

Keweenaw County Economic Development Committee

Keweenaw County Courthouse

Eagle River, MI, USA

Wednesday, April 3, 2019 Meeting Minutes

(approved May 1, 2019)

1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm by Chair Todd Holmstrom, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

- Members present: Tess Ahlborn, Harvey Desnick, Todd Holmstrom, Ned Huwatschek, Matt Kero
- Contributing Members: Tom Bryant, John Sturos
- Members excused: Peg Kauppi, Sam Raymond, Joe Miller, Kass Simila
- BOC Representative: Don Piche, Jim Vivian
- Guests: Jeff Radcliffe (KEDA), Jerry Wuorenmaa (WUPPDR), Brad Barnett (WUPPDR), Dave McCartney (PFN), Koray Inal (Baraga Telephone), Jon French (Baraga Telephone), Shawn Laemmrich (Baraga Telephone)

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda with the addition of new business item: Capital Improvement Plan; by Tom Bryant, second by Ned Huwatschek. All in favor, *motion carried*.

3. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the March 6, 2019 meeting minutes; minor edits as noted; by Matt Kero, second by John Sturos. All in favor, *motion carried*.

4. Unfinished Business

4a. Priority check-in:

1. Broadband Development and Communications
2. Website Communications
3. 100 Good Paying Jobs
4. Land Use Issues including Zoning and Permanent Easements
5. Workforce Development

1. *Broadband Development and Communications*

Guests from Peninsula Fiber Network and Baraga Telephone will present later in the meeting regarding a fiber network proposal for Keweenaw County.

Todd Holmstrom reported that he has not had further contact with Eric Smith (NMU EAN) but will follow up with him.

2. *Website Communications*

Harvey Desnick led a discussion on the development of an EDC webpage within the County's new website. We need targeted opportunities, need to understand what areas are underserved, what incentives the county can provide. Many businesses are transitioning from legacy owners, and this could be an opportunity for the county to be a portal for thought-starters, i.e. other new business ideas. Community input will be needed to help create a healthy list of opportunities, new business locations need to be identified as well as multi-family housing locations. Harvey will work with Jean Hardy (UM) and a small task group to further progress in this area. Todd Holmstrom suggested linking Harvey up with Keith Myers on what progress has been made in the Chassell area.

3. *100 Good Paying Jobs*

Todd Holmstrom informed the EDC that Patrick Visser, MTEC, will provide an update on the Mt. Horace Greeley concept paper “*Technology and Research Energy Park*” at the May 1, 2019 meeting.

Todd Holmstrom has been invited to participate Team Peninsula. This new group is coming together to connect people throughout the region that are working on similar economic development topics and challenges. By teaming, additional opportunities might be available if resources are combined and collaborations formed. The group will get stakeholders to focus on the bigger goals, whereas economies are regional, not just local, and identify key projects that may benefit the whole region. The EDC agreed this is a good group to get involved with.

4. *Land Use Issues including Zoning and Permanent Easements*

Joe Miller has started a white paper that lends towards the earlier discussion related to website development and the need to better understand zoning for new businesses and multi-family housing. This white paper will be shared as it is developed.

Todd Holmstrom mentioned the Houghton-Keweenaw Conservation District annual meeting is next week, Wednesday, April 10, 5-7pm at the Orphium Theater in Hancock. Input is welcome, and the meeting is open to the public. Todd will attend, and encourages others to attend as well.

5. *Workforce Development*

Matt Kero reported that the Marshall Plan did not get refunded. There is hope to have it renamed and reinvented with the new governor. Following up from the last meeting, the 5th year program at Calumet can allow students to attend college however it could skew the data. Some students in this program go immediately into the work force, but many use this as an opportunity to jump start a program at a 4-yr college.

Kass Simila provided an email update related to what our students do after they graduate from local high schools, which lead to a healthy discussion. ~50% want to stay in the area, but they don't see the opportunities to stay. Counselors are open to doing more to help students link to businesses. We should consider creating a KewCo Job Day, take key employers in the county, go to the students to talk about jobs in the county, and what education is needed. EDC can be a facilitator, Michigan Works may be a collaborator. Local businesses can introduce youth to many opportunities and mentoring for many careers. We can foster the attitude for leading youth to future careers. This links directly to the webpage development discussed in item 4a.2.

5. New business

a. Guest: Peninsula Fiber Network and Baraga Telephone representatives, (Dave McCartney, Koray Inal, Jon French, and Shawn Laemmrich) provided an overview of the longtime interest in expanding a fiber network to Keweenaw County. Baraga Telephone combined with Hiawatha Network to serve a larger region, defining Peninsula Fiber Network. A map showed how the collective network extends well beyond the UP. PFN's research has shown that there are many opportunities to assist in deploying feasible broadband to the communities of Keweenaw County.

The USDA ReConnect Grant program is open now. Given that we have a low population area, the 100% grant option is the best option now as there must be a feasible model that can operate going forward. The grant is focused on nine areas and Keweenaw County is the perfect fit. For example, points are given for rural communities with a population density of <6 people/mi²; KewCo ~0.4 people/mi². One area of interest is to identify farms in the county; this could include maple syrup farming, honeybee operations, the JamPot, roadside vegetables, firewood, check logging, possibly charter fishing, tree farms, or other operations in which something is produced and sold for >\$1000/yr. Need names and addresses to help PFN in this application.

PFN is collecting information on service speeds to locate underserved regions. Need to prove that areas have low service, and areas in southern Kew Co that have current higher service can't be served by these grant funds. The ATT fiber along Cliff Drive is a 12-count fiber, and while PFN has made inquiries, unfortunately it is not available for a reasonable use time.

Other areas to address in the proposal are healthcare and critical community facilities. PFN has support from the UP Family Health Care centers to be able to provide health care in Copper Harbor; may want to contact first responders in LBB, Mohawk, other? Educational facilities need to be identified. Letters of support will be beneficial including Governor support, house reps, senators, townships, board of commissioners, the EDC and businesses. PFN will provide template letters for businesses and entities.

The PFN team will develop an online survey to help collect information. Discussion followed as to where to post this, including a link on the website, through Keweenaw Report, Daily Mining Gazette, Houghton-Keweenaw FB page, MTU Alumni survey.

Anyone with information to help PFN with this grant proposal can contact Koray Inal. Jeff Radcliffe offered to work with PFN to identify businesses. Todd Holmstrom will work to identify farms. Tom Bryant offered to assist with the overall survey layout. The full application is to be completed by May 29, 2019.

b. GIS Data Sharing

Jerry Wuorenmaa and Brad Barnett (WUPPDR) provided an overview of Geographic (Geospatial) Information Systems (GIS) and associated related data. GIS is a tool for storing, visualizing, and interacting with information for a specific purpose (e.g. social, economic, demographic, geological, climate, etc. Availability of the data can allow for more informed decisions.

The county has been charging interested businesses and interested agencies for this data, and some members question whether this is in the county's best interest. Several options are available to make GIS data accessible for economic development, including open access (view, download, and manipulate data), limited view-only (without ability to parse or manipulate data), a pay-to-play option (currently used by the county), or "the Vault" (internal restricted use only). The economic development benefits gained from open-access could arguably be more important than risks, which include loss of revenue, threats to privacy, inaccurate information, or sabotage. However, while inaccurate information can be a concern, but we can also learn from mistakes and update the information as needed. KEDA would also like to have access, as it is difficult to access accurate information and barriers cause people to look somewhere else. Today's expectation is that the data is available.

WUPPDR has invested in tools that would allow for the portal for Keweenaw County data, but there is some effort required. It is estimated to cost \$25,000 to get the portal up and running, \$4k/yr to maintain, and the future small work effort is carried by WUPPDR. This could be an opportunity to change current policy, but the options will need to be reviewed and further considered. Tom Bryant volunteered to help out in coordination to bring something to the BOC at a future meeting.

c. Other – Capital Improvement Plan

Jim Vivian reported that the [2018-2022 Capital Improvement Plan for Keweenaw County](#) has been published and approved by the Board of Commissioners, and is available on the county web site. Over \$4M has been invested in the county in the past few years (e.g. new ownership of the Sand Hills Lighthouse, the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge, and the Eagle Harbor Inn). Thanks to WUPPDR for pulling this together. This document helps to make the county eligible for DNR grants. Nearly \$75,000 in projects are underway at Gratiot Park. Hard copies of the document are available from the Courthouse. Tom Bryant is offering his services for graphic design and photography for future reports.

d. Other – Tom Bryant questioned whether there had been any follow-up with Mary Barra, General Motors Chairman and CEO, as related to the topic priority of 100 good paying jobs. This task is not closed out but we will wait to have a specific ask for her.

6. Public Comment

None.

7. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn at 8:03 pm by Tess Ahlborn, second by Matt Kero. All in favor, *motion carried*.

Next meeting Wednesday, May 1, 2019 – 6:00 pm, Eagle River, MI