

DRAFT

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

August 29, 2018
City of Wyoming
9:30 a.m.

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

CEDS Members present:

Spence Riggs – Ionia County
Jim Sandy – Mecosta County Development Corporation
Tom Porter – Montcalm County
S. Michael Scott – Montcalm County
Dan Massy – Osceola County Community & Economic Development
Roger Bergman – Ottawa County
Joyce Kortman – Ottawa County
Lillian VanderVeen – City of Wyoming

Staff:

David Bee – Director
Nancy Murphy – Administrative Assistant

Guests:

Travis Alden – Barry County Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Alliance
Christian Borg – City of Grand Rapids
David Worthington – MDEQ Revolving Loan Program

2. Approval of Agenda

A MOTION WAS MADE BY T. Porter to adopt the agenda for the August 29, 2018, CEDS Committee meeting as presented. **SUPPORTED BY D. Massy. MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. Approval of Minutes

A MOTION WAS MADE BY M. Scott to approve the minutes for the May 30, 2018, CEDS Committee meeting as presented. **SUPPORTED BY T. Porter. MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

4. Guest Speaker

David Worthington – MDEQ Revolving Loan Program

D. Bee introduced today's guest speaker, saying that he had given the Committee a list of potential topics to be covered by our meeting speakers, and that one requested topic was

infrastructure programs in the state. Mr. Worthington has also been a speaker at a past December meeting.

Mr. Worthington presented information about local drinking water needs and related funding programs. The drinking water revolving fund is a revolving loan program that makes available low-interest loans with a 20-30 year period. There are also grants for a drinking water pilot program, in addition to possible asset management grants. There are 18 communities in the State that could be eligible for up to \$1.0 million in grant funds for drinking water pilot projects. There is no local match required, and grant recipients have a year to complete a project. The asset management grants might fund drinking water projects in the future; now they are only for wastewater.

Under the eligibility restrictions, the project cannot be primarily intended to promote growth, and also cannot be primarily for fire protection. There is also a requirement for planned growth that would include provisions for 20-year needs, a master plan, and assurance that there will be no significant negative environmental impacts.

Mr. Worthington talked about the application process. First, a community has to submit an "Intent to Apply" form. Next, they schedule a pre-planning meeting to discuss the project. The project plan is due May 1. The community will hold public hearings. They must submit the final plan by July 1. The plan will be point-scored and ranked on a priority list pending funding authorization for the upcoming Fiscal Year.

Funding sources include the State Revolving Fund (SRF), which provides low-interest loans to assist municipalities in funding wastewater treatment system improvements, storm water treatment projects, and nonpoint source pollution control projects. There is no local match requirement and pay back is a 20 or 30 year timeframe. Disadvantaged or green designation may result in principal forgiveness.

SAW (Stormwater Asset Management and Wastewater) grants are primarily for asset management. Funds are mostly spent. It has been a good source for new construction projects.

Mr. Worthington also talked about "planned growth". They are amenable to, and encourage, meeting all 20-year system design needs based on defensible flow projections. It should be consistent with an approved master plan. Again, projects should avoid negative environmental impacts.

He talked about funding coordination with other agencies, including USDA Rural Development, MEDC (Michigan Economic Development Corporation), and MDOT (Michigan Department of Transportation).

They expect \$400 million in funds for next year, so there is a lot of money available. Local plans generate projects that will need funding. This is a good time to consider applying for MDEQ project funds.

5. 2018 Interim CEDS Report

D. Bee said that the 2018 CEDS is an interim report. We did the full five-year report in 2017; the next five-year report will be 2022.

There have been several changes to the list of CEDS Committee members: Tim Cochran (City of Wyoming) retired; the City appointed his replacement, Nicole Hofert, to the Committee. Big Rapids representative John Schmidt has been replaced by Rory Ruddick on the Commission. Morris Langworthy has resigned; Osceola County has not yet named a replacement for the Commission and CEDS Committee.

D. Bee mentioned several items of note in the 2018 CEDS. And he highlighted several projects, including those in Lakewood, Grand Haven, and Reed City. Projects in both Cedar Springs and Greenville are in the active application process. EDA (Economic Development Administration) is interested in both projects.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY J. Sandy to approve the “2018 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy”, for submission to the Economic Development Administration. SUPPORTED BY T. Porter. MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The 2018 CEDS will next be presented to the WMRPC at the September 14 Commission meeting. After the final report is printed, a copy will be submitted to EDA, and distributed to both CEDS Committee and Commission members.

Projects do not have to be included in the CEDS to be considered for EDA funding. If a project has local support and aligns with EDA goals, then a community should proceed.

6. WMRPC Staff Updates

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.

Asked about the status of Barry County’s membership, D. Bee said that he sent a request to Lee Shirey (our EDA representative) and Michelle Velazquez (EDA program manager) for a status update. Throughout the process, EDA has been slow to respond, but MDOT also has not shown much interest in the change either. We re-sent a copy of the 2012 resolution to EDA.

We recently changed our auditor. The Executive Committee had wanted us to request proposals, and they selected the firm with the lowest cost.

7. Committee Member Roundtable

Lillian VanderVeen – City of Wyoming. She talked about the Metro Cruise. The 14th annual event happened last weekend, and was a big success, as usual. The Metro Cruise has become hugely popular, with more potential participants than capacity. It would be difficult to expand to accommodate all the interest; current participants receive first priority for the next year. The organizers start their work in October, right after that year’s event.

Site 36 could have possible tenants. She cited Wyoming's water line project as an example of the value of the vision and perseverance to plan for a future different from the present experience. Fifty years ago, they decided it would be better to build their own pipeline to Lake Michigan rather than continue to depend on a supply from Grand Rapids. Now they are supplying water to other communities.

Christian Borg – City of Grand Rapids. They have seen an uptick in projects. Their Brownfields program has been successful, and renewed. They have three new projects at properties that have been non-tax generating. The City also has a housing project with 165 affordable units.

Tom Porter – Montcalm County. At the primary election in August, County Commissioner (and WMRPC Commission Chair) John Johansen lost his bid for re-election. Another Montcalm County representative to the WMRPC, Tom Lindeman, chose not to run for re-election. The County continues its efforts to improve its financial status.

Mike Scott – Montcalm County. The County is still struggling with workforce challenges. Howard City will celebrate its 150th anniversary the third weekend in September.

Joyce Kortman – Ottawa County. Their County is also dealing with workforce issues – their unemployment is so low that businesses can't find workers. A big part of the problem is the lack of affordable housing for potential workers. They are working with MSU on the groundwater levels issue. Because everyone is affected, the problem should be addressed as a region. Although we know what the problem is, we haven't figured out the solution yet.

Travis Alden – Barry County. Summer events are winding down. Workforce development is ongoing. They will submit a bid for a Marshall Plan for Barry County. There is a renewed interest in Brownfield projects. He is talking to small communities about Main Street projects, working on downtown development.

Spence Riggs – Ionia County. He introduced himself, saying that he is the new business development coordinator for Ionia County, based at The Right Place. There are some good projects in the early development phase.

Jim Sandy – Mecosta County. He mentioned Manufacturing Week, which is a joint venture with Mecosta and Osceola Counties. RPI might lose their funding, but they will maintain the boundaries established for the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance (Region 4).

Dan Massy – Osceola County. They received a Michigan Department of Environmental Quality Brownfield grant. The Michigan Potash project is still in the development stage, with one-half of needed funding raised so far. They are seeing wages starting to go up a little, due to low unemployment.

8. Other Business

D. Bee said that because WMRPC Chair John Johansen lost his primary to continue as a Montcalm County Commissioner, the Executive Committee decided to appoint him as an at-large Representative. He would then be eligible to continue as Commission Chair.

The next WMRPC meeting will be September 14 in Greenville. The annual joint Commission and CEDS Committee meeting will be December 7 at the Loon's Nest in Montcalm County. We don't have a guest speaker for the September meeting because the Commission will review and update the Strategic Plan.

L. VanderVeen commented that it is good to see younger members. She thinks the education system should teach government to students. There's more to education than just computer skills. She mentioned an example of a recent township board meeting she attended – the township leadership did not have the necessary experience and knowledge to solve problems.

9. Adjournment

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

Attachment: Staff Update