



Northeast Michigan

Regional Prosperity Initiative

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REGION 3: RPI COLLABORATIVE

Wednesday, June 26, 2019

**Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary
500 W. Fletcher, Alpena, Michigan 49707**

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 10:30am.

A quorum was established.

Minutes of the May meeting were reviewed. Motion Sanderson, seconded by McComb to approve the minutes. Motion carried.

Financial Report

Schnell provided a brief financial report. Motion Stepanski, seconded Mabarak to accept the financial report. Motion carried.

Presentation/Discussion

Regional Entrepreneurial Network – Discussion of business support throughout the region.

Hannah Sanderson highlighted efforts of the Northern Lakes Economic Alliance (NLEA). Services they provide include a development resources toolkit, website with entrepreneurial resources, administration of a revolving loan fund, Northern Michigan pitch night with business support, one-on-one business support.

Dave Emmel of the SBDC said the region needs to build a culture of entrep., providing assistance as part of a collaborative. SBDC is funded by federal, state, and regional partners. This region's SBDC is the only one that doesn't have a central location. New ventures, small startups, technology companies, small business (<500 employees, revenues < \$10 million; 98% of businesses in NE Michigan meet this definition). Confidential 1-on-1 counseling to for-profit companies. They provide import/export support services. They assist with transition of business ownership. They work with a lot of main street businesses. Unique to the NE regional pitch nights is that they make sure that every business that pitch, also launch their business with a team of support. There is an increase in female ownership of businesses. Transition support is a big challenge in the area – trying to find someone to be the future owner.

Diane Love-Suvada discussed the work of the Sawmill in Roscommon. They have assisted over 50 business owners. They provide a business pitch, the Springboard Summit. They realized this is a very large region and marketing their support services can be a challenge. She's noticed the motivation to be an entrepreneur comes from not wanting to work for anyone else. She's working with youth and realizing there aren't the types of jobs that they want available to them right now. She's going to do a youth boot camp this summer.

Lisa McComb, Otsego County Economic Alliance; 57% of businesses in her area are entrepreneurs and are stage 2. Her business card is at the clerk's office at the county, available when people file a DBA. They partner with SBDC, tourism bureau, DDA, county. Their pitch night evolved from her Club 445, an informal social connection group for business people who can share resources and questions with each other. They share resources and partner in each other's business growth. Co-working space is a need in the area for conference rooms, getting out of the house for home-based businesses, and social connections. She noticed that many people who are interested in doing a small business don't know how to do a DBA, how to do zoning permits, state licensing, etc. They provide that service.

Steve Schnell and Sara McCauley highlighted the Entrepreneurial Network effort of the regional Collaborative Development Council (CDC). This Network provides information about all the resource in the region to potential entrepreneurs and provide a 24/7 resource and more opportunities for people to connect to the various entrepreneurial resources in the region. This is meant to be a force multiplier. The website will grow as more people add information. We hope to gather more metrics from the site to see what kind of resources are people searching for to be able to provide better information. The EN website progress will be included in the discussion at each RPI and CDC meeting to ensure it's moving forward.

Updates

Community Development Updates – Steve Schnell mentioned that there was a Land Bank workshop flyer was included in the packets. This was a success and there were many ideas on how this could be used to help with the housing challenge most communities face. Marisue Moreau mentioned that there are efforts to coordinate administrative boards of both NEMCOG and NE Michigan Consortium (Michigan Works!) and sharing resources including staffing and vehicles and office supplies.

Broadband – currently working on the vertical asset inventory and will very soon be 95% done. This is an inventory of towers that might be able to be used for broadband deployment.

Talent – Marisue Moreau discussed the success of the MiCareerQuest. She praised her staff at the professional organization of the event. There were very few suggestions received on how to do it better. Exhibitors will be easier to recruit next year. They will do it again next year in Onaway and will not do it near a holiday weekend.

Public Comment – none

Meeting was adjourned at 12:15pm