

Keweenaw County Economic Development Committee

Keweenaw County Courthouse

Eagle River, MI, USA

Wednesday, November 6, 2019 Meeting Minutes

(approved December 4, 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, Matt Kero, Sam Raymond, Kass Simila
- Contributing Members: Tom Bryant, John Sturos
- Members excused: Joe Miller
- BOC Representative: Don Piche
- Guests: Jeff Radcliffe (KEDA), new resident Tom Grubbe

2. Approval of Agenda

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

3. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the October 2, 2019 meeting minutes; by Harvey Desnick, second by John Sturos, with correction: replace “Senator” with “Representative”. 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 the PFN applications for the two grant applications are still in the running. We are looking forward to hearing a positive response soon.

2. *Website Communications*

Harvey reported the county is moving forward with a website update. Tess showed a draft version. The county continues to work on the webpage.

Harvey needs help with the *Pinterest* initiative in assisting with the remote workers effort. However, he is most concerned with our lack of infrastructure, in particular our poor internet service. How can we really be involved with this effort without adequate services? Keith Meyers has offered to “train” a person on working with *Pinterest*, which involves establishing a photo presence that appeals to remote workers. Peg suggested we still develop this opportunity while the internet access in the county improves. Perhaps an intern or student could help. If you can help, please contact Harvey.

Condé Nast Traveler – a national wide travel magazine recently highlighted the Keweenaw as one of the best fall weekend getaways. Read more here:

<https://www.cntraveler.com/galleries/2015-09-16/peep-show-ten-unexpected-fall-foliage-getaways>

Linking the county website to these types of articles is important for showcasing the county’s beauty and adventures. Harvey will follow-up with the county website initiative.

3. *100 Good Paying Jobs*

The FinnZone is bringing companies to the area in February and March to discuss potential links to business partnerships. An example is a previous business development with a Finnish company looking to

team with a local sawmill. The EDC discussed how to get the word out for possible partners and agreed we need to identify where the partnerships are needed before we can identify potential partners. Then we need to contact Keweenaw businesses and individuals. Jeff Radcliffe is working with the group. Some things to consider: Does the EDC have a role? how do we convince them to add businesses to Keweenaw County?

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

Tess reported that the GIS data availability initiative is moving forward. Creating a list of data layers that can be acceptable to all parties is a first step. Tess will work with Joe Miller to develop a list for further discussion.

Harvey reported using the *OnX-Hunt* app, an app that shows hunters the boundaries of where they can legally hunt. However, the Keweenaw county info is completely blank. Many companies use publicly available GIS data for specialty businesses that can benefit the county. It is imperative that we move the county forward with making GIS data publicly available.

5. *Workforce Development*

Kass reported that Peg, Matt, and Kass met with the counselor at Calumet High School. They have identified February 19, 2020 as a tentative date for the Career Conference at CHS. Counselor will work on the student side, EDC members will coordinate businesses to invite. It was suggested to send a “Save the Date” invite to local businesses, endorsed by the EDC, although we may need more information on the event format before contacting businesses. It is intended that students would have some preparation through their leadership class, and would come prepared to talk with business representatives. The all-day event will host individual grades and other schools, including the Horizons school.

4b. EDC Survey - preliminary results

Todd reviewed preliminary results of the posted survey to ask the public about the EDC priorities. Preliminary results were from 160 responses with >50% residents; the majority agree with what we are working on. There is a potential to have up to 3000 responses from taxpayers in the county. Other points of interest were in comparing residents and visitors – residents said creating new economic opportunity is the most important. Visitors said they like it because there isn’t much happening and they can get away without much. There are opportunities for the EDC to support both sides.

To increase the response rate: Eagle Harbor Township will mail the survey, Ned H will follow up with Grant Township. WUPPDR is hosting this survey site, and they are willing to sort some data. If you have specific info you’d like to see from the data, contact Todd. Todd will keep us updated.

4c. RFI Update: MI Space Launch Initiative

Jeff Radcliffe provided a tour to the MAMA group, but no further information has been received. The tour included a trip to the Rocket Range Road and launch pad, which is the only site in MI that has previously supported satellite launches. The tour included a short visit to Mt. Horace Greeley. The MAMA group is still considering the Keweenaw and anticipates site selection in January 2020. By the end of 2021, they could be breaking ground at the site with a year later designated as the first launch. Local support will be critical to the success. Lansing support will also be needed to create jobs in Keweenaw County. The county’s response to the RFI included a statement that required public outreach and a public vote to move forward.

4d. other None.

5. New business

5a. Copper Harbor trail meeting and next steps

The Keweenaw Outdoors Recreation group (KOR) was established to keep the future of Keweenaw County in the control of the residents. A stakeholder’s meeting recently held at the Mountain Lodge was a grass-roots in efforts with close to 100 people attending. Hunters, birders, etc. anyone with interest in the

Keweenaw is a stakeholder. Awareness was raised to inform stakeholders that much of the land in Keweenaw County is owned by a timber management company and a large portion is for sale (~40,000 acres). Public accessibility is a concern as this land changes ownership. A smaller core group of ten stakeholders will take the group input and start to define a mission and next steps for trail accessibility. A critical step will be securing public access and it is anticipated KOR will consider land grant opportunities. The EDC agreed to support Peg Kauppi and Sam Paymond's KOR efforts as EDC representatives. Peg and Sam will keep the EDC updated.

5b. Mt. Horace Greeley – BOC update

An appraisal is expected on Nov 12, 2019 to resolve the property issues with Mt. Horace Greeley. Enviro Solutions will provide the county with a report on clean-up issues. Once known, the county can pursue grants for clean-up. Don Piche will update the EDC.

5c. Membership terms expiring Dec. 31, 2019 (Holmstrom, Desnick, Raymond)

Because of upcoming term expirations, we are seeking interested parties to join the EDC as potential board position or contributing memberships. We will review and discuss at the next meeting. The EDC should approve new members in early December so names can be forwarded to the BOC for approval at their mid-December meeting.

5d. Changing the predictions <http://www.keweenawreport.com/news/local-news/u-p-population-projections-fall/>

The report, predicting a decline in county population, is good motivation for us to create 100 good paying jobs. Those jobs will be a game changer in our population changes. The EDC must keep working to bring jobs into the county.

5e. Opportunity Zones Meeting – L'Anse, 10am-1pm, Friday, Nov. 8., 2019

KCEDC members are encouraged to attend. Local businesses are aware of the meeting.

5f. MTEC Smartzone Return North event, Houghton, 3-5pm, Friday, Nov. 29, 2019

<https://www.mtecsz.com/return-north/> KCEDC members are encouraged to attend.

5g. other None.

6. Public Comment

Tom Grubbe, new resident who recently bought property in the county, has been coming here since 1977 and has a love for the Keweenaw. He noted the hardy people here that have overcome economic hardships and have learned to embrace the area. He was pleased to see the EDC recognizes that snow is a major feature here, as it is a world-class tremendous resource. He encouraged us to focus on the millennials, which he kindly pointed out was no one in the room, and provide them with an adventure. The Keweenaw is an undiscovered gem. Tom suggests we focus on the Chicago area; the 100 good jobs will come in the hospitality side to support the experiences and adventures these millennials seek.

Sam Raymond noted that Copper Harbor was featured on front cover of *Cross Country Skier* magazine this month.

7. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn at 7:46 pm by Peg Kauppi, second by Tom Bryant. All in favor, *motion carried*.

Next meeting Wednesday, December 4, 2019 – 6:00 pm, Eagle River, MI