



Northeast Michigan

Regional Prosperity Initiative

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REGION 3: RPI COLLABORATIVE MEETING MINUTES

**Wednesday, May 23, 2018
University Center – Gaylord**

Attending: Dan Beltz, Amy Berglund, Cameron Brunet-Koch, Erika Comerford, Lindsey Gardner, Donna LaCourt, Audra Leininger, Diane Love-Suvada, Luann Mabarak, Sara McCauley, Lisa McComb, Dana McGrew, Janie McNabb, Marc Miller, Keith Moore, Marisue Moreau, Lydia Murray, Erich Podjaske, Hannah Sanderson, Steve Schnell

Call to Order at 12:15pm

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

There were no minutes provided.

Financial Review

Steve Schnell provided the financial report which is a different format than prior reports. There was one change to make regarding the amount for mini-grants – both marketing and community & economic development mini-grants total \$30,000 for each category with a total of \$60,000 for both.

Presentations - Regional meetings to grow the Outdoor Recreation Sector in NE Michigan – Marc Miller, DNR Deputy Director of Regional Initiatives

Marc Miller introduced a project and asked for assistance from the RPI members in creating a series of listening sessions. The DNR is interested in connecting entrepreneurs with economic opportunities that involve the State's natural resources. Marc also announced a new initiative: the establishment of an Outdoor Recreation Advisory Council, providing information to the Recreation Commission. The Council is made up of outdoor industry business leaders. The Council will provide input on law, policy, and support needed for the outdoor industry and create jobs.

Marc would like input from this RPI group on who could participate in listening sessions in our region that would help inform this new Council, although, the Council members would not necessarily attend. Marc would like to start these listening sessions in June if possible.

Marc mentioned a website in SEMCOG's area called Park Finder that is very similar to Up North Trails but has a park layer added in, but for a smaller area than Up North Trails. It was decided that an attempt would be made to schedule in the coming couple months and limit the input to a couple hours and on an evening during the week if enough business people could be located. It was suggested to focus on winter-oriented businesses.

Talent Update

MCAN survey update was provided by Sara McCauley. The survey respondents mostly seem to already be considering college. The number of respondents was lower than expected but the results should still provide some good insight into the decision making process of choosing between options post-high school.

Community/Economic Development Updates

- A. Youth Entrepreneurship program – Steve Schnell and Sara McCauley updated the group on the meeting they had with the Career and Educational Advisory Committee (CEAC) earlier on the same day. They discussed the new Immersive Student Entrepreneurship Grant program that will provide up to \$5000 to a school to further develop an entrepreneurship program that is sustainable and innovative, using local entrepreneurial resources as much as possible. Emphasis on awards will be on sustainable programs and use of local existing resources. This will be released soon and have a mid-July deadline as proposed.
- B. Grayling Place Plan update – Steve Schnell will be meeting with the City of Grayling in June to finalize details of a meeting with stakeholders to determine a short list of actionable items to keep building Grayling as a successful Trail Town.
- C. Broadband update – Steve Schnell updated the group on the vertical asset inventory, which will be done in about one year, with work being done by NEMCOG currently to locate towers and tall structures with the next steps to identify other broadband assets near those vertical assets. The database will be publicly available those who want to do a wireless broadband provider.
- D. Mini-grant update – These are under review with a competitive group of applications. The RPI board agreed that the mini-grant selection committee can make the final awards, which will expedite the awarding of grant funds.
- E. Regional Ag/Local Foods – Taste the Local Difference will have a magazine release party in early June. The Grayling Farm Market is looking at a spring 2019 opening with some changes to the plans including a total rebuild on the main building.

Updates

- Janie McNabb updated the group on the talent efforts including – videos are still being worked on, talent activities include a large career exploration event in one large location for students to get real experienced based, hands-on, interactive activities to learn about various industries and jobs. Similar to MiCareerQuest (www.micareerquest.org). They need help and are looking for volunteers to be on the committee. Lisa suggested using Ellison Place in Gaylord.
- MEDC will be doing a toolbox training in the northeast region in August.
- NLEA interns introduced themselves and discussed their work to put together a development guide for the area.
- NCMC's Cameron Koch announced her retirement and David Findley will be replacing her.
- Amy Berglund will replace Lydia Murray at the MEDC and will be moving to northern lower Michigan from the UP very soon.
- Donna LaCourt announced MDARD's lumber grading certification classes and rural development fund grant announcement will be earlier this year. The website is: https://www.michigan.gov/mdard/0,4610,7-125-1570_51684-423804--,00.html
- Lindsay Gardner, MSU Educator, introduced herself.
- Lisa McComb mentioned work on a Vanderbilt trailhead and new businesses in downtown, the opening of NAI coming from Mexico with 25-30 employees, then 100 more later.
- Luan Mabarak mentioned new construction at the University Center.
- Marisue Moreau mentioned an increase in job fair attendance with many jobs filled that same day.
- Dana McGrew mentioned a new building trades program that will use neighboring property to build homes on 5 acre lots.

Public Comments – there were none.

Adjournment at 2:45pm