

MINUTES

LAKES TO LAND REGIONAL INITIATIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MONTHLY MEETING

PLEASANT VALLEY COMMUNITY CENTER
1 P.M. ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2013

Follow-up/response on “What could be done better?” Discussion

- Schedule: Use GANTT (project schedule) chart.
- Kurt Schindler’s checklist of process was helpful. B&R provided a simplified version: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/jiyc3acwafbvzo/Master%20plan%20review%20schedule.pdf>
- Data: include data sources for tables and maps; references. Contact Leah if you want that preference. Frankfort used live links right to sources and map. Sources in writing and date accessed suggested because sources can change. Incorrect data: keep correcting. Intermingling of township and village data. Census reports it that way. Leah is separating.
- Revisions: Mark ups so we know where the changes occurred on drafts. Open with Adobe Acrobat so you can make comments with the conversation bubble and send it back to them or the old fashioned way: page/paragraph/sentence. This protects the content. Suggested use of line numbers or highlighting changed sections to make it easier to follow up that the changes were done. Concerns expressed over the number of attempts needed to get the changes incorporated.
- Demographic descriptors offensive to some (See original feedback during initial comment period in December).
- Map revisions: Access to cartographer was productive.
- Incorporating original source documents or other references from the County MP – consultants can work with townships on an individual basis.
- Process: Provide incremental options toward achieving Best Practices. One of the critiques was too much, too fast. It’s a 5-year plan with a 20-year vision. Initial overview/training on the Master Plan process would have been helpful.
- Township boards not interested – Let them watch it work somewhere else. Success breeds success.
- If we had depended on our own skill sets we wouldn’t be as far as we are today.
- Avoid meeting cancellations.

Monica closed discussion with the sentiment that the Leadership Team needs to learn how to be in learning; uncomfortable with uncertainty without blame or shame to those we are working with.

Tim Ervin response: It would be very nice to educate the community about what a Master Plan is and isn’t. We need to convey the importance of emergent issues so this is a plan for today, but the priorities and blueprint should respond to change. There is a temptation to look at these things as static documents. Rural Michigan, and even TC, has no internal capacity to seek outside financial or technical assistance. Without that nothing will get done. He gave an example of a plan that was never implemented because there was no infrastructure in place. What is going to be the infrastructure to help all of these communities with their individual and collective goals? This needs to be addressed soon, with majority buy-in for what that is. It’s good to document the issues - it gives us more credibility - but we’ve got grant deadlines that are right upon us (next month). Hopwood added that

short term, AES has to be the infrastructure and be the catalyst for another level of infrastructure. But AES has never been able to support itself through this process.

Discussion about recent Incident/mixed message about need for signed resolutions from each community in order to receive grants. History: A competitive grant with the Dept. of Treasury was awarded to L2L to provide: 1) \$70,00 for zoning to identify common elements and language that could be useful to all communities. 2) Creation of a food innovation district (based on positive response to presentation by Sarah Lucas and Patty Cantrell). Ervin read the grant award letter where it states that in order to receive the grant, the treasury required resolutions from ALL the local units of government by the deadline or be subject to cancellation. Onkama Village didn't want to do it and was told that we probably weren't going to be able to receive the funding. A person at the Treasury Department told them the opposite; that it wasn't necessary. The very next day Ervin received an email from the Treasury Dept. reminding him of the condition of having all the resolutions. They sent all of them in but Manistee Township. The Treasury Department issued a note asking for Manistee Township's resolution so they could issue the grant award. Many hours were spent on this. That is the point of having an infrastructure. It needs to come from township representatives. This has been a voluntary effort by AES. There has been no funding for their operations or administration - the funders don't allow it. It would be up to our municipalities to pay for those services. We are looking at creating an L2L entity with a transition plan. In the interim, if AES is going to continue to do this voluntarily, people need to be more supportive.

Funding update – L2L is a group. There is no per community financial reporting; however, there will be for implementation. Some communities are using up more resources than others due to their MP. So what? What's relative is that we get the plans in place and what happens from there. Ervin explained how he sees it unfolding. He views the Convention of Communities as a nice tipping point for sharing what's been done and what can be done together and to expose this project in the first substantive way to funders. We talked about having two panels: key public agencies and private foundations. We've had MDNR, MDEQ and USDA say that they want to come in and overlay their program and services. That is a huge statement. It's never happened in Michigan. We've had that same discussion at the federal level with Senator Levin and Stabenow's staff. We need to get people to understand that there is going to be implementation at the local level; we need to get the funders to understand the priorities and common goals and how they can help achieve those priorities; and then we need an entity as the bridge between the two. And that entity has to have funder relations and the capacity to write grants and work them. One example Ervin would like to see 10 applications to the land trust fund arrives in March to the DNR on behalf of all these communities that maybe aggregates 3 million dollars for pathways and trails; something similar with MDOT for roads, improvements, non-motorized transportation. We need the piece of infrastructure that provides an entity between the two. Ervin needs some kind of representation from this group but not 18 people so he can take a look at some of the priorities and use them as examples to start pursuing grants. For example there is a grant opportunity coming up, the MDARD Strategic Growth Initiative and they are all excited about giving us money. It's all about funding something on a regional basis to support agriculture in any one of a number of areas: workforce development, technical assistance, commercialization, value-added processing, exporting. It fits like a glove. But the question becomes guidance. It's due in Oct. and we're meeting on the 18th. No problem writing the grant but we need a little bit of guidance from the group.

When we devised those groups (at the Priority Share Meeting) people didn't know what they were volunteering for. We have no time. A few of us have had some executive meetings to figure things out. We have to make this easy. Go to the chairs, form a smallish group and work through what the program is.

Denise suggested having generic resolutions in support of grants, as long as it doesn't cost anything.

Other grant opportunities: Ag grant, Stormwater and Wastewater Mgmt (SAW) grant, Recreation Plan.

Other questions/Issues

Onkama and City of Manistee are getting ready to review their Recreation Plan or Master Plan. If Onkama and the City of Manistee want to go through this process, Tim Ervin will find funding so they have updated plans from this project and another tab on the website. In hindsight any community within 18 months of a review process should have begun working on their plan.

Action Item: Have B&R work with those two communities to help us understand what is going to happen and what it will cost. Check with Lake Township, too.

Budget – B&R expenditures are so far greater than the grant provides. Ervin can report on what we've spent but not by community. From day one this has been a funded project. The deliverables are the Master Plans and that commitment needs to be met. There are administration costs. Eventually the communities may have to kick in and share that cost. **If we want to get funding to put together an L2L infrastructure then Ervin needs the directive to go forth and do that.**

Action Item: Go forth and do that! (Directive from Leadership Team that Tim Ervin secure funding to put together an L2L infrastructure). No objections.

One option is to form a non-profit. Other options: community development corporation (more complex). To set up a quasi-regional entity and look at best practices would take some money. Suggestion: have committees form executive committees to act on priorities, form leadership teams around the grant.

Convention of Communities - Saturday, October 19th at Crystal Mountain Resort. Pen it in. Monica will provide a general framework for everyone to react to. 5 representatives from each township need to come from each community. Monica will start with the individuals who attended the Priority Share meeting.

Action Item: Resend/clarify memo about the 5 representatives from each community.

Goal: November 1st all township boards have released plan for public review.

We need to get the plans to public agencies, utilities and adjacent communities. We'd like to bundle them up and send them all out at once, if possible. During the 63-day review period **you can still work on the Master Plan** and get input from residents. Elections are in November with possible changes in board members in some communities. It doesn't mean you are approving it or not working on it. You may still have tweaks on maps. The critical input is from the public- we need that. Tamara asked for an email to that effect to be sent out. Tim acknowledged Tamara for working on the most master plans at one time and still maintaining good spirits!

Citizen Planner Class update – 35 have enrolled. Starts on the 19th.

Next meeting Wednesday, October 9, 2013

- Master Plan review mechanisms
- L2L Administrative Entity Discussion