

MINUTES

LAKES TO LAND REGIONAL INITIATIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MONTHLY MEETING

March 12, 2014 at 1:30 p.m.
Pleasant Valley Community Center

Present: Susan Barnard and Al Taylor, Onekama; Janette May, Bear Lake; Betsy Evans and Ted Wood, Joyfield Township; Denise Blakeslee, City of Manistee; Bruce Wildie, Honor; Sharron May, Crystal Lake Township (recording secretary);

Public: Susan Zenker and Glen Rineer of the Benzie County Planning Commission; Kurt Schindler, MSE Extension.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Betsy Evans** will be speaking at a convening of Michigan land use funders throughout the state. The topic is the importance of developing a model to quantify land use as an economic driver. Would it be a useful tool in making land use decisions, justify preservation vs. development, etc.? Betsy will making a presentation on L2L.
- **Discussion:**
 - **Al Taylor** – one of the challenges is determining the economic impact of bringing in extra visitors. It's all guesswork. When we went through our dredging evaluation we had to determine what would happen if we lost Lake Michigan. We determined this by looking at real estate prices in Bear Lake, which is land-locked.
 - **Denise Blakeslee** – wouldn't NWMCOG have a model that can be used if they are overseeing the region as a whole? They do a mid- census and may have other resources. Al Taylor will ask them when they meet over the M-22 project.
- **Input for Tab 5** – Sharron May announced Leah DuMouchel's request for Tab 5 Input. If there is time we will try to respond as a group.
- **Citizen Planner certificates** – Al Taylor has not received his. Kurt Schindler asked Al to send him an email.
- **Firewise Training program** in TC on March 24 and in Manistee on March 31 and at 6pm. The Lake Michigan coastline is one of the most fire-prone areas in the state. The homeowner that puts some measures in place will be the first home responded to by firefighters because they have a better chance. This training is about incorporating into the zoning ordinance defensive strategies to prevent damage from forest fires. Master Citizen planner credits apply.
- **Zoning Template:** Kurt Schindler announced that the Village of Elberta had an entire zoning ordinance assessment, a 20-page single-spaced document. Bruce Ogilvie, chair of Frankfort's PC saw that a lot of things applied and could be put to use. The village of Elberta and Kurt's office have a copy. The old Benzie County Zoning Ordinance was used and quickly adopted by many of the townships. But it is full of a lot of problems and outdated. It might be worthwhile to collectively take that template ordinance (or whatever is closest to that template ordinance that would have commonalities between all the communities that use that ordinance) and run through a critique process before updating your zoning ordinances so everyone knows what those problems are. For MSUE to do it, Schindler estimated a cost between \$2000-\$3000, depending on how many problems. Summer is less busy than fall and they could do it quicker.
 - May- so we should have a copy of the Elberta Ordinance assessment to compare to our zoning ordinances.
 - Schindler - it makes sense to do a critique with all the townships using the county zoning ordinance as a template.
 - Evans - some of the grant money received to develop common zoning language could dovetail with this.
 - Schindler – I believe Manistee County used to have a standardized numbering system so that it didn't matter whose zoning ordinance you looked at, the sections and topics were the same in each ordinance.
 - Denise- I can tell you that the city ordinance did not mirror that. Rob Carson has written a Dark Sky Ordinance so there is already a template out there for that. He is a really great resource that we haven't tapped into.

ROUNDTABLE UPDATES

Master Plan Updates (including any comments received that you'd like to share)

City of Manistee, Denise Blakeslee - Rob Carson (Manistee County Planner) has only received two Master Plans (Arcadia and Pleasanton). He is missing Bear Lake Village and Township (they started later) and Onekama Village and Township (they are just starting their update). The city just finished their online survey for getting public input on the Master Plan. Right now there is a different item on their plate so that information is on the back burner until April. There were only 70 responses to the online survey. They are considering putting a survey in the tax bills for additional input. The Visioning Session had less than 20 people. They are doing their Master Plan in-house and Denise will be asking Rob Carson to help her finish the plan.

- **Al Taylor** – Onekama Village was concerned that if they didn't validate the surveys, somebody could stack the deck.

Joyfield, Betsy Evans - Joyfield will review municipal comments at their March 20th meeting. They have not scheduled a public hearing.

Honor, Bruce Wildie – The Public Hearing was supposed to be on April 3rd. It should have been in last week's paper but he didn't see it. One of the Council members thought that instead of the Planning Commission the Council should be doing it and there is some back and forth about that.

- Kurt Schindler clarified that the statute doesn't give them that option. The Planning Commission holds the hearing.

Sharron May, Crystal Lake will be reviewing the comments at a Special Meeting; no date for the Public Hearing yet.

Onekama, Al Taylor - The Onekama Joint Planning Commission (PC) was demolished. It was thought that it was illegal because there wasn't an ordinance to create one. Now there is an Onekama Village and Township PC. Eight people representing the Village and Township were asked to sit on the Master Plan Update committee to review the joint document. They have been working for 2.5 months on the rewrite. They think they are going to maintain one document and try to get a joint Planning Commission again. They will be asking if there is any change in the priorities. The Visioning Sessions indicated what people liked and didn't like about the area and what they didn't like hasn't changed - the condition of the village, the streetscape, lack of vibrant downtown; the loss of commercial businesses; and the shift to a retirement community. A lot of wealth is moving into the township but no wealth is moving into the Village. The current format regionalized quite a bit of stuff and is more of a 20-year plan where we talk about density transfer. We know what they are sensitive to that and are working to adjust it and have a 5-year vs. 20-year plan.

- Kurt Schindler – I think you're even going to be facing rougher times. All of the research shows that when a big box store opens in a major city, there is a loss in the small businesses in the towns nearby. Meijer is opening on 55 and 31. Most of the seasonal stores will survive because they've found a niche. But the grocery stores and gas stations are going to suffer. You need to think about that when you are updating your Master Plan. The name of the game for Economic Development has changed dramatically.
- Taylor- AES did a study that showed \$42 million dollars in retail sales leaving Manistee County and going to TC and Ludington. They are hoping some of that will be recouped, but there will also be a resulting loss.
- Wildie- much of the economy is more regional than local. People want Honor to stay the way it always was. I grew up in Honor – it will never be that way again. We had 2-3 grocery stores, a drug store, a hardware store – it was great. But you didn't take a couple of hours and go to TC and shop. Whereas now one small grocery store is doing well - as a specialty store, people still go to TC with their big shopping lists.
- Schindler – Regarding the Manistee leakage, I have been working with people who work with the Governor's office to draw the new Michigan Prosperity regional boundaries. Manistee has come up in the discussion. Manistee city pulls to Ludington but shifts to the north once you get beyond the airport.
- Taylor asked at the last meeting that the City of Manistee, Frankfort, Elberta, Onekama, and any other community in the initiative be included in the 3.18 Collective Priority table so it shows the priorities of communities who already have existing Master Plans.

CURRENT PROJECTS

M-22, Al Taylor - they are meeting on March 24 at 3pm at Frankfort City Hall with NWMCOG's Paul Bussey and Mat McCauley and MDOT's Patty O'Donnell who set up the Leelanau M-22 Heritage Hwy / Pure Michigan Highway. They asked for criteria, entry-level minimums, other more elaborate levels and the requirements for each level.

Langland Park Visual Access- Al Taylor announced a June 2nd meeting at 10 a.m. at Portage Point Inn with DEQ representative about dune removal in Langland Park in Onekama. Less than 30 years ago if you drove into Langland Park, you could see an

open vista of Lake Michigan. Over time sand drifted in and blocked the view. The Boy Scouts came in as a civic project and stabilized the dune. Now there is no view. We are asking them to assess this in light of their new objective to improved access to water. At Frankfort if you drive down to the end of the street, you have a complete vista of the lake. Al counted 40 cars within 20 minutes. They would like to create that same atmosphere.

Trailways – Denise Blakeslee reported that the City of Manistee Non-Motorized Transportation Committee is looking at expanding trail systems outside of the city. They have the M-55 Trail Park and connectivity is something they are truly working on. Rob Carson, their County Planner, worked on The Carolina Red Trail, a 15-county trail system in the Charlotte, N.C. region. The County Planning Departments provided the leadership, planning, development and community consensus building. He is also going to be updating the County Parks and Recreation Plan and including non-motorized trails, Blue Water, Green trails, etc. Rob Carson is a good resource we haven't tapped into. There is redundancy going on. As Rob has great experience, instead of hiring an outside consultant, wouldn't it be better to get a grant for implementation?

- Taylor – he is also an expert in Rain Gardens. He helped us with Wetlands identification. Grantors are lining up along access to water and recreation. Blue Water trails and green trails are getting the funding. Megan Olds at the GT Regional Conservancy is also working on this.
- May – that reminds me that we were going to branch off into smaller groups such as Trailways. Have we just been distracted by our Master Plans?
- Susan Barnard – that seems like a perfect example of a goal for this group, seeing where we overlap and can coordinate on these things.
- Evans – At the Priority Meeting people had concerns when they had to turn in a card before they left.
- Blakeslee – They felt strong-armed. The ideal people may not have been sitting in that room. I would rather have 2 - 3 enthusiastic people on a committee than 10 disgruntled ones.

Food Hub grant – Sharron May's report on the Food & Farm Summit at last months meeting is attached to those minutes. It has a lot of links to resources (free to low-cost education, funding, consulting etc). It was forwarded to AES and she hopes to share the same presentation and resources with the Benzie County EDC at a future meeting. She isn't doing this in any official capacity, just sharing her passion and information she's been privy to. Betsy Evans reported that the Food Innovative District grant is in the assessment phase of taking an inventory of what is out there currently (growers, products, etc). Betsy, Tim Ervin and Kathy at AES have been working on it.

Zoning Language grant - The LT would like an update on this and the Food Hub grant at the next meeting.

Discussion: ideas/strategies regarding moving forward with counties (communications, concerns, roadblocks, facilitation ideas, etc.)

- Evans- They need to be involved. There needs to be communication and collaboration. We need to figure the best way to involve the Counties. With Collective Priorities, It's silly to work independently.
- Taylor - The first thing was the review of the MPs. That was the starting point.
- Blakeslee- If there is a resource that the County can provide they need to be included in the process. I wasn't here at the beginning. I don't know if they didn't want the County Planner here or they didn't think about it or what.
- May- there was a huge conversation about it. B&R extended an invitation to the counties initially but there was some backlash from some of the townships.
- Evans- there was a concern initially that they wanted this to be a bottom up process and felt that including the county in the beginning would not allow for that. But we're beyond that. We've developed Master Plans for each entity. Benzie County is developing their Master Plan and will hopefully incorporate some of the townships plans.
- Taylor – we have built things from the bottom up, with some help. So I think we're past that point and it's time to involve them. They are going to be a part of the glue that holds this thing together if it's going to happen.
- Wood – We had a brief discussion on how to kick-start it and who to get involved and some possible things to work on. These projects - whether trail systems, agriculture, infrastructure or whatever - overlap and become integral to the County. We need their participation and buy-in to the process that we're working with. It made sense to invite 1-2 people to start the communication and let it evolve from there.
- Taylor – There is something we need to move forward regardless if the counties come on board. The townships, villages and counties still need evidence that there is a value in having this collaborative effort continue. They saw the value in the Master Plan process because there was some money available and commonalities among the townships that could be shared. But as we go through grants, what is the viability of having a multi-community approach to some of these things? Is it going to work in the grant process or are we going push ourselves out of some things? Tim and those guys have some work to do to have some of these viability things rise to the top and convince the townships that there is merit to it. The way we said we were going to do it is to hit some low hanging fruit on a couple of things and see if we could make some of those happen. And if it did, what's the next level of fruit? We keep hearing how interested the state is and the funding people are in this collaborative effort. Let's prove it. If we prove it, we have something to move forward on. If we can't prove it, Onekama Village is going to compete for grants with Onekama Township.

- Evans- we need to start as a Leadership team to prioritize our top 6 priorities. We can't work on all six at once. What is achievable and where is potential funding? Then bring in the appropriate people.
- Taylor- I think we need to look at that list again. We're smarter now than when we put it together.
- Blakeslee – we need to ask the people who attended how they feel about being on a committee, not force it on them.
- Evans – Going back to county involvement, there are a lot of people in the community with passion to be on those committees.
- Blakeslee- I would chose someone from the Non-motorized Transportation Committee for a Trails committee. The Planning Commissioners were the correct people for input, but maybe not to serve on the committees.
- Evans - We need more voices for this meeting. Maybe this is it's own topic and meeting at a different time.
- Wood- We gathered initially for the MP process and additional ideas came to fruition. There is still some background work going on for an organizational structure and leadership with funding to see how to bring these projects to the table.
- Evans – it might not be a bad idea to get a larger group together to discuss the Public Hearing/Master Plan completion process and get on the same page with that too. Maybe these conversations need to happen before we can move forward.
- May – At first we were too busy with our MPs. Soon we'll be too busy with on our zoning ordinances... I can understand why this keeps getting pushed back.
- Blakeslee – that's why I think that maybe we have a great list of items but that maybe others can champion these projects. Get who you need to make that happen and report back.
- Taylor- one of the things that this process has done is create a level of trust. And when you have that, you don't need more than a couple of people on a committee who can bring things back to the group.
- May- We already have something on the table: the Food Hub Grant and the Zoning Language template. Maybe we need to get that up and running first.
- Blakeslee – and maybe you'll find out that with trailways, the county is already working on it. It gets addressed but not necessarily by this group. This group can support it to help with grant funding.
- Wood- and just like the Food Innovation district is doing an inventory assessment, we need to do that with the resources within the governmental units and Conservancies as a good nucleus to start developing these things along with the funding effort.
- Blakeslee - with Kurt here, if the group decides to focus on Food Hubs, MSUE might be able to schedule a training to give you Master CP credits to maintain your certification.
- Evans- I think we need to focus. We need to complete the MP process. We have the Food Innovative District and Zoning Language projects on the table. Let's address those before we start taking on other projects and forming committees. We need to look at where we are and assess what L2L is going forward. It needs to be when B&R is here, when Tim can be here, when Monica and Brad are here. But I'd like to get back to the county involvement.

Glen Rineer and Susan Zenker were invited to the table to express their thoughts about County Involvement.

- Glen Rineer - You can't ignore that the county is there. We have the duty to review and comment, and have a Master Plan (MP). With the trails, collaboration with the county will probably be beneficial for securing grants. I'm not sure how many of the townships have used the County Master Plan as the basis but aligning, as much as possible, the township Master Plans with the County MP is going to benefit everyone
- Wood- aligning the Townships' plans with the County's or aligning the County's with the townships'?
- Rineer – To have the same vision is important. I'm sure there aren't really many significant differences presently.
- Taylor - With this process, the county's goals were right up front and I think that helped.
- Susan Zenker – as you get towards the end, the communication is important. Benzie County has a Parks and Recreation Plan and Department. All this collaboration could happen with them instead of having all these little committees. Communication could be very beneficial to everybody. The only other thing else I could say is that hopefully next time we won't get 6 Master Plans to review all at once. It was a very interesting process to read through those. It's been expressed by other members of the PC that they would have liked to be more involved or know more about what was going on and the process.
- Evans- Do you think there would be a couple who be willing to come to the Leadership Team (LT) meeting or wait to see what committees are formed and come in at that point?
- Zenker- I think that once you get your Public Hearings and your Master Plans adopted and you're ready to move on, there might be an opportunity to have a meeting with the full county Planning Commission and full Leadership team to let everyone know what is going on. Then the PC can go back and appoint someone to be on the LT.
- Taylor- It has never been established what the LT is going to look like going forward. One proposal was to have one person from Benzie and Manistee County PC sit on the LT. The concern is that the townships still want to remain autonomous. If there is disagreement, we want to do what we want to do.
- Zenker- There's not a problem with that. The townships are individual, with unique topography etc.
- Wildie - there may be some misconception that we are trying to put together a regional Master Plan (MP) as opposed to each township and village. There's some fear that we are trying to set something up that will squeeze out other townships that weren't involved. That's not the case. Each township has it's own MP. It's just the common threads that are being worked on together.
- Evans: Perhaps Benzonia Township will be included on a specific project. The county has access to each community's

vision and individual priorities. It's another tool for the county Planning Commission to use when they update their Master Plans.

- Taylor – regardless of what happens with L2L, the M-22 project will move forward.
- Evans- Do you think it would be appropriate to bring the county in as it pertains to projects or to come to monthly meetings?
- Rineer – an invitation for participation would be appropriate. In our work to review and comment, we have not been able to get around to updating our own Master Plan. When we do we are certainly going to consider the Master Plans of the townships. The people have spoken. Our Master Plan will need to be adjusted and formulated from that. Once a month representation might be good, but certainly when there are cross-jurisdictional issues or things like trailways.
- Zenker – if you send an agenda, perhaps we would refer it to a different department. We've had an advantage because we asked for L2L updates at our meetings. Parks and Recreation didn't have that benefit.
- Schindler – a lot of what Tim Ervin and the Alliance for Economic Success have been doing for L2L, in many other parts of the state, that is what the County Planning Commission does. With two counties, it's complicated. Going back to what Denise was saying, the Manistee County Planner can bring monetary value and expertise. He is a resource coming to the table. The county should be involved on a monthly ongoing basis. Part of the statute says when the Planning Commission starts to see a commonality, it is their job to bring them together, host it and facilitate a meeting and bring in the appropriate department. They have that coordination role; it's part of their job. The more they are involved the more chance they can help pull it together. Benzie County has a handicap; it doesn't have staff. As a group, you probably also need to be sensitive that Manistee County will ask how come their Planner is doing something in Benzie County. All of you know politics. That is Rob's job to sort through that, not yours, only to be sensitive to it. The Leelanau County Planning Commission acted as a facilitator and brought the appropriate parties together to discuss and make a decision. They didn't make the decision. You can't involve the county too much but you can err by not involving them enough. Think of them as a resource.
- Evans- I think that we at least need to look at the different departments and who needs to be involved or communicated with and make them aware or send them an agenda.
- Schindler- Given that is already the Planning Commission's job, let the county Planning Commission connect those dots for you.
- May- and that will become more apparent once we determine the priorities, projects and stakeholders. Until then, I think inviting 1-2 County representatives to the Leadership team table is a good idea. At the beginning, bringing all these townships to the table was big enough. Now that we have established that trust and a stronger sense of self - as a Leadership Team and as independent townships - it feels safe to widen the circle.
- Taylor – then the Counties can look at this group and say there were accomplishments; an end product. This group might be valuable to work with - as opposed to when it first started and we didn't know where it was going or what was going to happen. We didn't have to involve them through the whole organizational process.

Action items/ideas for next month's agenda:

1. 3.18 Collective Priority table: include Onkama, Manistee, Frankfort, Elberta and any other communities with existing Master Plans.
2. Focus: Public Hearing/ Master Plan completion
3. Focus: Food Hub and Zoning Language Grant Update
4. Organizational Structure Update
5. Collective Priorities strategy
6. Next Steps: County participation/facilitation

Next Meeting Wednesday, April 9, 2014 at 1:30 p.m. at the Pleasant Valley Community Center

Meeting adjourned at 3:35pm.

Tab 5 Inputs for Leah DuMouchel

The meeting ran over with no time for group input. Please reply individually to the questions provided below:

1. Are there any comments you would like to offer with regard to the Priority Sharing meeting?
2. Are there any comments you would like to offer with regard to the Citizen Planner classes?
3. Has your community undertaken any action as a result of the master planning process?
4. Have any new relationships or collaborations formed as a result of the master planning process?
5. Has participation in the Lakes to Land collaborative changed the way any business is done in your community?