

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

May 30, 2018
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:

Nora Balgoyen-Williams – Allegan County
Jim Sandy – Mecosta County Development Corporation
S. Michael Scott – Montcalm County
Dan Massy – Osceola County Community & Economic Development
Roger Bergman – Ottawa County
Lillian VanderVeen – City of Wyoming
Chris Thelen – At-Large (Consumers Energy)

Staff:

David Bee – Director
Nancy Murphy – Administrative Assistant

Guests:

Ryan Kilpatrick – Housing Next
Christian Borg – City of Grand Rapids
Lindsay Viviano – Michigan Economic Development Corporation

2. Approval of Minutes

A MOTION WAS MADE BY L. VanderVeen to approve the minutes for the March 28, 2018, CEDS Committee meeting as presented. **SUPPORTED BY** C. Thelen. **MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. Guest Speakers

Ryan Kilpatrick – Housing Next

D. Bee introduced today's guest speaker, Ryan Kilpatrick, director of Housing Next, which is a new collaborative initiative in Ottawa County. Mr. Kilpatrick said that Housing Next was developed in response to a three-year study by the Greater Holland United Way. That study identified the need for more affordable housing options. Middle income people working full-time could not afford to live in the community where they work. There were a lot of single-family homes, but apartment complexes were not accessible to most employers, so the cost of transportation, child care, and housing were all location based. Although a lot of workers were coming to the County, they were spending more on transportation and child care than housing due to location and housing availability issues. There is the perception that the public is not ready for less traditional development, that they are more comfortable with single-family houses and garden style apartments.

Long term solutions should be more strategic in terms of how we plan for growth. Most growth is in unregulated areas, and not coordinated. His organization partners with communities, non-profit service providers, developers, and other related entities. Local communities are very

interested in working with Housing Next. They need a good partner and have had some experiences with developers where promises were not always realized.

They are also partnering with financiers, including two foundations, and starting to reduce the capital cost. Every project should have some aspect of affordability. The average monthly rent is \$800 to \$900, which is too high for people making \$25–30,000.

Transportation? There is the MAX (Macatawa Area Express), which is the public transit system for the greater Holland and Zeeland area. But the routes run into and out of downtown Holland. There are no routes directly from other areas, like northwest to northeast coverage. Also, the buses run once an hour, which leads to problems for employers when workers are late if they miss a bus. We need to improve transportation access in order to get people places more efficiently. We need to use technology better, and aggregate the data, in order to make service more profitable. They are starting to build a network for future bus transit.

There is a huge gap between the growth of housing costs and wages. But if you raise wages too much, that justifies the use of more robotics. Long term, they need to work on workforce development for the future.

Zoning? We need to prioritize and incentivize higher density. Tall buildings and parking lots only is not the answer. Future investments should focus on transportation corridors instead of development of farmland in outlying areas. The goal should be smaller lots and improved access, which is a better pattern but no longer prevalent. Communities should change zoning to facilitate building more of these type of neighborhoods. Development patterns affect not just affordability, but economic growth as well.

Most localities in Ottawa County have square feet criteria that make affordable housing difficult. Although the County has a family-oriented vibe, one-third of residents are single without children. We want people to make choices in the free market regarding what type of housing they want. We need a system that allows neighborhoods and housing to evolve over time, with the option to add on to a structure, without over regulation. Ms. Viviano mentioned parking ordinances – most residential development in Ottawa County has a minimum of two parking spaces. Do we really need that many spaces? In the future, there will be different models for vehicle ownership. Parking requirements are one of the more expensive elements to add to a building.

4. 2018 CEDS Program

Program Overview / Opportunities

Schedule of 2018 CEDS Process

After the 5-year CEDS that we prepared in 2017, in 2018 we are doing the first interim CEDS. At the August 29th CEDS Committee meeting, the Committee will review and approve the 2018 CEDS, for presentation to the WMRPC at their September 14th meeting.

5. 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.

7. Committee Member Roundtable

Christian Borg – City of Grand Rapids. After the economic development boom years of 2015 and 2016, this year is relatively slower. However, they expect the second half of 2018 to see more activity.

Lillian VanderVeen – City of Wyoming. The City is working on budget planning. At more than 50 years old, the City is experiencing aging infrastructure, with the need for repairs to their water system. They had wanted (and developed) their own pipeline to Lake Michigan. She mentioned newer communities that are currently working on development, and wondered if they are making plans for their future, 50 years from today.

Nora Balgoyen-Williams – Allegan County. The Gun Lake Tribe wants to add more land to their sovereign nation. They are having a conversation with Hopkins Township, which is concerned about the impact on the tax base. They need more housing for workers at the casino. Lakeshore Advantage has a new contract for Allegan County's economic development program, and will hire a staff person. The Allegan industrial park is now full. The Allegan Event Center is a family adventure center that wants to be a destination center. Activities include a zip line, ropes course, climbing walls, jumps, and slides.

Chris Thelen – Consumers Energy. He talked about a ballot proposal for 30 percent renewable energy by 2030. Consumers wants to maintain flexibility, with 50 percent renewables by 2040. He also talked about the new Grand Rapids Service Center on the northwest side of the city.

Dan Massy – Osceola County. He said that Paul Bristol with USDA Rural Development had talked about their housing programs. Local communities are not taking advantage of those programs. Realtors should receive more information about them.

Jim Sandy – Mecosta County. The Manufacturing Council is working on the child care issue. Ferris State University has robotics training. The airport is working on an extension.

Mike Scott – Montcalm County. Agriculture is doing well. Affordable housing and workforce development is not where it should be in the County. Housing is too expensive, with prices that continue to rise, and employers can't find enough qualified workers. The State approved extra funding for roads. Montcalm County is struggling financially. D. Bee said that Montcalm County's dues to the WMRPC had been on hold, but recently they were able to pay their 2018 dues.

Roger Bergman – Ottawa County. The County has many communities along the Lake Michigan shoreline, where housing is expensive and sells quickly.

7. Other Business

None.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:43 a.m.

Attachment: Staff Update