

LAKES TO LAND REGIONAL INITIATIVE MONTHLY MEETING

August 8, 2012

1:00 p.m. Pleasant Valley Community Center (PVCC)
3586 Glover Lake Road

Roll Call: Brad Hopwood, Monica Schultz, Susan Barnard, Jackie Johnson, Bob Peterson, Bill Robinson, Dennis Holcombe, Bob Delanoy, Sharron May, Adam Putney, Gary Sauer, Dave Long, Dick Hitchingham, Sandy Giaier, Matt Emery, Ted Wood, Al Taylor, Jim Laarman, Bruce Wildie, Janette May, Tim Ervin (AES)

OLD BUSINESS

Vision Sessions Updates

Vision Sessions for Bear Lake Township, Village of Bear Lake, and Pleasanton Township Vision Sessions will be held on August 16, 2012 at Bear Lake High School Library and for Manistee Township on August 22, 2012 at Manistee Township Hall.

NEW BUSINESS

Overview of Process-Tim Ervin

Given the number of new LT members, Ervin gave a power point presentation and review of how the L2L Initiative was started and evolved, including:

- The roles of AES and the Leadership Team
- Conditions for the project
- Examples of AES projects and funding sources
- The original concept and how it evolved
- Deliverables
- The focus for the future
- A list of potential needs.

Ervin concluded his presentation with the following perspective: "The sooner a plan gets done and the sooner action takes place, we find the more people believe in what they've done and are doing. That will be a real challenge here – [the] need to work quickly. Another thing you have identified is the need for an institutional framework that would best serve all the communities going forward, particularly as it relates to developing resources to support implementation. From my perspective [it's] great we are thinking about this but it's a little premature to get too far into it until the plans begin to evolve and we understand more fully what the needs are, what the areas of focus are and what people would like to see happen. I think we need a little more information about what the desired outcomes are by all of the communities in order to do a good job of looking at potential scenarios for the future. And frankly, that institutional framework may not involve AES - and that's fine. Our concern comes right back to action and making sure that once you go through this process, we do it in the right way, with the right people and at the end of this tunnel things are happening in these communities in some way, shape or form."

Action Item: Upload entire power point presentation to the website under the LT tab.

The presentation was followed by a **Question and Answer Session:**

Question: Gilmore Township was one of the 3 Townships that participated in this process and brought things to where they are now. One of the things that got us "buy in" was that

phrase “owning the process” and I would like a description as to what you perceive owning the process is to you – I know what it means to me and the other townships, and we are going to hang on to those phrases tenaciously.

Ervin: In my opinion, it relates to the deliverables... the master plans and the joint implementation strategy and the processes used to complete both of those. What it meant in Onokama when they were developing their joint master plan was that there wasn't anybody that wasn't involved – the Lions, the Lake Association, the Village, the Township, businesses, Non-profits, Little River Band – everybody was involved in that and I think took a real sense of ownership in the plan, and by being involved, in the process. When the plan was completed, all those interests could look at the plan and see what they wanted to see happen in the community. In our perspective, that ownership is essential if in fact, implementation is going to occur. If you don't own the process, if you don't own what comes as a result of that process, you certainly aren't going to own the implementation and that's really the end game here.

Question: When we started down this road over a year ago, the big thrust at that time was securing funding and I believe when that funding was initially done, we were talking about 5 townships. Well, we are considerably bigger than that now. Have you got any sort of a timeline on when the money is going to run out or where more money is going to be coming from?

Ervin: This is the sequence as it played out. We originally sought a grant for \$65,000 from the Mott Foundation for the limited number of townships at that time who were participating. That was based on an assumption that to do an entire master plan update [it was] going to cost \$12,000-\$15,000 per township, depending upon where the township was with their current master plan. While it didn't give us a flush amount of money, it provided us with enough money [to] get started. It was on that basis that we issued the RFP.

We also applied at the same time to the Economic Incentive Program for \$167,000, an entirely new program, and we got the entire grant amount. We ended up with \$220,000 [and] and with more money than we set out to achieve, we talked [with this group] about expanding the Area of Influence to our neighbors. Now we have many neighbors included in the process.

What I haven't been able to define until now - because this thing has been expanding so rapidly - is exactly what that cash reserve is. We have enough money to accomplish the master plans in all jurisdictions. We have enough money to complete the collaborative implementation strategy beyond a shadow of a doubt. We also have a cash reserve. The exact amount of that cash reserve I will let you know in September. Now, at the same time we are already talking about this project with other funders. The conversation is basically going like this: Do you know about the L2L Regional Initiative? Well, here's what it's all about. We're going to need implementation money, and by the way, we're going to be counting on you. I've had that discussion with several funders, starting the educational process. There is tremendous receptivity to what we're doing and I can tell you that Rotary Charities of Traverse City [is] the biggest philanthropic organization in northern Michigan - they've granted 50 million dollars over 10 years. I've worked with Marsha Smith, Executive Director for a long time and they do good work. I don't think they could be more excited about supporting this. What you're doing is a big deal that needs to happen in other areas in Michigan.

I've had the same kind of response from the USDA and The Oleson Foundation. I went to Munising – on my own dime, I might add – at the request of The Michigan Natural Resources Land Trust Fund which each year allocates as high as 100 million, 20 million, 40 million in funding for recreational developments and acquisitions. I went up there because they wanted to learn about this and the reason [is] because they spend an awful lot of money and they want to begin to understand how they could be more strategic in how they can allocate their funding. And they wanted to learn about this initiative because it is the only initiative that is really bringing a whole lot of local jurisdictions together, both to develop individual plans but also collaborative ones, and I can tell you that they liked very much what they heard. A lot of work is going on to position funders and get into a position with funders, but do we need more funders right now to meet our core deliverables? No.

Question: Early on the LT was defined as two representatives from each township. Our contractor, Beckett and Rayder has reached beyond the bounds of the townships and invited [Benzie] County to participate. However that occurred, I don't know, but it was without the guidance of the LT. How do you plan to accommodate the County?

Ervin: Let me address that in a couple of ways. One thing I want to get back to is that we are baking a new cake here and to a certain extent it is a learning process for all of us. And I think everybody brings good will and the best intentions to this process. I like to think like that about anything. The way I look at [County participation] is that we've got all these interests that should be involved and care about this process: non-profits, other governments including tribal governments, businesses, private citizens, seasonal residents – everybody. And if these plans are going to be any good we've got to do our best to get everybody involved in that process. I view County government as part of those interests and I explained this to Johh [Iacoangeli of B&R] that it, again, goes back to the origin of the project and the explicit purposes of the LT. I don't believe that County government should be on the LT because we did not define the project that way. And how do I plan to address that? I think that's how I addressed it. We may have suggested [they] be on the leadership team but when we went back and looked at how this project was set up, how it was organized, how it was driven, and it really isn't the best fit. Do we want you to come to meetings? Absolutely. Do we want you to participate in any of these Planning Commission meetings, any of the other sessions that occur, the process? Absolutely. But I think the LT is the LT and what we said at the outset, which is 2 reps from each of the units that are creating deliverables. It just makes sense.

Question: Can you give us a few examples of the Invasive Species deliverables?

Ervin: I'm not an expert on invasive species but the best example I know of is sitting right next to you - the work done in Onokama is unbelievable - the first ever township-wide ordinance that got very little opposition and in the first year generated – wasn't it over \$100,000 to eliminate phragmites, Al?

Al Taylor: it wasn't an ordinance it was a special assessment district. 94% of the population supported it and the majority of it was not lakefront property.

Laarman: I'm wondering about the processes that need research and institutional assistance, like Swimmer's Itch, for instance.

Ervin: I suspect there are a lot of communities here that are going to identify invasives as an issue and we're probably going to get a whole bunch of invasives that we need to deal with as part of all the master plans. One of the things we can do potentially is make this project

a learning lab for how to treat, manage and possibly eradicate invasives for all time [because] we have this critical mass to work with.

Question: Don't we need a strategy first? Shouldn't we take the top 5 issues in the Visioning Sessions and make a strategy for each one of those major issues and then break those into initiatives? You don't go from the highest priority down to specifics without a plan, and we don't have a plan.

Ervin: There's a whole lot of work required to get to that point – it requires doing the master plan, which really lays out the vision, goals, steps and strategies and a year by year game plan for getting there. The goal is multiple communities talking about common problems, common ways to resolutions, strategies that benefit all the townships, and the need for a strategy to delve into these issues. It comes down to the steps and every township is going to be going through all of that work and we should be talking about those issues wherever possible at the same time not only to avoid duplication but identifying points of unison, and to avoid having to go back and modify the master plans at the end. One of the things at the September meeting to be addressed is the sequencing and the coordination of the events.

Action Item: Post an updated schedule of the Steps and Components on the website

Committee Survey – Brad Hopwood shared the results of the committee survey where LT members were asked to sign up for 2 committees.

Committee Break-Out Sessions, appointment of Secretary and written Scope of Work for the Committees – Tabled.

The Round Table Discussions were replaced by a lengthy discussion about the need, relevance and timing of these discussions. Brad Hopwood's understanding was that it was only an opportunity to get our feet wet, an exercise, explaining that "All we were asked to do today is talk among ourselves. Don't look at these discussions as more than what they are: cross-communication". The following is a summary of the diverse viewpoints expressed by LT members:

- That the topics should consist of the top 5 issues of the Visioning Sessions, to start to develop a strategy.
- To look at the timeline and determine when activities like this need to be placed on it.
- That the breakout sessions are premature and take the focus away from engaging the individual communities in the master plan process, an abstract idea that could use more concrete steps.
- That we need to delve more into the definitions of who is leading, who is following and who is advising - "It's like trying to get the Queen Mary into Portage Lake" - we need a steering committee to focus our energy in one direction or another and bring it to the group for a final decision".
- That AES and B&R are leading the process until we get through the master plans because they have the expertise to meet the statutory requirements, meet best practices and all the things we don't understand.
- That B&R serves as the common denominator and strategy for learning and sharing between communities.
- That we need to determine the most effective use of our time, decide what direction to go and step into it confidently.
- That breaking into committees was overwhelming, especially for Planning Commissioners who "don't need another project".

Tim Ervin agreed that right now it's important to get everybody to be a part of the Master Plan process and that a big part of the LT role is getting everyone involved. The strategic discussions about how can we learn from each other, how can we share [are also] good things for this group to be talking about. Short of having some strategic discussions, the authority has shifted to the Township boards and Planning Commissions. While our master plans are going on, it's probably good to start thinking about these things to get some background work done. Next month, we will try to get an updated schedule on the process, and the various components of the plan and have this all laid out on a matrix. "I think we know why we're here, I think we just need - because it's been such a dynamic thing - to understand the timing and sequencing of all these parts with an updated timeline". September should be a discussion of tools and practices: What do you need? What do your communities need?

Al Taylor initiated a discussion about **Stakeholder Analysis**. "It seems everyone is nervous about the Master Plan process. One of the flaws in the Onekama process was not doing a stakeholder analysis and where we've fallen short is running into the stakeholders who truly do control the process - you need to identify those key people in the communities who can make or break the process". A concern expressed by another LT member was that "after the summer people are gone, we are going to be trying to engage stakeholders who are living somewhere else".

Ervin: How many people in your communities know what a master plan is? He proposed that stakeholder analysis become a focus of the next meeting; adding that many grant-makers want to see documentation of Stakeholder input.

Action item: Submit a paragraph of your concerns, ideas, questions to Jami about:

- 1) How to identify Stakeholders
- 2) How to Communicate.

Action Item: Al Taylor will share websites and links regarding how to conduct a Stakeholder Analysis.

Taylor cautioned about using the boiler-plate language that consultants typically provide. "You want to be sure that the language is clear and it's your job to do that. Most of these templates come from urban areas and you have to make those adjustments".

Ervin: That falls under the category of Communication. The value in this thing is the local relevance.

Sharron May: that happened in Frankfort. Everything they couldn't figure out what to do with was zoned Agricultural. But the consultants didn't have a correct understanding of the areas - or of agriculture - and some of those areas were wetlands and sensitive dune areas. We ended up creating an Urban Agriculture Ordinance and Wade Trim is now using it as a model.

Monica Schultz: So does this mean that the small group stuff is sidelined for awhile?

Hopwood: I don't know how many people were comfortable about what was going on with the round table discussions. It was a good idea, and If there are groups who want to get together, I encourage it.

Long: We are all really busy right now. We need to focus on the master plans, stakeholder input and communication. We have to do that right if we're going to have a successful master plan. Let's focus on getting the deliverables that we have promised our townships. Once that is going well, then we can start looking at some of these other issues.

The discussion concluded on a note of gratitude from one speaker: "For me this group of discussions has probably been the most important meeting I've attended since the beginning. It shows the diversity of everyone's concerns. I don't think it is important that we got through the agenda for today because we have identified so many things that we should be on the lookout for, whether you are starting at the zero point as Joyfield Township is or you're already 90% there. I would have loved to have a recording of this discussion. I really appreciate all of the input today".

Next Meeting: September 12, 2012 at 1p.m. at the PVCC

Suggested Agenda Items:

- Tools & Practices: What do the LT/Communities need?
- Updated Schedule: Steps and Components
- Communication
 - Stakeholder Analysis
 - Boiler-plate vs. local relevance
 - Strategy: how do we learn from each other/share?