

Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning & Development Commission
Board Meeting
March 1, 2006
6:30 P.M. Maple Ridge Restaurant, Eckerman

Commissioners present: Rodney Richards, Earl Kay, Jim Feraro, Rich Conboy, Bernard LaJoie, Bill Ferguson

Staff: John Campbell, Ellen Benoit, Jeff Hagan

Ex-Officio: Michelle Walk, MSU Extension – Mackinac County

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Richards at 6:45 p.m.

Commissioner Farero made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 9, 2005 EUPRPDC meeting, supported by Commissioner Kay, the motion passed unanimously.

Financial Report – E. Benoit

Motion by Commissioner Kay, seconded by Commissioner LaJoie to accept the financial report as given. Motion passed unanimously.

Hazard Mitigation Plans – E.Benoit

Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs Minigrant Program – E.Benoit

Transportation Updates:

Tahquamenon Scenic Heritage Route – Jeff Hagan

Met with committee members from the Chippewa Twp. portion of the route in early December to discuss the history of the area and potential projects, proceeded to meet with a contingent from the Newberry/Luce County portion of the extension, to obtain the same type of information.

Committee meetings were held in November and January, scheduled meeting on the 15th of March to obtain project information from committee members. Work continues on the plan update, signage plan is being prepared for input into the plan. Signage inventory, scenic inventory and maps need to be completed. Tentative timeline is to complete the draft by June '06, submit to MDOT for review in July/August.

Asset Management Program Update – Jeff Hagan

Held an internet reporting training in the Sault on the 15th of February to discuss the new format that local entities (Act 51's) will be using to submit projects and completed project information. Program will continue for the 2006 FY. Ratings will probably begin in late summer to early fall. City of Sault Ste. Marie has expressed some interest in performing PASER on all city streets, dependent upon funding availability.

Bike Mapping (Non-Motorized Facility Mapping Project) – Jeff Hagan/Ellen Benoit

Easterday Ave./ 3 Mile Road I-75 Overpasses – Jeff Hagan/John Campbell

URS, the consultant on the project conducted two meetings in the region, one in December with the selection committee to review the proposed work plan, the 2nd was of the stakeholders within the project area, held January 26th at the Ojibway in the Sault. Completed traffic/ped counts last week (20-21) at various intersections in the project area. Apparently this data will be put into their computer modeling system, they will return in the spring (hopefully April) to perform another mechanical count using traffic counters, will probably need to field personnel to do actual pedestrian/non-motorized counts.

Economic Development Report – Jeff Hagan

CEDS Annual Update 2004 – 05

The CEDS Annual Update was approved by EDA in January and copies are currently being mailed to all constituents in the region (and board members), the report is also available on our website at www.eup-planning.org. Work will begin on the 2005 Annual Update this spring.

Other Economic Development Activities

Several potential projects are still in the hopper, including: DeTour Village EDC Business Park (recent \$99,000 USDA Grant/Loan), Luce County EDC industrial park expansion. One project has a tentative approval of funding at the Chippewa county EDC, through the CDBG program. Not at liberty to discuss this until formal award announcement is made, but it involves the rehab of two structures for the location of a wood products company.

Director's Report – John Campbell

Director Campbell discussed the recently presented Federal Budget and outlined programs and their anticipated funding levels for this fiscal year. It should be noted that EDA is expected to see an increase in their budget, this one year after being targeted for elimination from the budget. SACI is still out there, but it is probably another year away from making the rounds again. The

Director also discussed proposed budgets for CDBG, USDA, EPA, Homeland Security, Labor-Workforce Development, CDFI and Transportation.

Director Campbell distributed a recent press release regarding the MEDC/Charter One low-interest loan program. Under this program, a \$200 million low-interest loan program has been designed to create 5,000 jobs in Michigan during the next 5 years. Charter One Bank is working with the MEDC on the program, which offers loans at a fixed interest rate of 4.99 percent – 2.51 points below the current prime of 7.5 percent.

The Director also discussed the upcoming public input session regarding the State's Long Range Transportation Plan which will be held on March 9th in Escanaba, if anyone is interested in attending please contact us for the details.

Short discussion ensued regarding the Whitefish Township plan, and the unpaid portion of the contract. Plan has been completed and submitted to the Township. Director Campbell discussed the need to revise our current contracting methods due to the situation that arose from the Whitefish Twp. Plan.

A motion was introduced by the Director with regard to future contracts with communities, wherein they will pay 1/3 of the money up front, and then be billed every three months thereafter. The motion was made by Commissioner LaJoie and supported by Commissioner Conboy. Motion passed unanimously.

New Business

A couple of noteworthy events are coming up, MDOT Rural Safety Forum (EUPRPDC sponsored) on March 22, 2006 at Kewadin Sault; and the Planning for Prosperity Conference in Lansing at MSU on March 27th. If there are events that you know of that would be of interest to others in the region do not hesitate to email them to me, we try to keep the events section of our website as up-to-date as possible.

Motion to adjourn by Commission LaJoie, supported by Chairman Kay. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.