

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, August 8, 2018 at the Lapeer County Health Department.

Chairperson Lucas called the meeting to order at 10:32 a.m.

I. Introductions

Everyone introduced themselves.

Present: Andrew Northrop, Carl Osentoski, Dan Casey, David Merot, Derek Bradshaw, Destain Gingell, Eric Andreychuk, Jacob Maurer, Jim Mcloskey, Linda Burchell, Mary Ann Ketels, Nancy Boxey, Patricia Lucas, Paula Nas, Shawnice Dorsey, and Tom Young.

II. Patricia Lucas, Lapeer Development Corporation

a. Update on Loan Program

Ms. Lucas stated that since we last met the Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) was awarded an additional allocation of \$68,900 from the US Department of Agriculture. We now have around \$130,000 available to loan to businesses and eligible communities in the region, which is about every community except the City of Flint and City of Burton and that is based on population. Ms. Lucas passed out brochures to the committee and discussed rates, terms, and application fees with the committee. Discussion ensued.

III. Andy Northrop, MSU Extension

a. 2017 FIT Implementation Project Updates

Mr. Northrop gave a presentation on the First Impressions Tourism (FIT) Program. It is an MSU Extension program. It's an assessment of a community where a team of people that are invited but unannounced go into a community and separately spends a day in the community assessing it through the eyes of a first-time visitor. Through the assessment develop a list of action items for community plans whether they choose to implement them is up to the community leadership. Mr. Northrop talked about some of the developments the four communities are implementing due to this assessment. The following four FIT projects for 2017 were:

- Village of Elkton (Huron)
- Imlay City (Lapeer)
- City of Marlette (Sanilac)
- Village of Sebawaing (Huron)

b. 2018 FIT Locations

The two FIT projects for 2018 are:

- Cass City (Tuscola)
- Marine City (St. Clair)

This week was a kick off with Marine City and Cass City will have their kick off next week. Each city will receive \$2,000 to implement action items identified in the assessment. The assessments will take place in the fall with the results getting shared in early 2019.

Dan Casey stated that because Marine City got selected the Economic Development Corporation put \$4,100 in our budget for their usage and they are going to use it for signage. Discussion ensued.

IV. Paula Nas & David Mérot, UM-Flint EDA Center

a. Automate Business Resources

David Merot presented a tutorial and video of the MI Start Smart platform. Discussion ensued.

b. Wage and Benefits Survey

Paula Nas stated that this is the third year that UM-Flint EDA Center has done this survey. There are two sections to the survey, the first part is all about benefits and the second part is about wages. It is a long survey, but good information is received from it. Region reports were created first along with county reports in July and those were given to the ED partners at this time. Discussion ensued.

V. Partnership Projects Update

a. Community Website Grant

Jacob Maurer stated that a total of thirty-one (31) applications were received with nine (9) \$1,000 grants being awarded to the following: City of Davison, City of Imlay City, Lynn Township, Novesta Township, Thumb Area Tourism, Cass City, Village of Lennon, Village of Peck, and Village of Vernon. Announcements were made in June, so we should be seeing some new/updated community websites.

b. Education Grant Program

Jacob Maurer stated that there was \$20,000 available in funds with a maximum request of \$2,500 to education institutions to focus on career readiness and provide opportunities to the underemployed and unemployed. Mr. Maurer stated that thirty-one (31) applications were received with nine (9) being awarded to the following: Capac Schools, Croswell Lexington Schools, Lapeer ISD, Marysville Public Schools, Memphis Community Schools, Memphis Elementary Schools, Millington Community Schools, Sanilac Career Center and St. Clair Middle School. Announcements were made in late June.

c. Talent Tour

Jacob Maurer stated that funding for Talent Tours was made available for transportation only with \$1,070 available per county with the first round being due Friday, June 15th. Twelve (12) funding requests were received

and awarded. After June 15th, first come first serve per county. If any funds are left over by December, they will be open to the entire region. Mr. Maurer advised that the following remaining funds are available per county: Genesee, \$70; Huron, \$981; Lapeer, \$855; Sanilac, \$236; Shiawassee \$70; St. Clair, \$0; Tuscola, \$2.

d. Art in Place

Jacob Maurer stated that there was a lot interest in this grant. The following two communities were selected: City of Durand and the Village of Port Austin. The City of Durand is revitalizing a blighted building and adjacent property in the commercial district. The City is also contributing approximately \$17,000 for both interior and exterior repairs of the building. The Village of Port Austin, Fabrication and installation of two (2) to five (5) sculptures in the downtown. A local artist has donated their designs and the DDA has secured an additional \$1,000 for marketing.

Dan Casey stated that he thinks this is an opportunity for us to leverage the states money for these projects in the future. We should be going to our foundations and asking them if they can provide a match or see if they want to add money to the grant(s). We can show a demand for money for these projects and now we can show results.

e. Agritourism Directory Map

Jacob Maurer stated that all requests for additions/deletions to the map are now complete. Staff is in the process of gathering photography and statistics from each of the seven counties for the reverse side of the map. We are looking to have two hundred copies per county. Discussion ensued.

VI. Outward Facing Marketing

Jacob Maurer stated that the Targeted Marketing and Media Strategy RFP for the region was released. Applicants will be notified by this Friday. Two of them will be asked to come in and present more information to a panel before final selection is made.

Derek Bradshaw stated that staff is currently working with our partners, Networks Northwest to add trail route data to the UpNorthTrails.org platform for the entire Region 6. Jacob Maurer has a conference call this Friday with UM-Flint to help organize the data and content to be uploaded. We should see major progress later this fall.

VII. RPI Funding 2019

a. Update & Discussion

Derek Bradshaw stated that the Regional Prosperity Initiative made it in the budget for 2019. The maximum that can be requested is \$245,000. The application should be out in August. The governor is coming to talk to the region about the application process on September 11th. The application

will be due around November and we will hear back between March and May. Changes were made on eligible projects. They are looking for projects that support infrastructure. We can apply for an additional \$70,000 to support infrastructure which is sewer, water and/or roads. Mr. Bradshaw encouraged the committee to start thinking about projects. Discussion ensued.

VIII. Next Meeting

- a. Wednesday, October 10, 2018 at 10:30 a.m. at the Lapeer County Health Department

Chairperson Lucas stated that the next meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 10th at 10:30 a.m. at the Lapeer County Health Department.

Chairperson Lucas adjourned the meeting at 11:51 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Debby Compton, Secretary
GLS Region V