Eastern U.P. Regional Planning & Development Commission
Board Meeting
Wednesday, November 11, 2010
5:00 p.m. Trout Lake Township Hall, Trout Lake, MI

Members Present:
Jim Hendricks, SSM                Dean Reid, Mackinac        Jill Maki, Luce County
Bill Ferguson, Chippewa            Billie Jo Hermanson, Luce
Eric Becks, LSSU,                 Bev Holmes, Newberry
Greg Zimmerman, Chippewa          Barb Lisiecki, SSM

Staff:
Jeff Hagan
Ellen Benoit
Nathan Fazer

CALL TO ORDER
Meeting called to order at 5:15 p.m, by Vice Chairwoman Hermanson taking the lead role in absence of D. Timmer.

AGENDA APPROVAL
Vice Chairwoman Hermanson asked if anyone would like to make any changes to the agenda. There were none. A motion to approve the agenda was made by D. Reid and supported by B. Ferguson. It was approved unanimously.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING
Vice Chairwoman Hermanson asked if there was any discussion on the Minutes from the July 27, 2010 EUPRPDC Board meeting that was sent along in the packet. Being no additions or deletions to the minutes, a motion was made by Commissioner Maki to approve the minutes as presented, and was supported by Commissioner Reid. The motion was unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS -
Luce Co: Commissioner Maki reported they are working on Phase II of the Luce County Industrial Park and planning for the community Christmas dinner and tree lighting celebration that will be held at the Legion Hall.

Mackinac Co: Commissioner Reid reported on the County’s research and potential partnership with Northern Lakes Economic Alliance to start an EDC. The County is still trying to figure out the needs as there are no industrial parks, but is also checking into Brownfield re-development on blighted or unused properties in the County.

Newly appointed, Eric Becks, Director of the SmartZone project though LSSU reported that if all goes well there will be a spring ground breaking to start construction of the Breeder Building.
Commissioner Ferguson reported on the success of the annual blueberry festival and recent haunted trail the community volunteers put together for the kids.

Commissioner Hendricks introduced Barb Lisiecki as his replacement upon his retirement in February and discussed a collaborative tourism promotional campaign they are working on with the Great Waters group. A small grant was received for promotion of the port cities in the area. Collaborations included SSM Chamber of Commerce, SSM Convention and Tourism Bureau, St. Ignace DDA, DeTour Reef Lighthouse Society. Angela Nebel is working with the Great Waters on promotional publications. He also talked about the EDA grant the City received towards the Smart Zone and the progress made to date.

Commissioner Holmes talked about the brownfield property the Village is working at getting ownership of. A recreation plan is being written in anticipation of applying for the MNRTF grant program for a synthetic ice arena for the property. Long term plans include a community civic center with a pavilion facility and trailhead for this property. The Village has heard back on 5 of the 6 grants that has been applied for and is looking into CDBG grant monies and refinancing of the RD loan as the interest rates are down and would save quite a bit in interest money.

OLD BUSINESS - PROGRAM REPORTS

Vice Chairwoman Hermanson asked if everyone had a chance to review the program update report that was included in the mailing of the Board packet and were there any questions and or comments?

Staff reports included updates on the Economic Development Program, Transportation Program, Heritage Route Program, Asset Management Program, Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs Program, GIS Inventory for Chippewa County, Community Development Block Grant Technical Assistance Program, Dafter and Bay Mills Township Master Plans, Whitefish Township and Luce County Wildfire Protection Plans and Chippewa County Communication Asset inventory project, Chippewa County 5 Year update of the Natural Hazards Plan, Portage Township’s CDBG-Infrastructure Capacity Enhancement (ICE) grant application, Marquette Township Master Plan and application for Coastal Zone Management grant.

E. Benoit asked the Commissioners to approve a resolution for EUPRP&DC’s application to the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs Services grant program. This program would be a renewal at the same rate as last year with $4,400 in administration funds that need to be matched with $4,400 in cash and in-kind. The amount to re-grant remains the same at $13,600. The resolution also authorizes the Executive Director to sign the necessary documents. E. Becks made a motion to approve the Resolution of Support to Apply for Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs Services grant and authorize Jeff Hagan to sign the necessary documents. Commissioner Reid supported the motion. It passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORT -

E. Benoit explained the current financial status. A financial packet was mailed with the Board Packet so it could be reviewed. This packet included financial reports on the status of the Agency as of September 30, 2010. One report showed the expenses for the fiscal year from October 1, 2009-September 30, 2010. The second report broke each program down.
individually from start date to September 30. A projected budget for fiscal year 2010-11 was included. Ms. Benoit explained that the auditor has started the audit process and will probably have the report ready for the next meeting.

A motion to approve the financial report as given was made by Commissioner Hendricks, and supported by Commissioner Maki. The motion was unanimously approved.

**DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

**Authorized Signatories**

The Commission is running into a continual problem processing payroll twice a month, in that, there is only one local signatory, the other two do not live either in the Sault or within reasonable driving distance. The current authorized signers are the Executive Director, Jim Hendricks, Dawn Nelson and Dick Timmer. The latter three are all coming off the board effective January 1, 2011 and it is vitally important that the Board approve replacements now so that business can be conducted after January 1, 2011. After careful discussion with our auditor, the Director offered the following resolution for consideration by the Board to add the following individuals as authorized signatories on the account: Jeff Holt, Sault Tribe, Don McLean, Chippewa County, Leisa Mansfield, Sault Area Chamber and Nathan Fazer, Eastern U.P. Regional Planning & Development Commission. We are also checking into the possibility of direct deposit for payroll.

A motion to approve the resolution authorizing new signatories was made by Commissioner Reid and seconded by Commissioner Becks. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried unanimously.

**2011 BUDGET:**

The budget for fiscal year 2011 is taking shape, we are still awaiting word on the Heritage Route funding which would represent a significant hit to the budget (13-15% reduction), we have some projects lined up but it would not cover the loss of that one single program; it appears that the funding impasse is centered around the amount of money MDOT takes off the top to administer the Heritage Routes program state-wide. We are hopeful that this situation might be resolved soon but I do not have definitive word on that as of this date. The rest of our core programs remain intact (EDA, TRAN PLAN, ASSET, MCA). The CDBG program is an annual unknown, and could go either way in December. The potential loss of a program coupled with a 20% increase in the Blue Cross/Blue Shield benefit plan is causing us to evaluate all expenditures and potential ways that we can save money, however, the increases in the benefits, coupled with the possibly decrease in revenues, does put the organization in a precarious position. We have been informed by our BC/BS representative that all of the older PPO plans, such as the one that we currently have, are being phased out, and essentially we will be forced out as next year we can expect a 50% increase if we do not switch over to one of their new plan offerings, which could result in significant cost-savings. The Director is exploring several options such as joining another group and other ways that we can still offer a top quality plan without sacrificing long-term sustainability as an organization. We have several other multi-year and new projects we will be working on through the next year, including:

- Marquette Township Master Plan Update
- Bay Mills Township Master Plan Update
- Continuation of the Whitefish Twp. and Luce County Wildfire Protection Plans
- Portage Township ICE Grant Administration
- Potential: 2007 and 2009 Scenic Byways grants (EUP would receive $7,800 for administration)
- Hazard Mitigation Grant Application (June 2011)
- Portage Township Zoning Ordinance (January/Spring 2011) – MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT 1st
- BMIC Superior Shores Trail Inventory (January – May 2011)
- GIS projects for townships – address maps, recreation plan maps, etc.
- CZM Proposal (January 2011) - $46,000 if funded

**Board Appointments:**

Dr. Tony McLain contacted me regarding a representative from LSSU, and I am happy to formally introduce Eric Becks from the University. I would also like to formally introduce Barb Lisiecki from the City of SSM Planning & Development Department, Barb will be our representative after Jim Hendricks’ retirement at the end of December, so welcome to both of you, and we look forward to having you on board!

With regard to the other two spots, one being the City of St. Ignace and the other being workforce development, I did not get a response to the correspondence I sent out inviting appointments. I will make another round of outreach for workforce development after talking to Gwen Worley.

**EDA EDD**

EDA recently released an FFO regarding the new Investment Approval Process, which will see quarterly funding rounds and a more synchronized and efficient grant approval process. For EDA these are drastic changes as compared to the way they have been doing business for much of their existence.

The recently completed Revised CEDS Revised 5 Year Plan has been nominated for a national award through the University Economic Development Association at their Annual Meeting in Reno Nevada next month. See the attached award announcement and press release from MSU.

We will begin the process of performing the CEDS annual update or progress report after the first of the year, all units of government, economic development organizations and stakeholder organizations will receive a packet on the “call for projects”.

After the upcoming elections are completed we will begin updating the 2nd Edition of the EUP Directory which was first published last year, this directory contains contact information for all units of government in the EUP, as well as various other organizations such as transportation, economic development, chambers of commerce, colleges and universities, and legislators, just to name a few! Please help us by responding to requests for updated information.

**Regional Growth Strategy Development –**

The 3rd draft of the Regional Growth Strategy was completed during September with significant assistance from LPI. As a capstone to this process, a conference was held in Lansing on October 7, wherein the Governor and economic development leaders discussed the project and
the next steps moving forward. Once the final version is completed, we will make it available for download from our website. The 14 SPDR’s all received recognition from the Governor, DELEG, and MEDC on their efforts to develop these strategies in a VERY short amount of time.

Marquette Township Wind Turbine Ordinance –

We recently wrapped up the technical assistance we had been providing to the Marquette Township Planning Commission and Board on the zoning ordinance amendment for Wind Energy Systems siting in the Township. A public hearing was conducted on September 27th, 2010 and comments received and reviewed from the County Planning Commission, the Township Board held a special meeting on October 11, 2010 to adopt the proposed Amendment. We are now assisting the Township clerk with the necessary adoption notices, which should be completed by the end of the month.

Transportation

MDOT conducted their annual Rural Elected Officials meeting yesterday in Kinross, followed by a public hearing on the Rural Long-Term Transportation Plan; EUP annually provides assistance to MDOT in sending out notices for these events in the Region.

We are also in discussions with the MDOT Newberry TSC regarding the development of a road projects clearinghouse of sorts, either a website or some other medium by which residents and visitors of the region alike can find out about road projects that are going on whether on the state trunkline system or the county system. The original request on this came from Tim McKee at Chippewa County OES regarding people calling about road closures and the length of the closures etc. The City of SSM has a website up and running this year which outlines specific projects occurring within the City and contact information for contractors on various jobs. We have discussed this as a staff and feel putting together a webpage off our website, would be a fairly easy thing to do and provide updated information on what projects are going on where and who to contact.

Scenic Byways Projects

Several NSB projects to discuss, unfortunately at this time the Commission is in a holding pattern on all Heritage Route related activities due to a funding impasse between the FHWA and MDOT. It appears that our SPR funding is in place to continue to provide staff support and technical assistance to the Heritage Routes in our region, the MDOT funding to administer the program is being held up. We are essentially stuck in the middle here until this situation is resolved. We are optimistic, but at the same time, we need to proceed very conservatively in this regard as the budget will certainly take a severe hit, if for some reason this funding does not come through as anticipated.

That being said, we are still involved in three active FHWA Scenic Byway projects, two on behalf of the Tahquamenon Scenic Heritage Route Committee (2007 and 2009) and one with the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society. On the 2007 grant, we ran into issues on the matching funds required for the project, FHWA requires a 20% local match, as we have moved through this process during the past couple of years, all of them match (or so we thought) was converted to “cash” to be provided by Northern Initiatives, however, we learned in August that their “cash” could not be used on the site amenities portion of this grant proposal, which will see the upgrade and improvement of two sites along the route, one in Luce County at the Hamilton
Lake Nature Area and another in Chippewa County at the Eckerman Trout Rearing Pond. The cash match needed for this portion of the grant was $3,409. I reached out to various local organizations and governmental units to obtain this relatively small amount of match needed to secure the $74,597 grant from FHWA. I am happy to report that through the Luce/West Mackinac Conservation District, Newberry Area Tourism Association and Chippewa Township, we have successfully raised 100% of the local matching funds, and once the documentation has been received on the commitments from each entity we will provide that to MDOT and FHWA and await obligation of the funding.

The 2009 grant also has match issues related to Northern Initiatives, and we are working with MDOT, NI and FHWA to accurately depict their contributions to the project, and likewise with 2007, are hopeful to have a project authorization in place during this fiscal year. As a result of the conference call we facilitated in early August, the GLSHS project has overcome the hurdle on the Section 106 Environmental Review, as described in your packets, by removing any mention of the design or construction of the museum wings. Correspondence to request a change in the scope of work has been submitted to both MDOT and FHWA. The GLSHS is awaiting word on the request, in hopes that once that is approved the RFP can be modified and that process can begin for this project.

MAP BOARD ELECTION

At the MAP Annual Conference in Detroit in late October Executive Director Hagan was elected to the MAP Board to represent the Upper Peninsula, from varying accounts it appears there may have been only one person to EVER represent the UP in the history of MAP, possibly Jim Hendricks, the Director is excited about the opportunity this provides to get more education and training programs in our Region and the timeliness given that MAP is discussing the Regional Planning Act legislation which directly impacts our organization and every State Planning and Development Region in Michigan.

LEGISLATION OF NOTE:

Regional Planning Act – the Michigan Association of Planning’s law committee is working on a re-write of the Regional Planning Act, the Michigan Association of Regions (MAR) is being told that we will receive a draft to comment on during November or December. This is important for us to keep tabs on particularly in this environment of dwindling resources and the apparent rise of “unfunded mandates”.

HB 5858 H-1 – proposed by Representative Lahti in response to Senator McManus removing all University capital improvement projects from the Senate’s appropriations bill. Rep. Lahti emailed me last week and said he is hopeful that his bill will pass before the end of the legislative year.

HB 6242 – New Economy Commission creation – has passed out of the house and to the Senate, however, word on the street is that it will not move there, passed pretty much along party lines. MAR is prepared to take up the bill and do some tweaking, working with the Senate, to require inclusion on the commission of at least one representative of the State Planning & Development Regions in Michigan. The Commission is essentially a placeholder for the New Economy trainings that were held across the State for the development of the Regional Growth Strategies, this would allow for some consistency if there is significant change over in the legislature, the duties of the commission would include the development of a
statewide strategy for enhancing, encouraging and growing the new economy in Michigan and to promote through public and private means responsive public policies, innovative private sector practices, and creative nonprofit initiatives. The Commission is also charged with developing a strategic vision for Michigan that includes economic development, international issues, outdoor recreation, land use, transit and green initiatives. The Commission would be located within the Michigan Strategic Fund.

Steve Syrja is the new regional manager of the Upper Peninsula for Debbie Stabenow, many of you probably worked with Sheri Davie in the past, we retired in late August. Steve can be reached at 906-228-8756.

**2011 Board Meeting Dates:**

Meeting dates for FY 2011 were set at January 26 (Noon); April 27 (5 PM); July 27 (5 PM); and October 26 (Noon).

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Maki with support from Commissioner Ferguson. The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM.