



Northeast Michigan

Regional Prosperity Initiative

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RPI Collaborative Meeting Minutes
November 17, 2016
University Center
Gaylord, MI

Call to Order: Doug Baum called the meeting to order at 10:05am.

Members Present: Doug Baum, Lisa McComb, Tom Stevenson, Niki Chamberlain, Lydia Murray, Erich Podjaske, Cameron Brunet-Koch, Mandi Chasey. Via GOTO meeting: Donna LaCourt, Rich Wolin, and Rosalie Myers.

Staff: Diane Rekowski, Dave Glenn

Introductions: All attendees introduced themselves.

Roll Call: Done by sign in sheet

Approval of Past Minutes and Financials: Erich P. motioned to approve minutes of October 19, 2016/Second by Niki C. All ayes, 0 opposed, motion carried. Diane R. reviewed financials, pretty much all funds expended. Lydia M. motioned to approve financials through October 31, 2016/Second by LuAnn M. All ayes, 0 opposed, motion carried.

RPI/CDC Discussion:

Dave G. gave an update on the regional input meetings held in Grayling (KCC), Comins, Alpena, West Branch and Cheboygan. Attendance varied from 2-35. Some common themes that came up were: need for better communication and collaboration among local and regional agencies; need for available and affordable daycare (needed in order to have a reliable workforce); need for affordable housing; healthcare; region-wide broadband/internet available; leadership training; improve school exposure to trades/professions and make dual enrollment more affordable and available region-wide.

Dave said that he is recommending a different approach to the 10 year plan. Rather than a long detailed and as many outcomes, he recommends focusing on a few core, fundamental issues that will directly support community and economic development in the region; leaving the details to the annual/yearly plan as they may change, or be completed, thus they should be addressed by the entire RPI Collaborative each year, ensuring RPI adoption and buy-in. The plan, both 10 year and each annual plan should be reviewed at the local level – commissioners, townships, school boards, service clubs, etc.- each year to make them aware of the plan, the expected short/long term outcomes.

Focus areas for 10 year plan: 1) Develop training plan for board members, on roles, importance of communication/collaboration to achieve local and regional efforts. 2) Explore improving availability of quality, affordable daycare; perhaps looking at collaborative day care for smaller businesses or communities where it isn't available from companies. Explore training/certificate programs via

Community Colleges. 3) Housing, especially in areas where large numbers of employees will be hired. 4) Focus on Talent and Workforce development. Work with schools to broaden exposure to career paths and opportunities. 5) Continue to build infrastructure, mainly broadband/internet access as well as cell coverage in region. 6) Managed tourism – develop strategies for each sub corridor that matches resources and opportunities. 7) Promote and encourage young professional group(s).

Discussion: Doug B. – need more collaboration and communication Diane mentioned there is software to help collaborate. Doug B. - Midland gave a great presentation to ARAUCO, he asked to have a copy and was told no. Lisa M. - in addition to tourism, promote NE Lower as a place for jobs and a place to live (low cost) and housing. Trend is for younger folks to move back to start/raise families. Donna L. asked how many people need daycare? Diane said that the new RBEG grant would be perfect for doing a feasibility study on this. Donna mentioned that MDARD will have funds available soon for this also. Lisa M. – use MEDC to help develop onsite daycare. Rosalie – need to develop or review zoning issues for daycare. Cameron B.K. – they have a certificate program already in place. Mandi C. - the NE Lower Industrial Group meets and will be discussing employee retention in January.

Dave G. suggested that as the plan is developed, that Region 3 should collaborate with other RPI regions/COG regions to advocate for common issues and more actively discuss with Lansing and others to raise the awareness of needs, obstacles. Lydia M. - there is a collaborative group – Chamber Alliance in Kentwood that does some of this. Doug B. suggested that legislators be invited to the RPI meeting in the future. Donna L.-the U.P. folks started doing this, started small and now include all of the UP and regularly discuss issues with Lansing, agencies and the Governor's office – in fact the Governor mentioned this advocacy at the UP State Fair.

Housing was discussed and agreed that more is needed. Discussion about obstacles to renting (landlord selectively renting, keeping rent high-excluding some from being able to rent). Lisa M. - lo mod housing needed, did their own TMA in Gaylord. Diane R. - USDA has low interest loans for first time young professionals

RPI Year 4 Plan – Diane R. – met with smaller CDC group to develop plan for year 4. Discussion...1) Collaborative support 2) Talent 3) Placemaking -Trailtown program continue to connect smaller communities to trail town. Doug B.-there are plans for no actions for this. Diane R.-focus on 1-2 TrailTown communities in 2017. Diane R.-the 2016 mini grants were supposed to be used for TrailTown support but were diverted to other uses. In 2017, need to support trail signage. 4) Tourism – offer mini grant again, support going to regional trade shows to promote region, develop and expand websites for trails, Bluewater Trail – wayfinding signs for emergencies – important to develop this signage for emergency personnel to find people. 5) Business Development – mini grants 6) Broadband – Cheboygan and Alpena to do yet.

Motion to approve timeline for RPI Year 4 – Niki C Moved/Lydia Second. Approved with all ayes, 0 opposed.

RPI Year 4 budget – Motion to approve RPI Year 4 Budget by Donna L. /Second by Lisa M. Approved by all ayes and 0 opposed. Discussion – Diane R. said that most likely won't get full amount (\$250,000 requested). Need to Prioritize: 1) Talent, 2) Infrastructure, 3) Business, 4) Tourism, 5) Placemaking

30 Second Updates: Lisa M. - ALDI store open in Gaylord, Fairfield Hotel to open early winter. Tom S. – Switched to new program, updated. Focus more on Ag/Farming use of broadband – looking at farms

more as business rather than as residential. Mandi C. - Millage failed, EDC cut, cuts to 911, 4H. Their masterplan is done. Niki C.-Spring career fairs – one in Mackinaw City. Last Career Fairs in the office, now changing to Job Fair. There were a lot of career fairs in October. Diane R. - Retention visits – about 50 done, will add a scheduler in 2017 to aid in managing appointments. Lydia M.- Steve Arwood is still MEDC CEO. Roger Curtis will be the new TED director. Erich P. - 60 people were at PRT issue in Sept – had 20 people sign up for the 10 issues. Snow removal millage passed. Rosalie M. - Applying for IBT funding, new manufacturer (actually an expanding biz, has been working in garage for past years). Donna L. - Value added grant abstracts due today (Nov 19).

Next Meeting – Moved Dec 7 CDC meeting to December 21 to combine with RPI. CDC will meet earlier, 11 am, Lunch with CDC and RPI, RPI meeting at 1pm. (Note – December 7 CDC meeting is canceled – moved to December 21, 2016.)

Meeting adjourned at 11:50 AM.