down?

**Local attributes:** Workforce, Infrastructure, University administration interest, Community networks, and Government commitment. Of which:

- **Workforce:** Well trained for job opportunities in new and existing firms. Does school system support entrepreneurship? Mindset: Does community support and respect entrepreneurship? Austin attracts talent from across US and internationally. 43% of those over 25 has college degree or higher (5<sup>th</sup> in US). Computer and electronic product manufacturing, IT and telecoms economic drivers. Number of organizations target youth workforce development Campus2Careers organization that matches young college graduates with small/medium enterprises.
- **Infrastructure:** Physical infrastructure supports new and growing business firms. Austin Technology Incubator at UT, Austin: focuses on bioscience, clean energy, IT, and wireless industries.
- **University administration interests:** Offer instruction in entrepreneurship, mid-career education, specialized training that fits needs of firms.
- **Community networks:** Named "Best City for the Next Decade" in part due to variety of creative attractions including live music scene, "funky" businesses, and others. Establish business-membership organizations in targeted industries. Nurture young/new firms. "Make a scene" in order to facilitate cross-community collaboration breaking down barriers. Annual conference (Relationship and Information Series for Entrepreneurs (RISE)) on small businesses / growing entrepreneurs.
- **Government commitment:** Government does not interfere with business start-ups. Procurement policies apply equally across long-established and new firms. Affordable business support services. Emerging technology funds and other localized incentives for targeted industries. Produces interactive business web directory. Assist companies navigate permit process.

### **Potential Next Steps**

- Examine strengths/weaknesses
- Develop long-term plan
- Nurture creativity through apprenticeships/internships for academic credit with small businesses
- Social media marketing
- Do not fear failure
- Determine entity to take lead
- Establish achievable goals

### **4. Asst. Prof. Dr. Nat, CMU discusses CNX Creative City.**

Initially looking to IT industry opportunities but may extend to food and handicrafts. Will build on CNX existing strengths. Currently submitting funding proposals.

### **5. Discussion / Question and Answer**

**Smith, FTI:** Q. What are key government regulations that would enable a city to become a "Creative City?" A. Engage/meet with businesses often.

**Christopher, Manao Software Company Limited** Q. What steps should I be taking as the director of a small IT business in Chiang Mai A. Businesses should coordinate to present requests to government.

**Peter, CNX Wood:** Q. CNX at the beginning of process, not well developed like Austin. How to start? A. Austin originally a sleepy college town. Ridiculed for looking to IT. Start small with small successes. From small successes, can attract national government and other funding. Q. But how does CNX bring a major business to CNX as Austin did with IBM, etc. early on? Peter continues by pointing out that if CNX can attract, through a variety of SMEs, the equivalent employment of recruiting one large corporation, maybe that would be a good start and then could attract larger corporation. Unlikely to initially attract large corporations.

**Wiboon, IBM:** Q. What were the keys to success? A. Tap retirees as angel investors for new industries here in CNX

**Martin, TDCI, CMU and ICT Group JFCCT Representative:** Q. Austin linked venture capital and businesses but CNX does not have that opportunity. Lacking that, what linkages can CNX make with financial community to educate on risk? A. Austin actually lacks resources of venture capital resources of CA or NY. Austin writes to CA and NY and sends representatives to talk with them. Relies heavily on local "angel" investors. Uses UT to locate/tap wealthy alumni.

**Simon, Intropica Co. Ltd.:** Q. Was it top down or bottom up? A. Both, but must have something very strong from ground up. Majority of drivers should come from bottom/ground up.

**Smith, FTI:** Q. Advertising, marketing? A. City has limited budget. Very little spent on marketing. Austin has taken advantage of UT (2<sup>nd</sup> largest university system in US). Very few tourist attractions to draw outsiders. Have built from ground up including festivals including Austin City Limits.

**Martin, TDCI, CMU and ICT Group JFCCT Representative:** Q. You say no marketing but would appear to be some alignment of story about Austin across variety of sources if

outsiders access web, whether through government, university, or private. A. Yes. Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce has website for potential investors.

**Tul, small IT business, Chiang Mai:** Q. Where is budget to support CNX CC? If Government, he is concerned will be too little, too late. A. **Martin, TDCI, CMU:** Want to do many small things to create success to then attract bigger things. **Asst. Prof. Dr. Nat, CMU:** Some of small successes already there. Need to promote and extend them. UT played a significant role in funding projects in Austin. In contrast, CNX universities have limited funding resources. **Dr. Nopasit, Dean, College of Arts, Media and Technology, CMU:** CMU focusing on placing new students in good jobs in CNX. Providing space and licensing opportunities for software businesses from BKK to come to CNX to employ recent graduates. CNX has 100,000 university students out of 300,000 residents.

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Annop, Chiang Mai University International College:** CNX CC Project should also focus on tapping Governor's office.

**Aracha, Chiang Mai Community group:** Q. Projects at community level? A. Hike and bike trail. Aggressive biking plan for city. Assist music community. Q. CNX has many cultural treasures. Last time had conference here, participants not impressed with meeting room but impressed with treasures of city. Need to make residents proud of its city first, then focus on tourists and investors. A. It is a matter of resources.

### **Interesting weblinks**

<http://www.campus2careers.com/Partners.aspx>  
<http://www-01.ibm.com/employment/us/extremeblue/location/austin.html>  
<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/redevelopment/>  
<http://www.imagineaustin.net/>  
[www.WorldWideAustin.org](http://www.WorldWideAustin.org)

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