

## **SUMMARY OF I-69 THUMB REGION - REGIONAL PROSPERITY STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**

The I-69 Thumb Region Regional Prosperity Steering Committee met at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, June 13, 2018 at the Port Austin Welcome Center.

### I. Introductions

Chairperson Lucas called the meeting to order at 10:37 a.m.

Cameron Schwanitz welcomed the committee to Port Austin and discussed all the points of interest in the area.

Dan Casey, Economic Development Alliance in St. Clair County mentioned the State Designated Smart Zone which serves the seven-county region with some specific programs that were created by the State to help fund start-up companies. The State sets aside a few million dollars a year to fund these projects. One of the programs is called the Business Exhilarator Fund that targets technology companies or Advanced Manufacturing. Companies can get up to \$50,000. They will have to go through an application process. Mr. Casey stated the application process is a partnership with Animation Alley in Troy through the underground incubator in Port Huron. They work with companies remotely on the application process. They file a letter to the state agency on behalf of the company and act as a Fiduciary.

Everyone introduced themselves.

Derek Bradshaw announced that Anna Pinter took a position with the City of Detroit, supervising their lead abatement program. Jacob Maurer is going to be stepping in and picking up on this project. Some of you will remember Jacob from working on our Ecotourism project.

### II. CIB Planning, Justin Sprague and Carmine Avantini

#### a. Final Presentation on Housing Study

Justin Sprague talked about current conditions and what is known, buyers side and what was learned, builders side and what was learned, what's working, implementation projects/strategies/priorities and performance measures. Mr. Sprague answered questions and stated that the final report was available to the committee as well as the presentation from today's meeting if anyone would like it. Discussion ensued.

#### b. Next Steps

- Get the inventory of the available properties across the seven-county region and get that uploaded on the I-69 Thumb Region website, that's an immediate marketing tool to developers to show quick, easy access to land.

- Understand what the fee structures are and the development and review, sort of guideline for the region.  
Discussion ensued.

### III. Partnership Projects Update

#### a. Community Website Grant

Jacob Maurer stated that thirty-one applications were received with nine being awarded \$1,000 each and announcements were made last week.

Dan Casey mentioned that if we get funding next year maybe we could put more money into this grant, so more communities can be selected since we can see that the demand is there.

#### b. Education Grant Program

Jacob Maurer stated that we received thirty-one applications requesting over \$66,000 in funding with only \$20,000 available. The preliminary scoring is underway at this time with an Education Action Team meeting next week to make award determinations.

#### c. Talent Tour

Jacob Maurer advised that applications are being accepted until Friday, June 15<sup>th</sup>. There is a little over \$7,000 to award with \$1,000 available per county. Funding available for transportation only. Seven applications have been received so far from every county except Genesee and Huron. After Friday it becomes first come, first serve per county. If there are any funds still available by December it will be open regionwide.

#### d. Art in Place

Jacob Maurer stated that there is a lot of interest in this project. Only one application received at this time. Two communities will be selected and awarded \$5,000 each. Application deadline is June 15<sup>th</sup> and project must be complete before 2019. Discussion ensued.

#### e. First Impressions Tourism

Andy Northrop, MSU extension, stated that this is the second time we have done a First Impressions Tourism (FIT) project. Consists of a five-person team that drops into the community unannounced and spends 12 to 24 hours there evaluating the community. How the community looks from a visitor's view. Closed applications on June 1<sup>st</sup>. Received applications from Owosso, Cass City, City of Lapeer, Marine City, Lexington, and Grand Blanc. Two will be selected of the six that submitted. Mr. Northrop will let the committee know which two communities were selected.

#### f. Agritourism Directory Map

Jacob Maurer stated that the GCMPC staff is working on a fold out hard copy of the online agritourism directory. Mr. Maurer displayed the map and advised that staff would be sending it out to get feedback from the Economic Development Partners.

Derek Bradshaw mentioned that he heard the money for this initiative is in the budget for next year. Discussion ensued.

IV. Next Meeting

a. Wednesday, August 8, 2018 at the **Lapeer County Health Department**

Chairperson Lucas stated that the next meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 8<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m. at the Lapeer County Health Department.

Derek Bradshaw advised everyone to keep in mind that in the middle of summer the meeting may be cancelled if there is nothing to report on.

Chairperson Lucas adjourned the meeting at 11:56 a.m.

Sincerely submitted by,  
Debby Compton, Secretary  
Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission