Members Attending: Fred Bell, Jeff Beckelman, Tom Davis, Cristina Gregorio, Terry Green, Bill Kroonen, Toni Lawrence, Mike Napoli, Dick Oliphant, Jerry Patton, Don Perry, Mary Roche, Kate Spates, Carolyn Stark, Bill Powers, Chauncey Veatch, Lisa Vossler Smith, Steve Weiss, Aurora Wilson

Guest speaker: Daniel Foster, The Community Foundation

Minutes for LYCEUM meeting on February 4, 2010

1. Quality of Life:

Carolyn Stark opened the meeting by asking members to offer thoughts on the key elements and fundamental building blocks that are important to having a quality of place. Jeff Beckelman stated that from the tourism perspective, he would like to make sure that we maintain the recreational and relaxation atmosphere that attract tourist. Dick Oliphant said that we need the right planning and development especially because there will be about one million by 2030. Tom Davis said that CVAG has done a great job on the transportation planning. Bill Kroonen said that he would like to have a discussion on whether we feel the quality of life is better today than it was 40 years ago. Kate Spates and Toni Lawrence agreed that the quality of life was better. Daniel Foster asked whether the group plans to break down their audience in terms of old timers and new arrivals when they address the quality of life issue.

Carolyn welcomed Daniel Foster, president and CEO of the Community Foundation. The Community Foundation provided over 4 million dollars of grants to the Riverside community last year. Daniel stated that they are trying to adopt what the national research suggests which is to be a proactive foundation. He said that the more people develop a collaborative region and build leadership and have champions then the more funding that the community can obtain. Daniel stated that the Coachella Valley is extremely important to their growth and future; however, there are problems that need to be addressed in this region that seems to lack collaboration. However, he is excited to see that there is an economic blueprint in place now. He said that the San Joaquin Valley, similar in characteristics and size, started working together and has managed to make positive changes.

He stated that non profits are a huge potential partner to the economic plan. There needs to be a 3 way partnership in which the public sector, private and nonprofit sector are all involved. The question then becomes how to get large foundations to invest in a community. The average per capita grants in Riverside County is $27 and the state average is $119 and San Francisco is $653. It’s obvious that the presence of external funding to this region is not developed to its full potential. Foundations really love to invest in collaborative community which helps to build networks and then helps groups identify leaders. When there is a lack of this then all you have are individual leaders.
Having a well thought out strategic approach is also important. Daniel stated that snowbirds in this area get a lot more attention than yearlong residents and that’s not always good thing. Don Perry stated that there are a lot of charities that are formed around the concept of the snowbirds. He said that there are too many non-profits for the valley’s size. Daniel said that nonprofits, especially the largest foundations are not getting together in this area and that this needs to happen. Fred stated that it is really tough to get shared funding in the housing area.

Carolyn said there is fundamental base that we need to build such as health, education, jobs, public, safety, housing prior to focusing on the Arts. Carolyn stated that she’s impressed with how collaborative the valley is and that other areas of the county could benefit from some of the things that are happening in this part of the region. Daniel asked if there is collaboration and networking happening. Aurora Wilson shared that there are regional collaborations occurring in the following areas: Transportation, Air quality, Energy partnership, Coachella Valley Health Collaboration, Regional health Shelter, Workforce Housing, Regional Animal Campus, Regional Access Foundation and Desert Foundation.

Kate asked whether enough is being done to advertise these projects. Daniel said that the group needs to find out what’s going on with the non-profit, how they are collaborating, what they are doing, who’s driving leadership to build. Aurora said that getting collaboration with non-profits is tough as many of them are going after the same dollar. Mary Roche stated that there are a lot of partnerships but that maybe we need to do a better job at getting the word out. She said that the UCR Lyceum is the first collaboration that brings peoples from every leadership aspect. Daniel said that he understands now that government sector is collaborating and that there is a real problem with the non-profits who are extremely important to the Economic Blueprint. Daniel stated that it would be good to engage the foundations and start helping them fundraise externally. There is money out there that can help the non-profit who have limited resources. Bill asked Daniel to talk about how the current partnerships can be publicized. Daniel stated that he uses the media and writes a column to talk about what is going on in the nonprofit area. Writing as a Community Expert for the media works well for both the nonprofit and the newspaper. Don agreed that raising community awareness about what’s going on here is very important.

Terry Green said that the ability to work together in the valley is the reason the Irvine Foundation funded Career Pathways to Success. It is also for this reason that the College Access Foundation has committed 1 million dollars to Pathways to Success over the next ten years. He said that Pathways to Success now has 14 non-profit partners. He agreed that the nonprofits are not coordinated and that he’s not sure many of them have good capacity. Terry stated that it’s been difficult to get foundations to collaborate. Don Perry stated that those who choose to participate should receive an incentive such as media coverage.
Carolyn stated that she’s been working with Bev Greer Partner in Building a nonprofit resource incubator here at UCR Palm Desert that can support non profits with resources such as grant writers and leadership workshops. Daniel stated that the RAP and Desert Foundation are doing some of this work too and that it might be a good idea to partner with them. Lisa Vossler Smith stated that part of our strength in the valley is that we have a small community where we can get the leaders on the phone and get the discussion makers. Carolyn stated that as we move forward our ability to collaborate will be a key component to being successful and it will be important to continue to nurture our ability to collaborate as we grow.