

**WEST MICHIGAN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
CEDS MEETING MINUTES**

May 31, 2017
City of Grand Rapids
9:30 a.m.

1. Call to Order. J. Sandy, CEDS Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

CEDS Members present:

Nora Balgoyen-Williams – Allegan County
Jim Storey – Allegan County
Kara Wood – City of Grand Rapids
Morgan Carroll – Ionia County
Julie Clement – Ionia County
Jim Sandy – Mecosta County Development Corporation
Tom Porter – Montcalm County
Dan Massy – Osceola County Community & Economic Development
Morris Langworthy – Osceola County
Roger Bergman – Ottawa County
Joyce Kortman – Ottawa County
Tim Cochran – City of Wyoming
Lillian VanderVeen – City of Wyoming
Chris Thelen – At-Large (Consumers Energy)

Staff:

David Bee – Director
Nancy Murphy – Administrative Assistant

Guests:

Lee Shirey – U.S. Economic Development Administration
Breese Stam – City of Grand Rapids Engineering Department

2. Approval of Minutes

A MOTION WAS MADE BY J. Kortman to approve the minutes for the March 29, 2017, CEDS Committee meeting as presented. **SUPPORTED BY** T. Porter. **MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. Guest Speaker

Lee Shirey – U.S. Economic Development Administration

Mr. Shirey said that he covers Michigan and Wisconsin, serving as a project developer. EDA (Economic Development Administration) is the only federal agency that works on economic development. Their focus is on high pay, high skill jobs. There is a set allocation of funds within each region.

Mr. Shirey talked about EDA's programs, including grants for short-term planning and partnership planning, and local technical assistance. Big money programs include public works assistance (for roads, sewer, water, and others, to support economic development), and also economic adjustment assistance.

J. Sandy asked about the availability of a prioritized list for public works assistance and Mr. Shirey said that all projects are driven by private sector needs.

Mr. Shirey said that EDA is geared to communities that are suffering major distress, such as from a natural disaster or major plant closing. Grants generally range from \$500,000 to \$2.5 million. Eligibility is based on per capita income and unemployment.

J. Storey asked about the Palisades nuclear plant closing. Yes, that could trigger an EDA program. Mr. Shirey said that he is meeting with them tomorrow. Allegan County will be affected.

Other programs are more national in scale, such as regional innovation strategies and investment in manufacturing community partnerships. D. Bee mentioned that the Pfizer plant in Ottawa County is in that category.

There is a power program, for communities impacted by plant closures by the coal industry. There are three in Ottawa County.

Mr. Shirey mentioned EDA's investment priorities, for which there have not been any changes since the previous Federal Administration. The priorities are –

- Collaborative Regional Innovation
- Public/Private Partnerships
- National Strategic Priorities
- Global Competitiveness
- Environmentally-Sustainable Development
- Economically Distressed and Underserved Communities

He also talked about eligibility for both the applicant and the local area, and the need for consistency with a regional strategy. Is the proposal ready for EDA consideration? What makes a competitive application? And he talked about EDA's review process, which now has a quick turnaround time of two to five months. He also talked about the role of the Economic Development Representative.

M. Langworthy said that Detroit is making Tier 1 jobs viable. They are looking at land issues and trying to fix the related problems, like environmental concerns. The goal is to repurpose the land in clusters.

J. Sandy said that the primary barrier to participation in EDA projects is the local match requirement. Mr. Shirey said that if there is a high distress level, applicants can qualify for a better match, like up to 80 percent federal. J. Kortman said that Ottawa County communities have the match dollars, but their economic status is not distressed enough. Mr. Shirey said that they can go down into a census tract to find poorer areas, and they can also apply for non-construction projects.

4. 2017 CEDS Program Planning

Program Overview/Opportunities

D. Bee said that the next Committee meeting is August 30, in the City of Wyoming. At that time, we will have the completed 2017 CEDS report for the Committee to review and approve so that it can be presented to the Commission at their September 15 meeting. The 2017 CEDS is the full five-year update.

Projects

D. Bee has been contacting local communities to talk to them about possible projects for EDA funding.

J. Sandy mentioned that the Michigan's Dragon at the Hardy Dam project is not eligible for EDA funding because the land is privately owned (by Consumers Energy). D. Bee said that we address that issue in the CEDS with two categories of projects – EDA targeted projects and additional community projects.

At the last CEDS meeting, Committee members had expressed an interest in adding a mechanism, such as a check list, to report that each element had been completed, as well as a way to track our progress from year to year. D. Bee said that he had added check boxes to the Big Rapids master plan we are currently working on. He recommended that at either the end of the calendar year, or else at the December Commission meeting, we would prepare a list to indicate the status of activity toward each goal. It could be similar to the list of WMRPC goals, which was previously 20 pages long but was recently condensed to two pages.

There are two lists of CEDS goals – Organizational Goals and Objectives, and Community and Economic Development Goals. He will send the list to Committee members for them to review, and abbreviate, and return to him within 30 days. That revised list of goals will be folded into the full CEDS document.

5. WMRPC Staff Update

D. Bee distributed a Staff Update. The Update includes information in the categories of Economic Development, Transportation Planning, Member Projects/Initiatives, and Other. D. Bee highlighted a few of the items.

Shortly after the January Commission meeting, EDA told us they would increase our annual planning grant from about \$50,000 to \$70,000. At that time, we didn't think we needed a resolution because there is not a dues match. However, after the March Commission meeting, EDA said that we did need a resolution. When the Executive Committee met May 19, they approved a resolution, which will be ratified by the Commission at their June meeting. The Committee discussed amending the Bylaws to allow the Executive Committee to act when there are urgent issues.

We are still waiting for a letter from the State before Barry County's membership in the WMRPC can be finalized. EDA needs that letter to verify the boundary change.

Meanwhile, we are proceeding with the CEDS process as if Barry were a member. We also worked on a MDOT project in Barry County and the State has not changed the MDOT boundaries either.

In response to a question about the “PASER” ratings for the Asset Management program, D. Bee said that the ratings are intended to identify the most cost-effective time to fix the roads, before conditions deteriorate too much. Their motto is “*Applying the Right Fix...At the Right Time...In the Right Place*”. The roads are rated on a 10-point scale.

6. Committee Member Roundtable

Tom Porter – Montcalm County. The Howard City corridor improvement looks wonderful!

Julie Clement – Ionia County. She mentioned a 52-acre state health facility in Ionia.

Jim Sandy – Mecosta County. The new bridge in Big Rapids that received EDA funding was given a state engineering award. The Hardy Pond trail project is moving forward. The environmental review is complete and the state regulatory review in process.

Tim Cochran – City of Wyoming. Byron Township and Wyoming partnered in a 425 Agreement on a 60-acre site.

Nora Balgoyen-Williams – Allegan County. The City of Allegan’s new Zip-line will be launched June 10th.

Jim Storey – Allegan County. The West Michigan Regional Airport in Holland has a new service center that won an aeronautics award for the second year. The Holland Civic Center’s redevelopment will be funded by a combination of private donations and bonds. The City has two proposals for major residential development in its downtown.

J. Sandy asked about the 200 jobs lost at the nuclear plant – because they are high skill jobs, will they be easily absorbed in the local economy? J. Storey said that some workers will transfer to other Consumers Energy facilities. Although the positions lost were high tech jobs, they were also people with very specific skills who might not find comparable opportunities.

Chris Thelen – Consumers Energy. He talked about closing plants, future workers, location and access. Consumers is making the switch to renewable energy, which is required by the Michigan Public Service Commission.

Roger Bergman – Ottawa County. The County hosted a “Strong Towns” workshop in Grand Haven two weeks ago. The event talked about new and established community and economic development concepts. He recommended watching a YouTube video “Conversation with an Engineer”.

Lillian VanderVeen – City of Wyoming. The City continues to work on its downtown development program for 28th Street. With Metro Hospital’s new partnership with the University of Michigan, the 56th Street corridor is also the site of increased development activity. They have a new DDA Director.

Dan Massy – Osceola County. They are working on Connect 2.0 – previously they were certified for Connect 1.0. Ice Mountain has a pumping facility in Stanwood. There is controversy at the Evert plant. Ice Mountain asked for a permit and they were told “no”, not to more water but to a pumping station. There will be a public meeting with Michigan Potash. The largest deposit is in Hersey Township; it is far underground and hard to access. It is also difficult to make a profit from potash because it is so plentiful.

Joyce Kortman – Ottawa County. She talked about the West Michigan Regional Dashboard, which is a product of the Regional Prosperity Initiative (RPI). She thinks that the dashboard is a good tool and something that we could use to look at our goals and objectives. It can be used regionally to evaluate progress. J. Sandy said that the dashboard is done by county, which was used for the Ice Mountain discussion. J. Kortman said that we could use the dashboard to review our goals and objectives over time. (Web link to dashboard – <http://www.wmdashboard.org>)

Kara Wood – City of Grand Rapids. The MSU (Michigan State University) Research Center will be open in the fall. The road construction at that site is part of a larger project. Six hundred jobs at the call center will be moving to other West Michigan locations. Work continues on the river restoration project. They are looking for a developer for the 201 Market site.

Morgan Carroll – Ionia County. She talked about their “Discover Manufacturing” program, which has had two tours for high school students to introduce them to careers in manufacturing. They will sponsor a career and job fair in the fall, with 40 to 50 employers expected to participate. Juniors and Seniors in Ionia Public Schools are required to attend the session. They published the broadband plan this morning. They have a new 20,000 sq.ft. office space.

J. Sandy talked about MEDC’s (Michigan Economic Development Corporation) Talent Connect program, which connects employers and job seekers. Their “Going PRO” campaign is designed to showcase opportunities for rewarding careers in professional trades.

7. Other Business

None.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Attachment: Staff Update