



Lakes to Land Regional Planning Initiative Meeting Notes

May 9, 2012 1:30p.m.

Pleasant Valley Community Center

In attendance:

Tamara Buswinka (B&R), Tim Ervin (AES), Todd Kalish (DNR), Brad Hopwood (Arcadia Twp), Greg Wisner (Arcadia Twp), Sharron May (Crystal Lake Twp), Jim Laarman (Crystal Lake Twp), Matt Emery (Joyfield Twp), Betsy Evans (Joyfield Twp), Ted Wood (Joyfield Twp), Susan Zenker (Joyfield Twp), Kris Kranz (Pleasanton Twp), Bob Peterson (Pleasanton Twp), Chuck Beale (Blaine Twp), Greg Wright (Crystal Lake Twp), Claudette May (Bear Lake Twp), Deanna Pattison (Bear Lake Twp), Janette May (Bear Lake Twp), Bruce Ogilvie (City of Frankfort), Monica Schultz (Crystal Lake Twp), Dennis Holcombe (Gilmore Twp), Tom Hart (Joyfield Twp)

Introduction to Megan Olds of Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy

Tim Ervin proposed inviting interested stakeholders to speak to the Leadership Team (LT). A lot of interest is coming from different organizations, such as USDA Rural Development and other State agencies. A snapshot of their goals and projects may be useful to the process. There was an objection over using the term "stakeholder" as 'the real stakeholders are the members of the communities'. It was requested by LT members that a list of groups be provided in advance of their placement on an agenda. John Iacoangeli explained that outreach to appropriate organizations is required in the master planning process. John also stated that while State agencies will inform the LT of their goals they will also learn from this Initiative which may result in opportunities for collaboration.

Action Item: A list of agencies or organizations normally cited for a Master Plan process will be mailed out to the Leadership Team.

Megan Olds, Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy (GTRLC) Megan explained her role with GTRLC and previous work with Northwest Michigan Council of Governments (NMCOG) as a regional planner. She currently serves as a volunteer for the professional organization Michigan Association of Planning. GTRLC's mission is to protect natural, scenic and farm lands and to advance land stewardship now and for future generations. The 20 year old local non-profit has managed to protect over 35,000 acres of land within the 5 county region through the following ways: willing land owners who choose to permanently preserve their land with conservation easements (½ of the Conservancy's protected land is privately owned); partnerships with local units of government who want to create public parks and natural areas (Arcadia Beach and Elberta Dunes South); Conservancy-owned land through donations and acquisitions (Arcadia Dunes and Nature Preserve) and partnerships with Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, DEQ, Michigan Farm Bureau, Conservation Districts, MSU Extension and other partners working on land stewardship issues. Their 5-year goal is to protect 1000 more acres per year; enhance access to nature and recreation; take care of their protected properties; and connect more people to the land and each other. Projects include: Arcadia Marsh restoration project; Arcadia Dunes; Railroad Point Natural Area;

Trapp Farm and working with private owners on forest land, natural land, river corridors or farmland. Garlic mustard removal is paying off with help of volunteers, SEEDS Youth Corps and federal funding. Private contractors are even creating cottage industries from it. Megan spoke about how individualized plans and working with private landowners impacts the tax base. Conservancies pay the taxes the first year and then it comes off the tax roll. A study showed that more parks increase property values with an example given of how Acme Township took 6 properties off the payroll at an impact of under \$1000. She sees the opportunity for transportation, watershed, forest, and river corridors and farm communities to be unbounded by lines on a map and viewed through the lens of an asset base or user. Decisions about policies and programs can tie common goals across municipal boundaries.

Lakes To Land Website – John Iacoangeli

The website is up and running. Each community has its own Tab. A contact list is included with direct email access. Meeting minutes are posted. The web address will be featured on all media materials. John gave a preview of the slideshow for the Information Meetings. There was a change in venue from Bear Lake to Onekama Consolidated Schools. Refrigerator magnets are available for Leadership Team members to distribute to residents advertising Visioning Session dates, times and venues.

Overview of Community Information Meetings – John Iacoangeli

The Information Meetings will include a timeline, inform the public about the process and invite them to attend a Community Vision Session. The Information Meeting is not a substitute for the community Vision Sessions, it is just another opportunity to provide residents of the region with information. The presentation will explain the opportunities; the function of the leadership team; how to subscribe to monthly updates. The focus of the Information Meetings is the creation of individual master plans and the collaborative strategies, DNR Recreation plan, and Planning Commission training through MSU's Citizen Planner Program. Posters, the Lakes to Land Regional Planning Initiative website, Facebook page, Twitter site and phone numbers have been established. The Information Session slideshow will be posted on the website. The interactive website includes descriptions, a calendar, upcoming events and valuable resources.

It is anticipated that Manistee will join the process and Lake Township is also considering (a representative was in attendance at today's meeting).

Discussion: It was noted that Crystal Lake Township is only partially represented on the Leadership Team. The team was asked to reach out to other communities who will join the Initiative during the Conference of Communities. It was suggested that the Community Vision Sessions be videotaped and posted on the website. Frankfort suggested that their Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance might be placed under their Tab for information purposes. A deadline of July 1st was set as the cut off date for communities joining the process. The LT suggested that two new Tabs be created on the website titled Library of Resources and Press Releases.

A lively discussion followed about qualifying the groups designated as 'valuable resources' on the website. There was a concern over 'tainting the process' and becoming a venue for promoting agendas with a specific objection. The Michigan Land Use Institute and The Grand Vision were two examples given that some members of the LT expressed concern over listing on the website. It was suggested that providing a link

on the Initiative's website for specific interest groups or other planning endeavors might create a perception that we are advocating for their policies and hinder participation. Kurt Schindler, MSU Extension Land Use Educator expressed his opinion that The Grand Vision sets the regional standard; that MLUI has taken the planning professions best practices and repackaged it. Others felt these resources might be more helpful later in the planning process. Some Leadership Team members felt more appropriate resources for the Lakes to Land website include The Citizen Research Council, Michigan Association of Planners, American Planning Association, and other professional associations as they are known for utilizing objective data, research and methodology. These will provide general information and examples of best practices and principles and serve as a source of comparison that can legitimize our process.

Action Items:

- **Leadership Team Members need to finalize Community Vision Sessions locations.**
- **Post a link on the Lakes to Land website for Frankfort's Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance.**
- **Consider videotaping a Community Visioning Session to embed in the Website.**
- **Create a Leadership Team Tab on the website and send resources to John so his office staff can post it.**
- **Post all press releases on the L2L website**
- **Remove Michigan Land Use Institute and The Grand Vision from the list of Valuable Resources. Include Citizen Research Council, the Michigan Planning Association and the American Planning Association.**

Overview of Community Vision Session by John Iacoangeli

The community will be introduced to the Leadership Team, receive information about the purpose of a master plan, why collaboration is important, and will be introduced to the proposed format of the visioning session.

A discussion followed about incorporating high school aged population into the planning process; defining rural community issues and opportunities as distinct from those of a sister village; how to keep focus on township jurisdiction issues. The question of how to separate input during the Vision Session from residents and that of visitors from other communities arose. Participants who are not from the community whose assigned date it is for the Vision Session will be placed at separate tables in order to elicit their information respective to their communities. However, there may be some individuals who will attend Visioning Sessions that will only be observers. Collaboration will come later. The Vision Session slideshow will not be shared on the website. The Leadership Team members will receive the Visioning Session slideshow but it is very important that they do not share that information with anyone who is not a Leadership Team member.

A discussion followed about the need to send out postcards and the status of the Talking Points brochure. AES has been waiting to hear back from Manistee Township regarding their interest in joining the Initiative. Using the tax assessor database, mailings can be done through Vistaprint and are covered in the budget. They already have databases from both counties so postcards can be sent to the property owner of record. Despite posters, mailings and articles in the paper, the most effective PR is a personal invitation.

The importance of inviting naysayers was also emphasized as transformations can often take place in the process.

Action Items:

- **Mail Talking Point brochures and slideshow to LT**
- **Get locations for Vision Sessions in ASAP for a postcard mailing**

A random drawing to determine the sequence that the individual master plans will be prepared led to the following sequence: Pleasanton, Bear Lake, Crystal Lake, Gilmore, Joyfield, Blaine, Arcadia

It was clarified that townships can adjust their master plans or collaborate with other townships as little or as much as desired. After the Visioning Sessions, the Leadership Team will meet every other month to allow more time for B&R to work with the Planning Commissions. Additional meetings and special meetings may be required.

Benzie County Water Festival

Tamara Buswinski and Sharron May were both on panels and promoted the Initiative. Names and email addresses were collected and/or entered at the website.

Collaborative 5-Year MDNR Recreation Plan and MDNR Placemaking Inventory

Discussion regarding the Collaborative 5-Year MDNR Recreation Plan and Placemaking Inventory will occur at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Planning Commission Training Questionnaires need to be completed in preparation for the Citizen Planner Training.

Action Items:

- Leadership Team member need to submit to Tamara their Planning Commission Training Questionnaire.**

The next meeting date was set for 1PM June 13, 2012.