Members Present: Chris McIlraney, Jenny McCoy, Lisa Bleakley, Peggy White, Michael Solomon, Kevin Byrd, Ramona Chapman, Douglas Jackson, and Elijah Sharp.

Introductions: Jackson started the meeting at 9:10 am. Each meeting participant introduced themselves and shared Agriculture/Agritourism things they noticed on their drive to the meeting.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis: Jackson led the group through a two-part exercise. First, meeting participants were asked to conduct a SWOT analysis on the Agriculture Industry. Second, meeting participants were asked to conduct a SWOT analysis on the Management Team. Here are some of the results:

1. SWOT analysis on the Agriculture Industry in the NRV:
   a. Strengths:
      i. Transportation Routes
      ii. Natural Beauty – open land
      iii. Awareness
      iv. Community Support
      v. Strong Agriculture Heritage
      vi. Oldest Agriculture Fair in Virginia
      vii. Traditional infrastructure (farmers have equipment, land, etc.)
      viii. Farm to table
   b. Weaknesses:
      i. Funding
      ii. Extension – lack of local awareness of services
      iii. Lack of day-trips to prolong visitor’s stay
      iv. Marketing of Agriculture
      v. Increased costs combined with increased regulations
      vi. Potential liability of farmers
      vii. Next generation of farmers
      viii. Local food – incentives for restaurants to use
      ix. Niche – specialist misunderstanding
      x. Lack of market access
   c. Opportunities:
      i. School/Agriculture programs
      ii. Legislation opportunity to source food locally
      iii. Community events educational opportunities
      iv. Institutions desire to have local food
      v. More involvement
      vi. Food security need
      vii. International visitors
      viii. National movements (buy/eat local, training, 100-mile dinners, etc.)
      ix. Local movements (So Fresh, local food, etc.)
d. Threats:
   i. Next generation farmers
   ii. Surrounding regional exports
   iii. Local politics
   iv. Time
   v. Legislation
   vi. Development – retaining farm land
   vii. High beef prices
   viii. Fear of change
   ix. Widespread illness
   x. Need more small growers to support local food programs

2. SWOT analysis on the Management Team:
   a. Strengths:
      i. PDC leadership
      ii. Local knowledge – access to information and resources
      iii. Well represented by local government DMOs
      iv. Inclusive
      v. Mutual benefit
      vi. Local government partnership
      vii. Understood importance
      viii. Creative
      ix. Doesn’t set boundaries
      x. Service to farmers
   b. Weaknesses:
      i. Political bosses
      ii. Need a farmer champion – mainstream, respected
      iii. Role definition
      iv. Need process understanding
      v. Need specific goals
      vi. Need team vs. individual strategies
      vii. Time constraints
      viii. Nice (too?)
      ix. Floyd County not at the table
   c. Opportunities:
      i. Engage private sector – potential transition post project completion
      ii. More outreach
      iii. University outreach/connection
      iv. Use strengths in strategies
      v. Engage farmers/producers
      vi. Implement new programs – farmers, schools, etc.
      vii. Current political will
      viii. Individual enthusiasm
      ix. To build on strengthening relationships
      x. Marketing
   d. Threats:
      i. Resistance of farmers
      ii. Competing with existing businesses
      iii. Communication overload – engaging team
      iv. Internal focus leads to external confusion
      v. Losing energy/interest
      vi. C.A.V.E. people (citizens against virtually everything)
      vii. Threat of scale/attention
      viii. Changing methods
Progress Report: Sharp provided a brief overview of how the PDC aligned deliverables between DHCD, AFID, and the Steering Committee by developing a revised project budget and timeline. Major points included:

- Project deliverables now align with project budget
- A 1-page report card was provided to each meeting participant
- The budget concept, included in the AFID Interim Report, was reviewed
- To date, Giles County has paid all eligible expenses for the previous year worth of work
- No reimbursement requests have been submitted to either grantor
- Invoices have been sent to each participating local government for the cash match commitment on the project

In addition to discussing the work complete thus far, Sharp asked for the meeting participants to offer initial thoughts on the Strategic Plan Table of Contents. Meeting participants contributed the following suggestions:

- Providing specific goals for agriculture and agritourism that are identified by the management team needs to be complete
- Identifying specific strategies for Agriculture and Agritourism separately would be valuable
- Remove traditional ag and new ag from the chapter titles
- Create a consistent overview, examples, analysis, strategies, and estimates framework for beef, forestry, value-added food, agritourism, grapes and wines, and education chapters

Positioning Questions: Jackson led the group through the following questions:

1. Who are we?
   - Response: Three local governments exploring partnership opportunities that could grow the agriculture economy.
2. Who do we serve?
   - Response: 1) Agriculture producers, 2) agritourism operators, 3) tourists
3. What is our service?
   - Response: 1) aggregation, 2) awareness (opportunities and culture), 3) creating an agriculture voice in local government, 4) advocacy, 5) education, 6) regional structure/backbone
4. What do we want to achieve?
   - Response: 1) help sustain and grow the agriculture economy (farming) through awareness, marketing, web presence, central info resource, and sharing a common identity
5. What’s in it for the region and/or our targets?
   - Response: 1) preservation and support of the industry, 2) encouraging growth, 3) increase productivity, 4) new partnerships, 5) access to information, 6) industry/business creation
6. Who do they contact?
   - Response: TBD

Next Steps:

- Management Team Meeting – focus on Strategic Plan completion

Meeting Adjournment: 11:55 am