

Eastern U.P. Regional Planning & Development Commission
Board Meeting
Wednesday, October 28, 2009
6:00 p.m. Maple Ridge Restaurant, Eckerman, MI

Present: Richard Timmer, Mike Patrick, Dawn Nelson, Billie Jo Hermanson, Rita Lemanek, Dean Reid, Don McLean, William Ferguson, Jessie Knoll, Jill Maki, Beverly Holmes, Gregory Zimmerman, Jim Durm

Staff: Jeff Hagan, Ellen Benoit, Nathan Fazer

Meeting called to order by Chairman Nelson at 6:00 p.m.

Chairman Nelson asked if anyone would like to make any changes to the agenda. Being none, Commissioner Patrick made a motion to approve the agenda. It was supported by Commissioner Timmer and the motion passed.

Chairman Nelson asked if there was any discussion on the Minutes from the July 15, 2009 EUPRPDC Board meeting that was sent along in the packet. Being no additions or deletions to the minutes, a motion was made by Commissioner Timmer to approve the minutes as presented, and was supported by Commissioner Patrick. The motion was unanimously approved.

A few minutes were taken to make introductions as there were a few new faces as well as a guest speaker. Director Hagan then introduced Brett French from American Transmission Company, who gave a presentation on what ATC is doing in the U.P. region. Mr. French gave an overview of the Company, how it was started through legislation, the need for and development of an Energy Task force, plans and goals that they have been working on. He also gave an overview of future issues, projects and possible scenarios that the company continues to address in efforts of maintaining and upgrading the system for the service area they cover. A question and answer period followed the presentation. Mr. French gave his contact and presentation information to Director Hagan who will make it available on our web-site.

OLD BUSINESS - PROGRAM REPORTS

Chairman Nelson 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, USDA Solid Waste Recycling Grant Program, the Superior Region Non-Motorized Transportation Investment Strategy Plan, GIS Inventory for Chippewa County, Community Development Block Grant Technical Assistance Program, Pickford Township Master Plan as well as information on new programs and plans that we are beginning to work on.

N. Fazer talked to the Board about the Asset Management Program and the direction the State is taking in the program and how they would like more local units to use the RoadSoft database program to inventory and manage the transportation assets not only at the State level but also at the local level. To date, the State has only focused on federal-aid eligible paved roads. The program is a powerful database in which an inventory of the road system can be kept including surface type and condition, shoulder width, signage, and culvert information. The roads are rated each year and that information is entered into the database. Models can then be run to determine the best "mixes of fixes" – what maintenance or construction would work best and be most cost effective over an extended period of time. The information can be displayed on a map to give a visual of what is happening on the roads and would be a valuable tool to planners in determining the best options for maintaining their road system asset within their budget.

FINANCIAL REPORT -

E. Benoit explained the current financial status. Three financial reports were passed out – one showing each program’s expenses from inception to date, as some programs have different start dates and timeframes. The second report detailed the expenses for the fiscal year October 1, 2008 through September 30, 2009. The third report was a budget overview for the upcoming year October 1, 2009 through September 30, 2010.

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

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Director Hagan briefly touched on the move to the new office and thanked the Board for the support and vision which allowed the Agency to move to a more professional atmosphere with room to conduct the necessary day to day business. The move went smoothly, with only some minor issues and repercussion from CLM CAA.

Director Hagan discussed the Executive Committee’s review of the By-Laws and the area of establishing a formula for determining the local share amount. Budget requests to each for the local share this year were adjusted to reflect the formula that is in the By-Laws currently. However, there is no documentation on how this formula was developed. Research of other regions have shown there are various ways that the local share is determined based on population or SEV or combination and in the up-coming year D. Hagan would like to work with the Board in amending the By-Laws to establishing a fair assessment to each county.

Director Hagan discussed the Credit Card Policy that was sent in the packet for review. The Board discussed the Policy and suggested the credit limit be set at \$2,500 for the Director and \$1,000 for staff. Commissioner Timmer moved to pass the Credit Card Policy with those changes. Commissioner Durm supported the motion and it passed unanimously.

Director Hagan asked the Board to review a request of support for a large land conservancy project located in northern Luce County and part of Chippewa County that the DNR is seeking. Discussion of the implications of what that would mean for the local units ensued and was determined that it would not be in the best interest of the County’s or region to support this request. No action was taken.

Director Hagan brought to the attention of the Commission legislation that is proposed for the Economic Development Administration with a hand-out explaining the proposal. The proposed bill would enact a 5-year reauthorization period instead of annually and increase the funding level that has remained consistent over the past 35 years. Director Hagan requested the Commissioners to write their congressmen to support this proposal.

Also included in the meeting packet was information on new legislation proposed: Livable Communities Initiative through the HUD program. This proposal aims to implement cross-cutting regional and local planning and project development strategies that better integrate community and economic development, housing, land use and transportation needs. The legislation specifically recognizes regional councils, rural transportation planning organizations and metropolitan planning organizations as key partners in development and coordinating sustainable development initiatives on a regional basis and would provide future funding opportunities for the Agency.

Director Hagan then passed the floor to Commissioner McLean who informed the Commission of a proposal that has recently come before each of the Counties regarding broadband. There is an opportunity for federal stimulus funding to develop a fixed broadband wireless fiber redistribution network which would provide a “back-bone” for local providers to then further develop and offer hi-speed internet within the region. The project would put the region in the “ready-to-build” position giving the opportunity to better serve the communication needs. Discussion ensued regarding the potential

benefits as well as concerns. After the discussion, Commissioner Reid moved that the EUP Regional Commission Board adopt a resolution of support, recognizing that broad-band communication is needed in this area and would be beneficial to the region in many ways for individuals, as well as businesses, and future economic development. Commissioner Ferguson supported that motion and it was passed unanimously.

D. Hagan finished his report with announcing the up-coming meeting dates for the next year as follows: January 27, 2010, May 26, 2010, July 28, 2010 and October 27, 2010 with election of officers at the January meeting. Director Hagan also reminded the members of an upcoming MDOT Elected Officials meeting to be held November 4th in Kincheloe.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Nelson asked if there were any public comments at this time. There were none.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Patrick with support from Commissioner Timmer. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.