



Southcentral Michigan Planning Council

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Board Meeting Notes

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, March 31, 2020
MEETING TIME: 11:30am
MEETING LOCATION: Hosted digitally via GoToMeeting

1. Call to Order
 - a. The meeting was called to order at 11:31am by the Chair.
2. Representatives Present/Introductions
 - a. Representatives present: Bomba, Carahaly, Drost, Frisbie, Grieve, Hazelbaker, Kale, Morse, Pangle, and Woodin
 - b. Welcome New Board Member: Bronwyn Drost who is employed by Southwest Michigan First
 - c. Others present: Fred Nagler (KATS); Steve Stepek (KATS); Joanna Johnson (RCKC); Lotta Jarnefelt (Kalamazoo County); Lee Adams (staff); and Molly Trueblood (staff)
3. Representatives Excused
 - a. None
4. Approval of the Agenda
 - a. The agenda was approved by unanimous consent
 - b. Adams noted that the Comstock Master Plan is not included in the Packet as correspondence because the file was too large, but can be emailed upon request.
5. Approval of the Minutes
 - a. The minutes were approved by unanimous consent.
6. Public Comments
 - a. None offered.
7. Acceptance of the Financial Report
 - a. No report this month (only quarterly)
8. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
 - a. Staff discussed the 2020 CEDS workplan and steps they are taking to adjust expectations due to COVID-19. The Chair emphasized that the Strategy Committee is the most important task to accomplish next in this process, and requested the board's assistance in recruiting applicants.
 - b. Next, Trueblood presented a review of 2014 CEDS plan goals, objectives, and metrics, as well as plans in peer regions. The board discussed the variation in

building permits across the 4-county region, but did not request additional data for review.

- c. The board discussed the CEDS Committee application process and progress toward receiving applications. Adams described SMPC's recruitment process to date, including a press release, multiple email blasts, and partner support. Staff described how they are already preparing data and analyses for the Committee's review, but need planning guidance. Adams and the Chair reiterated the importance of forming the Committee to a successful launch of the 2020 CEDS process.

9. Housing

- a. Adams gave an update on the Regional Housing Toolkit; due to time constraints, he will provide a presentation at the next meeting. All elements are ready to share, but need to be packaged in a user-friendly format. Staff proposed using SMPC and Institute resources to design an interactive web tool that combines the toolkit elements and is hosted on SMPC and Upjohn websites. One board member asked if the toolkit would be shared at one of the MEDC-funded workshops; although it may not be possible to meet in person for several months due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, Trueblood suggested that staff could try presenting the toolkit via a digital format.
- b. Adams provided an update on the St. Joseph County Housing Plan. Feedback has been received from all focus groups and staff are currently drafting the plan.
- c. Adams provided an update on the Kalamazoo County Housing Plan. Contracts were emailed in early March and are thus delayed due to the COVID crisis, but staff hope to start working soon.

10. Southwest Michigan Prosperity Initiative Update

- a. The Chair stated that the Regional Prosperity Initiative held their final meeting and voted to dissolve in February 2020. Adams described staff's asset management roles, and explained how these would continue through SMPC's partnerships with KATS and SWMPC. Adams clarified that the remaining funds from this program are still held at SWMPC, but that the remaining unallocated SWMPI funds were disbursed equally between SMPC and SWMPC. Each organization received around \$30,800, to be used to further regional initiatives.
- b. Adams proposed using the funding as grant match for a regional broadband assessment; or for the creation of a Kalamazoo River water trail. The board requested that staff write outlines of these proposals for consideration; that staff work diligently not to duplicate other studies; and that Adams follow up with information gathered from the EDA. The Chair emphasized the importance of returning these funds quickly to the public.

11. Local Government Assistance, Planning Activities, and Transportation

- a. KATS representatives described changes in staff roles and provided an update on the upcoming Rural Task Force meeting on April 8th; details can be found on the SMPC transportation webpage, <https://smpcregion3.org/transportation/>.

12. Staff Report/Other

- a. No additional reports this month.

13. Representative Comments

- a. The board expressed gratitude and praise for SMPC's continued work and collaboration during a challenging period.

14. Action: Adjournment

- a. The meeting was adjourned at 12:53pm.

Next Meeting:
May 5 in Kalamazoo

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