

Memo.

From DDD

To PHH

Re: Attempt to start a CHOICES followup Conference for key Connecticut businessmen

Meeting 8/27 at Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce. In attendance were:

David Smith, President, Greater N.H. Chamber
William Hawkins, Pres., Greater B'port Chamber
Tom Mayers, Community Relations Manager, Olin Corp.,
Stamford.
Justin Horan, Pres., Greater Waterbury Chamber
Bob Simpson, VP, Conn. Business and Industry Assoc.
and David Doniger

I asked them to co-host with us a meeting for the top businessmen in the western portion of the state plus Greater Hartford. The session, probably over a lunch or dinner, would aim at the fifty to seventy-five people whose corporate and private decisions cast major shadows in Connecticut. We would brief them on the results of CHOICES and on RPA's positions on development issues. We would recount the September 21 Conference on Strategies experience.

Their first question was: What are you really after? Their money?

I replied that we wanted to draw top businessmen into our plans for a continuing force to pursue the CHOICES and RPA goals with regard to development, tax changes, social spending, etc. If an organization grew out of this, we would be looking to these businessmen for financial support.

Dave Smith was particularly concerned. Like many people in Conn. he reacted: Why do we need a new organization? Why can't the Chambers get together on these issues? We've been effective in the past.

I replied that while this was true and welcome, the Chambers realized that they can't speak for the minorities, for example, or for educators. Nor can those groups speak for ~~the~~ the Chambers, even when they agree. I said that I thought a new group, even if only a loose committee, was needed to widen the base and the view of other organizations.

All were somewhat itchy about setting up a super organization that might tend to supplant some of their functions.

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Tom Mayers pointed out the growth in "corporate responsibility" but he acknowledged that business was still far from totally disinterested.

I added that another reason for deciding to hold this meeting now and scheduling it for early ~~late~~ October was my availability to coordinate it. They said that if and when they decided to do it, coordination by staff would be no problem.

They all agreed on an interested, open-minded wait-and-see attitude. Horan said this outright: I have to see what happens on September 21 and then see how far I want to try to commit my Chamber. After all, they pay my salary.

Hawkins told me he would be there when we needed him, after the 21st.

It should be pointed out that all the Chambers have lent their names to the Conference on the 21st and have done huge mailings.

So the next step is to ~~convene~~ convene these people again after September 21. If all goes well at the Conference, I think they will agree to host this meeting.

The cost of the meeting, of course, can be defrayed through a charge for it. If these fat-cats agree to come, 10 or 12 dollars won't deter them.

Regional Plan Association - Conn. Office

A Luncheon Conference on Strategies for Businessmen

Possible program (no speakers even asked yet):

Welcome and introduction - John P. Keith, President, Regional Plan Association

CITIES AND SUBURBS: STRONG CENTERS AND COMMUNITIES or SPREAD CITY?

RPA slide show

POLICIES FOR STRENGTHENING CENTERS - LeRoy Jones, New Haven Dev. Administrator

Friendly debate: WHERE SHALL WE LOCATE? - President of GT&E vs. President of GE