

MINUTES

LAKES TO LAND REGIONAL INITIATIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MONTHLY MEETING

Present: John Iacoangeli, Tamara Buswinka, Brad Hopwood, Monica Schultz, Tim Ervin, Bruce Wildie, Greg Wisner, Ted Wood, Becky Evans, Dave Long, Dick Hitchingham, Thomas Hart, Susan Zenker, Al Taylor, Adrian Poulisse, Joanne Bittner, Shelley Greene, Deanna Pattison, Janette May, Jim Laarman, Bob Peterson, Dennis Holcombe, Bob Delaney, Charles Beale, Sandy Skees-Gaier, Sharron May, Bill Robinson.

OLD BUSINESS

Review of Visioning Sessions, John Iacoangeli – Google Analytics show 470 visits to the Lakes to Land Regional Initiative web site over the last month. Hits to the web site increase prior to Visioning events and after media campaigns. People are using the documents posted on the site. Traffic by geographic areas includes hits from all over the State of Michigan and United States. 62% of the hits are direct traffic.

Summary of Collective Priorities - The results from each individual community vision session are posted on the website. Iacoangeli reviewed a spreadsheet that showed the common priorities for the region. Iacoangeli explained that the data is skewed as a result of the varying number of individuals who attended the different visioning sessions but it at least shows the start of trends.

The trends are that the:

1. highest common priority within the region is maintaining natural community character/rural character/open green space;
2. second priority was Zoning and Planning enforcement; and
3. third priority was for channel dredging/full operational harbors/water quality.

Iacoangeli showed a table that correlated the number of votes for an item by frequency of community. When counted by community and tallied by ranking:

- 5 out of 5 communities had as their top priority planning and zoning enforcement/having quality master plans/zoning for quality development.
- 4 out of 5 communities had as their second most collective priority maintaining natural character/maintaining a balance of single family residential and agriculture/ maintaining rural character and open space.
- 3 out of 5 collective priorities were improving water quality.
- 2 out of 5 were improving roads.
- 1 out of 5 was jobs and employment.

As other communities have their vision sessions, these rankings may change and will be updated.

Catch-Up Visioning Session (July 11, 2012)

A catch-up Visioning Session will be held tonight (July 11, 2012) as a catchall for those who were not able to attend a prior Visioning Session. Posters, press releases and emails were sent out.

Springdale Township Visioning Session (July 12, 2012)

Tomorrow night, Springdale Township will have a Visioning Session, and later in August there will be a joint visioning session for Bear Lake Township, the Village of Bear Lake and Pleasanton Township.

NEW BUSINESS

Memorandum and Organizational Suggestion (Dennis Holcombe) – a draft organizational chart was submitted by Dennis Holcombe in order to stimulate conversation about a potential future organizational structure that would be dedicated to the implementation of the Lakes to Land Regional Initiative. The flow chart was sent out to everyone on the mailing list (except for newer members who may not yet be on the mailing list) however; many of the members of the LT reported that they did not receive the email.

Hopwood explained that currently the organizational structure of the Leadership Team for the Lakes to Land Regional Initiative is a Town Hall open meeting format. Two people from each community preparing a master plan are theoretically on the Leadership Team. Hopwood stated that he believes the Leadership Team has been very inclusive of other stakeholders and interested individuals who are associated with the project. He agreed that eventually the Leadership Team would need to take on more structure.

Iacoangeli indicated that this flow chart is very reminiscent of a community development corporation. He views Dennis' chart as a White Paper for discussion and to start thinking about a more formal organizational process and an institutional framework that is more like a board to help get the implementation done. At the end of the project, when all the master plans are finished and we have had the Convention of Communities, we will better know the goals and objectives. As a group, working with AES and B&R, we can bring in one of the advisors for the Citizens Research Council who is very familiar with Intergovernmental arrangements and agreements. Then we can have a technical conversation about the best organizational structure for implementation. Right now it's too soon, but it's good to start thinking about it.

Ervin reinforced the importance of this Initiative being about planning to action/implementation. "The question will become: How will all the communities individually and as a group be best served? What kind of infrastructure is it going to take to support that, to have both private and public monies come into the region, and to support all of the goals identified both as individual jurisdictions but also as a team? It's great to have bits and pieces of the discussion now knowing that we'll know more as it unfolds."

Holcombe emphasized that while the consultants will be able to provide input on structure, "ultimately it is our decision of how we want to function after B&R and AES are no longer with us."

A question was brought up of how to share resources during the planning and zoning process. Iacoangeli explained that this will come by taking a look at how the priorities are starting to shake out and the opportunities for building effective collaboration. The LT will be hibernating for a while during the time B&R will be working with the Planning Commissions.

Successful dredging is an issue along the lakeshore, so he suggested that there is a group around this table who could get together to begin defining local solutions.

Sharron May cautioned Leadership Team members about getting too overly concerned or too far ahead, expressing confidence in the expertise of AES, B&R and resources like Kurt Schindler of MSU Extension who runs Intergovernmental Cooperation programs and has attended almost every meeting. “We may not have to figure it out all by ourselves. There are experts and resources out there we may not even be aware of. When the time comes, perhaps they can be brought in with templates for us to choose from.”

Roles and Responsibilities (Brad Hopwood and Monica Schultz) – Monica created a memo after looking back at the original RFP (Request For Proposal), the Scope of Work document that B&R created and other references to the roles of the Leadership Team, AES and B&R. She reviewed the Roles and Responsibilities of each entity. Some LT members did not get this email either. A discussion of possible causes included the size of the documents, diversion to junk mail boxes, and incomplete email lists. Dennis Holcombe suggested using an email list to check off names as a sign in sheet. Iacoangeli suggested posting all agendas and attachments such as this memo on the website. LT members were asked to look the memo over and bring questions or comments to the next meeting or contact Brad or Monica.

An LT member asked, “What is the endpoint of all this?” Iacoangeli explained that at the end of the Master Plan process, an organizational structure needs to be developed to serve as a focal point for obtaining funding to achieve implementation. As an example, if Crystal Lake Township wants to have a park on the lake and wants to go after a DNR grant, one of the best ways to enhance their chances is to show broad-based support, such as letters of support from other communities. By working together, communities can help each other get funding. He added, “Without exception, people at Visioning Sessions said that they have been through a process like this before but nothing ever happened. That’s where communities flounder: they don’t know how to make things happen. The goal here is to put an organization in place to make sure it happens.”

Iacoangeli went on to explain that while both Counties have Planning Commissions and NMCOG provides broad information to 7 counties, there is no organization in the middle to get things done. That could be one of the end results of this process. Al Taylor remarked that in looking at the inputs for Onekama Township’s Visioning Session, he feels that many of the priorities require experience and skills that local Planning Commissions do not have and that this is where B&R’s best practices and expertise helps. Hopwood surmised that many Planning Commissions write their own Zoning Ordinances to avoid outside influence or because they don’t have access to resources. “Outside influence does not have to be as much concern as it often is. Local control can be kept and funding issues can be resolved with collaboration. Whether it’s an airport in Thompsonville or a beach in Blaine, they’re all assets that we can use and collectively, if we can get these things done, it benefits everybody.”

Action Item: Check junk mail box and make sure you have Leah DuMouchel and Jami Klomp in your address book. A tab for the LT will be put on the website where all documents, attachments and agendas will be available. You will get an email to let you know to check the website.

NON-AGENDA ITEM BUSINESS

Discussion: How the zoning ordinance is related or contingent on the 5-year review and (possible) update of the Master Plan. Iacoangeli explained that there is a requirement in the Michigan Planning and Enabling Act, Act 33 of 2008, which states that a Master Plan has to have a Zoning Plan informing the community of what changes need to be made in both classification and content of the zoning ordinance. A zoning ordinance needs to be based upon a master plan. Al Taylor mentioned that Onkama is in the process of updating their zoning ordinance and one of the problems he sees is that the motivated people who come to the Visioning Sessions may not be the majority. “The ones who show up to ordinance reviews are not the same people who come to the visioning session. A stakeholder analysis is important. The people at the Visioning Sessions are only one group of people, not the only group.” One of the roles of LT members is to engage diverse members of their community.

Discussion: other means of drawing people in besides the Visioning Sessions such as phone or surveys. Over 5000 postcards went out advertising the visioning sessions. Once communities conclude visioning, the collective priorities will be made available for public review. It is important that the motivated people who were engaged in the Visioning Sessions also need to participate throughout the master planning process and update of the zoning ordinance. The LT members’ role is to engage residents and bring them to the table as engaged as possible throughout the entire process. Iacoangeli also likes Sandra Skees-Gaier’s suggestion to purchase space on a billboard along US-31 directing people to the Lakes to Land website.

DNR Placemaking Update:

Iacoangeli, Buswinka and Ervin (AES) attended a DNR meeting. The purpose of the DNR meeting was to plan for the convening of a wide variety of DNR Department heads to discuss how the DNR is going to coordinate their Placemaking initiatives with L2L. Topics to be discussed at the meeting will include Fish, Wildlife, Open Space, Forestry, Jobs, Easements and information for the Master Plans.

Change in the Order of Master Plans

When the random drawing was done to determine the order of working with Planning Commissions on their Master Plans, the first and second communities to begin the process were Pleasanton and Bear Lake Township. Because Pleasanton and Bear Lake Township did not attract a large enough number of people to consider their visioning session a success, a second visioning session is planned. The second vision session will combine Bear Lake Township and Pleasanton Township with the Village of Bear Lake. As a result of the delay in visioning for Bear Lake and Pleasanton, B&R will begin working with Crystal Lake (with John I.) and Gilmore and Blaine (with Tamara B.). B&R will begin working with each Planning Commission and will tailor the process to the unique circumstances of the community.

Deadline Status and Extension

The Deadline to join the Initiative was July 1st. **It was proposed to extend the deadline for communities in the prescribed Area of Influence who want to join in at the Convention of Communities like Onkama and Frankfort have done. This would allow the villages of Benzonia and Beulah, and townships of Benzonia/Platte and Homestead/Inland Townships to join in at the end.** It was mentioned that Shelley Rosa is working on Homestead Township.

There was a lot of discussion concerning the inclusion of the townships outside the original Area of Influence. Holcombe stated that we need to prove to ourselves that we can manage what we have, complete the task of the original RFP and meet that contractual obligation; and allocate the money that was already awarded. Schultz stated that:

- we are not saying “infinite growth”;
- we need to include interested townships and local governments in the conversation and invite the relationship;
- efficiencies can be built into the process;
- we may need their cooperation later.

Holcombe and Beale stated concerns that L2L has doubled the size of the Initiative and therefore the amount of funding needed.

Beale proposed that it be defined how an arrangement with communities who wish to be part of the L2L Initiative past the July 1st deadline to join will work, how L2L members can be reassured that it won’t affect the Initiative in a negative way, and/or how it would add to our abilities. Ervin confirmed that the deadline on Visioning Sessions and Planning work is done. Iacoangeli, quoting “A house divided does not stand,” proposed that the appropriate conversation with communities outside of the Area of Influence is to include them in the general conversation with the specific message that while L2L doesn’t have the budget or the resources right now, we will endeavor to find other funding. May went back to her original question of the importance of involving the communities in the prescribed Area of Influence and asked if anyone who has connections to key persons in those communities could work with her on getting them on board for the Convention of Communities. Betsy Evans, Monica Schultz, Bruce Ogilvie and Bill Robinson offered their assistance.

The LT group then named issues that have been immediately identified as shared among local townships/governments:

- Dredging
- Scenic Hwy
- Road/Infrastructure (example: Gracie Road Access sites to widened road with DNR)
- Watershed plans
- Trails
- Invasive Species
- Specialized Agriculture

Iacoangeli suggested that LT group find interested parties in their communities who want to work on these issues and bring them to the next meeting.

Next Meeting

August 8, 2012 at 1PM all committees will meet at this location and start their initial discussions.