Minutes

West Michigan Prosperity Alliance Steering Committee
May 29, 2014
12:30 p.m.
Harborview Marina (Ludington, MI)

I. CALL TO ORDER:
John Weiss called the meeting to order a. Called at 12:42

Those present introduced themselves. There were 30 subcommittee members present and 24 guests present.

Members Present:
- John Weiss, Executive Director, GVMC
- Steve Bulthuis, Executive Director, Macatawa Area Coordinating Council
- Roger Safford, Region Engineer, State of Michigan, DOT
- Jim Sandy, President, Mecosta County Development Cooperation
- Deborah Groeneveld, Executive Director, MI Works! Muskegon-Oceana
- Doug Wood, Director, Orchard View Schools Adult Education
- Jacob Maas, Executive Director, Kent-Allegan Michigan Works!
- Dave Bee, Director, WMRPC
- Simone Jonaitis, Executive Director, GVSU-Center for Adult/Continuing Students
- Julie VanDyke, Director of Development, West Shore Community College
- Dan Rinsema-Sybenga, Dean, Muskegon Community College
- Rick Chapla, Vice President, The Right Place, Inc.
- Kathleen Sullivan, Facilitator, Adult Learning Partners of West Michigan
- Kevin Stotts, Talent 2025
- Paul Griffith, Executive Director, Michigan Works! West Central
- Jim Fisher, Padnos/Talent 2025
- Valarie Byrnes, Barry Co Economic Development Corp
- Kathy Maclean, Ludington/Scottville CoC/MCGA
- Ed Garner, Muskegon Area First
- Kathleen Sullivan, Adult Learning Partners of West MI
- Angie Barksdale for Bill Raymond, MI Works! Ottawa Co

Members Excused:
- Andy Johnston, VP of Government Affairs WM Chamber Coalition
- Erin Kuhn, Executive Director, WMSRDC
- Linda Brand, Executive Director, Model Com Initiative
- Fiona Hert, Dean, Grand Rapids Community College
- Bruce Adair, Lakeshore Advantage

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion by Jacob Maas, seconded by Paul Griffith approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried on a voice vote.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion by Jim Fisher, seconded by Jacob Maas, to approve the minutes of April 30, 2014. One change was the spelling of the origin of the tribe that the word Mecosta County comes from to be spelled Potawatomi. The motion carried on a voice vote.
IV. SUMMARY OF FIRST COMMUNITY CONVERSATION PRESENTATION ON PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA FROM THE FIRST COMMUNITY CONVERSATION AT THE GOVERNOR’S ECONOMIC SUMMIT

John Weiss began with a presentation of the concept of the Regional Prosperity Alliance and the history of the initiative for the benefit of the guests present. He described the required members and the make-up of the steering committee. The plan approved was to hold three large meetings over the course of the year, two of which have been held. The goal is the initiative is to come up with a regional prosperity plan that lists five projects of regional significance for a 13 county area.

V. PRESENTATION OF REGIONAL AREA

Julie Van Dyke gave a presentation of the regional Ludington area, along with Kathy Maclean from the Ludington Chamber of Commerce. She thanked the sponsors for today’s meeting including West Shore Community College, House of Flavors, the Ludington Beverage Company, Big Apple Bagel, and Mason County.

Julie and Kathy presented on the many assets of the area including natural and cultural resources. Tourism plays a large role in the local economy and there are 1,200 lodging units with a CVB budget of $525,000. Current economic development projects include an upgrade to the Pumped Storage Plant, the Lake Winds Energy Park, and investment in the Spectrum Ludington hospital. Agriculture in Mason County encompasses 450 farms and 76,446 acres of farmland. Manufacturing is also a major employer with companies such as FloraCraft, Whitehall Industries, and Occidental Chemical Corporation employing residents. There are a number of education and workforce development entities that are active in the county. Community collaboration is a major asset for the county with many entities across sectors working together on projects.

VI. PRESENTATION ON PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA FROM THE FIRST COMMUNITY CONVERSATION AT THE GOVERNOR’S ECONOMIC SUMMIT

Steve Bulthuis went over the criteria for projects to be included in the regional prosperity plan. Initially ten criteria had been identified and after discussion at that meeting those ten were winnowed down to five criteria. These have been distributed along with the project submission form that has been disseminated to the steering committee. He briefly went over the five agreed upon evaluation criteria. For the benefit of the guests, John briefly went over the process for project submission.

VII. COMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS

General Session Committee

Committee presentations began with John presenting in regards the next general session, which would be the third and final convening during the one year grant period ending September 30. John has invited the Governor, but has not confirmed his availability.
Public Committee

Rick Chapla presented briefly on the Public Communications committee. The next step will be communicating the projects selected. Also, work on a website for the RPI is underway. The Right Place is implementing this.

Alliance Committee

Ed Garner reported on Alliance Communication. This group met earlier this month and is working on rolling out Basecamp as the collaborative tool for the steering committee. Each subcommittee has a folder and projects selected will also get a folder when that takes place. Minutes and other communication will also be posted here. He noted steering committee members who have not received an invitation should notify Ottawa County MI Works. It was also noted that you would need to accept an invite for each project you are assigned to. The invites will be sent again as it appeared some had deleted their invites.

Prosperity Plan

Dave Bee presented on the development of the Prosperity Plan. There is no definition of what exactly this plan must entail so the regional planning agencies have come up with a work plan to accomplish this project. Rather than supersize a CEDS plan the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance Steering Committee has decided on a concise plan that only identifies a small number of projects. The plan must be adopted by October 1st. The work plan for this Prosperity Plan is on track with regional descriptions being developed as well as a SWOT analysis of all the steering committee members. The SWOT analysis is available for those interested. Now they are working on the goals and actions component of the Alliance plan. There is also actions for the regional that are more a recommended nature. The top five projects will be listed and will include detail about how those will be implemented. Other projects will be included in the appendix. John added that emphasis should be given to forget geographic boundaries and rather on what the region needs to do to compete globally.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS:

Dave briefly went over the prospective projects that have been, or will be, submitted. The deadline for project submission is May 31. In all likelihood evaluation of the projects submitted will begin at the next steering committee. It was suggested that some of the projects will need to be analyzed before they are brought to the group. Survey Monkey was suggested as a way for steering committee members to evaluate the projects based on the criteria. It might be nice to have a summary template of the projects to allow for an objective presentation of the projects.

Jim Fisher requested that the work timeline for the plan be submitted to the steering committee. Roger Stafford enquired as to the ability to encourage submitters to scale up ideas that are submitted to a regional level. It was agreed that this idea made sense to allow for editing. Rick Chapla added that the steering committee be given the purview to add or consolidate projects.

As Other Business, John gave an update on how the state of Michigan is consolidating at regional levels. This update is on the GVMC website and outlines the activities of each state agency. Over half of state agencies are already in alignment with the regional level.
In regards to Cooperation/Collaboration efforts, Jacob Maas made a presentation on progress related a more regional approach for Michigan Works!. In particular is the issue of one county MI Works! agencies. Discussions have been ongoing and an RFP has been released and two consultants were under consideration to undertake this work. This work has been folded into the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance Steering Committee process and the decision should be completed soon. He also presented on the STEM grant that was recently worked on and received by agencies across the region. The idea that will be funded through this using a curriculum called Engineering is Elementary, so two employees from each ISD will be trained on this curriculum.

John noted that this regional work began with the work of the West Michigan Strategic Alliance. This organization has been acquired by the GVMC and they will have all the materials that were created and be available as a resource to the region.

Ed Garner noted that Erin Kuhn was appointed as the director of WMSRDC.

IX. NEXT MEETING DATE/LOCATION

It was noted the next meeting would take place in Muskegon, but a date was not determined.

X. ADJOURMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00pm. It was noted the next meeting would take place in Muskegon, but a date was not determined.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Groeneveld