

Keweenaw County Economic Development Committee

Keweenaw County Courthouse

Eagle River, MI, USA

Wednesday, October 2, 2019 Meeting Minutes

(approved November 6, 2019)

1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm by Chair Todd Holmstrom, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Introductions were provided to welcome our guests. See item 5a.

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda; by John Sturos, second by Ned Huwatschek. All in favor, *motion carried*.

3. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the September 4, 2019 meeting minutes; by Joe Miller, second by Harvey Desnick. All in favor, *motion carried*.

4. Unfinished Business

4a. Priority check-in:

1. *Broadband Development and Communications*
2. *Website Communications*
3. *100 Good Paying Jobs*
4. *Land Use Issues including Zoning and Permanent Easements*
5. *Workforce Development*

1. *Broadband Development and Communications*

Tess Ahlborn reported working on improved cell coverage as discussed at the last meeting. As a starting point for AT&T customers, there is an app available. Download “AT&T marks the spot” and identify locations with poor coverage. How can we make this more widely known? Possibly consider Keweenaw Report and other social media.

Todd will follow-up with NMU EAN.

2. *Website Communications*

No report, Harvey will provide an update when it becomes available.

3. *100 Good Paying Jobs*

Jeff Radcliffe reported that SkyWest has submitted a proposal for continued service to Chicago, in spite of public input. Jeff is coordinating a “comment initiative” to contact the USDOT during this open comment period, until 10/17/19. Letters should address that service has deteriorated over time; data shows poor on-time service. Letters should ask the USDOT to take steps for changing parameters for the next round of proposals. This will allow the Houghton County Airport to be put through a different hub. Skywest is not going to change their position on improving service to the area, so this is a necessary step.

Todd will draft a letter to the USDOT on behalf of the EDC and circulate for editing. Jeff will provide contact information and encourages individual letters as well. Todd suggested we copy Representative Bergman's office and the Houghton County Board chairs on any individual letters.

4. *Land Use Issues including Zoning and Permanent Easements*

Joe Miller reported that he is updating the white paper. What we would do with it? Maybe website for distribution. See item 4b below.

5. *Workforce Development*

Todd reported that Kass Simila is continuing to work on the "KewCo Career Fair" event for high school students.

4b. GIS Data Discussion

Joe Miller reported on his use of GIS data with his engineering consulting business and the benefit of having data publicly available. He provided an overview of several sites with various data set available, including updated aerial maps, zoning maps. Some GIS sites include general info and the option to purchase additional information (detailed sales history, etc.). Joe reviewed several websites with publicly available data including Clark County, Washington and Gogebic County, Michigan.

Discussion included suggestions to have layers for property ownership, most recent property sales, county parks, libraries, township halls, and zoning at a minimum. Other layers could be hidden or for-purchase, e.g. tax bills, foreclosures. There typically is a cost associated with GIS data that is publicly available, however WUPPDR is willing to work with the county. Jeff Radcliffe reported that Coleman Engineering is involved with conversion of data and shape files.

Jim Vivian suggested education and awareness are needed to move this forward, at both the BOC and township levels. The EDC needs to get input from Ann Gasperich and the Sheriff's office. Joe Miller will start to lead this effort.

4c. RFI: Michigan Aerospace Manufacturers Association

Jeff Radcliffe assisted the BOC in responding to the RFI for the Michigan Aerospace Manufacturers Association that was supported by the EDC at the last meeting. The MAMA is interested and has planned visits for both sites on Tuesday. There will be an opportunity to meet with representatives on Monday, 8pm at the Mountain Lodge. Jeff will lead the group on Tuesday 8am to visit the rocket range, then to Mt. Horace Greeley at 10am, then to Eagle River to meet with Keweenaw representatives for a debrief. Sam Raymond volunteered to host the Tuesday tour. Jeff will provide an update as this initiative progresses. The MAMA would like to make site decisions in January 2020.

4c. EDC Survey follow-up

Todd has contacted all townships to gain support in distributed the EDC survey. Todd will follow-up with WUPPDR for a publication date. We will need to enter data from hard copies, it was suggested that EDC members volunteer to enter data.

5. New business

5a. Guest: Keith Meyers, Chassell Twp.

Keith Meyers reviewed some of the concepts needed for moving forward with workforce development, and how we often take for granted the wonders of the Keweenaw. Many want great places to live, and that is what we have to offer. How do we get our message out to those looking for us? A WUPPDR grant allowed him to have a targeted social media effort in large cities, remoteworkforcekeweenaw.com. Keith has developed a Pinterest Board for Chassell, and would like to have a page for each community. We are the best thing you've never heard of. For some locations, for every good-paying job brought into the county, expect 2-

3 service jobs to be generated in the area. There is a small sector that will embrace what we have to offer, we just need to find them and social media has been successful in the past. There are a significant number of videos and images available to highlight the Keweenaw that could be added to Keith's website.

We have a unique product. And we have challenges, including access to high-speed reliable internet and the lack of quality air transportation service. Jean Hardy described the 1990s bubble of remote workers that failed, however the technology infrastructure is better now and the remote work force is expected to grow. We have connections to the alumni associations, snowmobile clubs, other sporting clubs throughout the region and more.

Keith requests EDC members start to develop a Pinterest page for Keweenaw County. Harvey will be a point of contact. Jim Vivian agreed the BOC would be happy to see the EDC work on this effort.

5b. MDARD Announces Grant Opportunity for Rural Area

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is offering a grant opportunity in which Keweenaw County is an eligible county. Many studies were funded previously, some business related, due October 29, 2019. It is a simple application, and has been available every year since 2013. The EDC should consider these opportunities in the future.

<https://www.michigan.gov/mdard/0,4610,7-125--423804--,00.html>

5c. MDOT Ride Sharing

https://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,4616,7-151-9615_11228---,00.html

The MDOT Ride Sharing program provides an alternate opportunity for transportation. The difficulty in Keweenaw County is not only our distance to workers, but also the distance between businesses (e.g. Copper Harbor and Mount Bohemia) so it may be difficult to coordinate. The Keweenaw Mountain Lodge had a previous program. Peg Kauppi will explore this topic with Copper Harbor Improvement Association and the Downtown Development Authority in Copper Harbor.

5d. New Business – Land swap update

Sam Raymond reported that the DNR is not interested in the land swap concept that was presented to them. Copper Harbor residents have been working together to develop a master plan for expanding the trail system. There will be a stakeholders meeting to discuss further (primary stakeholders include CHIA, KEDA, EDC, others). **Tuesday October 15th, 6:30pm, Keweenaw Mountain Lodge, stakeholders meeting.**

This is the future of recreation in the county. A broader public meeting will be held in the spring as the plan is developed. A dark sky designation might help the tourism in the county. Jim Vivian commented that we have so much more potential for trail development. This huge playground allows many intangible benefits to the county. Keith Meyers reported that voters passed a recreation development tax that has allowed for development in Chassell Township. This is something for the EDC to consider in the future.

5d. New Business - Welcome

Tess Ahlborn requested the EDC send a welcome letter to the owners of Glacia, the new tavern in Mohawk, that opened a few months ago. We should also send a welcome letter to the new owners of Slim's. Todd will check with county staff to identify other new business in the area and provide welcome letters to them.

6. Public Comment

none

7. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn at 7:43 pm by Peg Kauppi, second by Sam Raymond. All in favor, *motion carried*.

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