

# Keweenaw County Economic Development Committee

Keweenaw County Courthouse

Eagle River, MI, USA

Wednesday, February 6, 2019 Meeting Minutes

(approved March 6, 2019)

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Chair Todd Holmstrom, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

- Members present: Tess Ahlborn, Harvey Desnick, Todd Holmstrom, Ned Huwatschek, Peg Kauppi, Matt Kero, Joe Miller, Sam Raymond, Kass Simila
- Contributing Members: John Sturos
- Members excused: Tom Bryant
- BOC Representative: Jim Vivian
- Guests: Jeff Radcliffe (KEDA), Jean Hardy (UofM)

## 2. Approval of Agenda

*Motion* to approve the agenda by Joe Miller, second by Ned Huwatschek, with the addition of 4d. website update. All in favor, *motion carried*.

## 3. Approval of Minutes

*Motion* to approve the December 5, 2018 meeting minutes; by Harvey Desnick, second by Joe Miller. All in favor, *motion carried*.

## 4. Unfinished Business

### 4a. Priority check-in:

1. broadband development and communications
2. establish a small business revolving loan fund
3. 100 good paying jobs
4. land use issues including zoning and permanent easements
5. workforce development

#### *1. Broadband development and communications*

Tess Ahlborn and Todd Holmstrom will follow up with PFN regarding progress toward a fiber network in the county. PFN is invited to attend the March 6, 2019 EDC meeting. Also see EAN update below (item 4b).

#### *2. Establish a small business revolving loan fund*

Each *Opportunity Zone* will play an important role in the county's economic development. Information is needed for our new website to promote the current small business loan opportunities. This priority needs a new name or needs to be removed as a priority.

#### *3. 100 good paying jobs*

Updates provided as new business item 5c, see below.

#### 4. *Land use issues including zoning and permanent easements*

Joe Miller reported the group is reviewing zoning barriers and several zone items need clarification. Joe will provide an email update. Gaining permanent easements for trails throughout the county is a priority.

#### 5. *Workforce development*

Matt Kero attended a recent workshop and described the Marshall Plan for Talent, a program in which all school districts in Michigan have \$250k to spend on workforce development. Matt has contacted CCISD to discuss the CTE programs, including the “heavy-civil” focus program. He will continue to work on getting stakeholders involved to provide this program to our area.

#### 4b. EAN coordination follow-up:

Todd Holmstrom and Harvey Desnick met with NMU’s EAN again. The EAN is interested in expanding to our county but need to coordinate for back haul infrastructure and towers. The county doesn’t have the infrastructure to offer, but the state police towers can be accessed through an application process. Jeff Radcliffe will follow-up with the process details and Todd will follow-up with NMU to question their needs and fit with infrastructure currently at Mt. Horace Greeley.

#### 4c. Land swap update:

Peg Kauppi discussed the many groups working with TRG on land swap topics. Don Kauppi will present to the EDC at the March meeting. It was noted that Keweenaw County is eligible for National Land Trust Grant funding, which closes in April. We need to convince the state why this property is so critical and to possibly use Land Trust funds to get the state to purchase the land directly from TRG. It is anticipated that TRG will provide an easement for non-motorized trails, which would enhance the grant application if this coordination could be identified.

#### 4d. Website development update:

Todd Holmstrom will ask Rob Tarvis to provide an update to the EDC via email.

### **5. New business**

- a. Keweenaw Co. Economic Outlook Report: this document was provided via email. The information is a good reference going forward and may be useful in future grant applications. However, we should be cautious when using the data as our population data doesn’t include summer swings during high tourism season. Focus on trends, rather than exact numbers. Two trends that can be noted are 1) the county’s economy is growing, albeit slower growth than the state, and the state’s economy is growing slower than the nation, and 2) a decrease in population is an export of the workforce.
- b. Brockway Mountain Master Plan: The EDC is grateful to have been asked to be a part in the review process and look forward to working with Eagle Harbor Township as they finalize the master plan document.
- c. Concept Paper for Mt. Horace Greeley – MTEC SmartZone: The Michigan Tech Enterprise Corp. (MTEC) Smartzone provided a concept paper, *Technology & Research Energy Park of Keweenaw (TREK) 2019*, to the EDC for establishing a technology and research incubator at Mt. Horace Greeley. An energy component would be included for wind, solar and biomass. The MTEC SmartZone is currently working with a Finnish company to pilot a small biomass operation here. The biomass could start as a research park, allowing for the company to better understand the economics of the biomass supply and overall operational process. The EDC discussed many obstacles, including

the poor condition of the existing infrastructure at Mt. Horace Greeley. However, the county has many liabilities and needs to turn these into assets, e.g. the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge. This may require a review of the zoning ordinance. The EDC welcomes the opportunity for and encourages the MTEC SmartZone to provide further develop the concept and provide additional information.

*Motion to approve the following statement; by Harvey Desnick, second by Kass Simila. All in favor, motion carried.* Todd Holmstrom will inform the County BOC of this support.

The EDC supports the MTEC SmartZone in further developing the ideas presented in the concept paper, *Technology & Research Energy Park of Keweenaw (TREK) 2019*.

d. Workforce Housing Initiative: the housing shortage for temporary and seasonal employees is an issue in Keweenaw County. Harvey Desnick has talked with representatives of Cambridge Capital, a workforce housing developer that has a focus on development of student housing at many universities and who has been discussing options for housing at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge. A representative from Cambridge Capital would like to address the EDC or county housing authority in the spring. Harvey will invite a representative to the April or May meeting.

e. 2019 EDC meeting schedule: The EDC discussed a future meeting schedule and agreed to the first Wednesday of the month, 6pm, except for January and July.

## **6. Public Comment**

Jean Hardy is a PhD Candidate at the University of Michigan who researches the role of technology in rural community and economic development. He is interested in how Keweenaw County and its municipalities do future-oriented economic development work. He will be attending a few EDC meetings as he conducts his research.

## **7. Adjourn**

*Motion to adjourn at 7:22 pm by Harvey Desnick, second by Joe Miller. All in favor, motion carried.*

Next meeting Wednesday, March 6, 2019 – 6:00 pm, Eagle River, MI