

Benzie County BRA/EDC Meeting

Friday October 19, 2018

Present: R. Griner, B Russell, Ken Holmes, M. Carroll, A. Jeannot, B. Brooks and E. Kowalski

Also Present: Gary Sauer, Lisa Leedy, Josh Stoltz, Kay Bond, Coury Carland and Chris Varenhorst

Agenda approval: M Carroll brought up bylaws. Discussed under new/old businesses. Retention list was handed out to EDC/BRA Board. A. Jeannot handed out Venture North handout for 10/26/18. Agenda was approved by modified. Motion made by R. Griner, second by E. Kowalski. Motion carries unanimously.

Approval of August 24, 2018 meeting minutes Motion by M. Carroll second by B. Brooks. Motion carries with one clerical change.

Public Input: No public comments.

Brownfield Discussion: E. Kowalski went over the LBA request for reimbursement out of TIF recovery. Request for a reimbursement from TIF to land bank in the amount of \$1,266.14. Last year we reviewed the LBA request in the amount of \$6, 100, which was reviewed by ECT.

Motion made by A. Jeannot to reimburse the Land Bank \$1,266.14, second by B Brooks. Roll Call vote with everyone in favor. Motion Carries.

Advocates for Benzie County presentation – ABC is involved with 5 other entities that are in the process of looking to develop community centers. ABC is looking at the Platte River School. Josh Stoltz, from Grow Benzie currently has a community-based center. Discussed the Grow Benzie Model and how they are involved with connecting systems, avoiding redundant services. Other possible community centers are Betsie Valley School, Frankfort and Thompsonville are all interested in developing community centers. All involved groups have been meeting to try and collaborate with each other regarding developing resources for community centers. Presentation was simply to provide information to the BRA/EDC Board.

AES Update – Lisa Leedy, AES Executive Director provided an update on AES activities.

- Natural Gas project down 115. Approximate cost is \$1.4 to 1.6 million that goes directly to Thompsonville. Looking for funding mechanisms to potentially assist with this project. Crystal Mountain conversion from propane to natural gas is approximately \$1,000,000. Will need to look at layering funding mechanisms to accomplish project. B. Russell would like to look at DTE plan with L. Leedy. More to follow.
- Sewer project with Beulah, Benzonia and Benzonia Twp. meeting held. Looking at a grant opportunity to prepare an infrastructure plan to determine the infrastructure needs for all three entities and this population center for Benzie County. AES would be the applicant for the feasibility study. Water, sewer, broadband, etc. 5-year infrastructure plan for this area is the goal. Motion by B. Brooks to apply to a MDAR Grant and Rotary Charities planning grant second by A. Jeannot, acknowledging that the fact that this motion is not committing either the BRA/EDC and Benzie County finances currently. Motion carries unanimously.
- Transloader conversation. Held meeting with state Land Bank and MEDC to develop a transloader facility at Walton Junction in Grand Traverse County. Also looking at Camp Pugsley (state owned at this time) in Grand Traverse County. More meetings will be held with state and Benzie County to continue to explore this opportunity. This would have a positive impact for large distributors in Benzie county. Need to explore broader region in NW Michigan that could also benefit from a new transloader facility.

- Broadband Discussion. Chris V. from Eclipse was in attendance and is trying to expand broadband within Benzie County. Looking for a resolution of support on Eclipse a grant application. Chris V. gave a brief introduction on his companies.

Motion made by B. Brooks to have the County Administrator draft a letter of support regarding the need for expanding broadband internet connection opportunities throughout Benzie County by any private sector applicant and authorizing the BRA/EDC Chairperson to sign the letter of support, second by A. Jeannot. Motion unanimously carries.

Coury Carland, made comments to the BRA/EDC Board. Would suggest that Benzie County complete the broadband project that was started in 2016. Presented a list of internet providers located in Benzie County. Believes that we should reach out to these people. Project was started in 2009 to map Benzie County for internet distribution. There might be a work product out there that can assist. Need to see if his can be received.

- Retention visit sheet provided. Visits will commence ASAP.
- AES working with Benzie realtors that can place some available commercial property to place on zoom prospector to assist potential developers looking for property in Benzie County. Will work with other realtors to identify all commercial properties within Benzie County for potential development.

Old Businesses

- Working on Bylaw updates. Need to identify when and how can the EDC be dissolved, due to outstanding revolving loans. Would request that we get an update on outstanding revolving loan obligations. Need to elect officers at next meeting.
- Venture North having a workshop grant learning opportunity.

Next meeting November 16, 2018 at 11:00 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitchell D. Deisch, Administrator

Benzie County