

# Keweenaw County Economic Development Committee

Keweenaw County Courthouse

Eagle River, MI, USA

Wednesday, November 7, 2018 Meeting Minutes

(approved December 5, 2018)

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 pm by Chair Todd Holmstrom, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

- Members present: Tess Ahlborn, Harvey Desnick, Todd Holmstrom, Ned Huwatschek, Peg Kauppi, Matt Kero, Joe Miller, Sam Raymond, Kass Simila
- Contributing Members: Tom Bryant, John Sturos, Rob Tarvis
- BOC Representative: Don Piche
- Guests: Gina Nicholas, Jeff Radcliffe (KEDA)

## 2. Approval of Agenda

*Motion* to approve the agenda by Joe Miller, second by John Sturos. All in favor, *motion carried*.

## 3. Approval of Minutes

*Motion* to approve the October 3, 2018 meeting minutes by Harvey Desnick, second by Kass Simila. All in favor, *motion carried*.

## 4. Unfinished Business

### 4a. Priority check-in:

1. broadband development and communications
2. establish a small business revolving loan fund
3. 100 good paying jobs
4. land use issues including zoning and permanent easements
5. workforce development

#### 1. *Broadband development and communications*

Todd Holmstrom volunteered to coordinate a meeting with NMU's EAN contact Eric Smith to discuss Keweenaw County's role in the network being implemented throughout the UP. Others interested include Peg Kauppi, Jeff Radcliffe, Joe Miller (evenings) and Tess Ahlborn (evenings).

Tess Ahlborn will check in with PFN in Baraga on progress towards a county-wide fiber network and report at a future meeting.

#### 2. *Establish a small business revolving loan fund*

Need to consider renaming this priority as RLF's are available to Keweenaw County businesses through KEDA. More RLF info can be found at <http://kedabiz.com/resources/-business-financing>. Harvey Desnick will focus the group on raising awareness and coordinating with countywide website developments. Upcoming statewide *Opportunity zones* will play an important role in economic development.

### 3. *100 good paying jobs*

Todd Holmstrom attended the Million Cups event last month at the KML. The new owner, John Mueller, described his two community objectives to grow the economy and to grow housing. The KML will roll out a winter expansion plan to include year-round jobs.

Todd also attended the KEDA breakfast meeting last month with guest speaker MTU President Rick Koubuk, who pledged the university would actively take a role in the area's economic growth. Communities need to be prepared as Tech grows from 7000 to 10,000 students in the future. This is a large workforce that we could benefit from.

Harvey Desnick is registered with Handshake, an online resource for connecting students with employers. Harvey will follow up with Matt Kero to develop a conduit for interns to connect with local businesses.

Connecting with the FinnZone, a collaborative effort with KEDA, Smartzone, and others, to develop relationships with Finland for economic development may be an avenue worth exploring. Tom Bryant volunteered to look into this topic and follow up with the EDC in the future.

### 4. *Land use issues including zoning and permanent easements*

Joe Miller reported there are only a few areas in the county zoned for business and multi-family housing. The group is in a learning mode now and currently focused on gaps or stumbling blocks that require new businesses to file variances. The group will approach the planning commission in the future.

Sam Raymond has been involved in a few meetings regarding permanent easements for recreational access for human-powered activities including additional cross-country ski trails in the Copper Harbor area. He will continue to update the EDC on progress.

It was suggested the EDC learn more about zoning related to solar power infrastructure in the event that guidelines need to be developed.

### 5. *Workforce development*

The success of our future depends on advancing our education for vastly changing professional career paths. The MiSTEM program and the Marshall Plan for Talent are two state initiatives impacting K-12 and beyond. NMU is focusing on cybersecurity while MTU has a digital focus. Outreach and awareness are needed at all levels. Kass Simila will contact the ISD to see how the EDC and ISD can work together.

#### 4b. Welcoming new businesses:

Tom Bryant volunteered to draft a welcome letter to new businesses in Keweenaw County. In addition to new KML owners, there are new owners at the Eagle River Inn, Fanny Hooe Resort, and the Keweenaw Agate Inn. Tom will follow up with Elizabeth and Ann to get updates on new businesses in the county. If members hear of more, please forward info to Tom Bryant.

#### 4c. County website update:

Rob Tarvis volunteered to be the EDC representative for the county website development project. He will coordinate with Ann. Suggestions include highlighting our businesses, resources, financing, and partnerships.

## **5. New business**

- a. Opportunity Zones: Jeff Radcliffe, KEDA, introduced *Opportunity Zones*, areas designated to receive qualified opportunity funds. It should be noted that the entire Keweenaw County has been designated as an opportunity zone. The program will allow businesses to reinvest capital for growth. There will be an open community meeting hosted by KEDA on Thursday, Dec. 6, 2018 at the Lakeshore Center in Houghton. All are invited to attend.

- b. Keweenaw County Pleasure Maps: Sam Raymond noted that he attends several conferences and events each year. As such, he would like the county to consider resurrecting the Keweenaw Pleasure Map brochure. Suggestions include developing a list of content to include recreation types, (trails, fishing, etc.), businesses with websites, attractions (county owned, historical, Brockway Mtn.), no paid advertising, consider the CHS graphics class for assistance. Don Piche will investigate available funding options, Sam will develop a check list of items for EDC review at a future meeting.
- c. Other: Harvey Desnick introduced SCORE, a group a retired volunteers and business executives that come together as a mentoring service and resource for business owners. Harvey will present more about getting qualified as a SCORE volunteer at a future meeting. [www.score.org](http://www.score.org)
- d. Other: Tom Bryant mentioned his involvement with the engineering of licensed medical marijuana warehouses downstate and questioned Keweenaw County's interest in this business area. There are currently no growers approved in the UP, and there are no testing facilities in the UP. Zoning requirements will need review before attracting these businesses. The EDC recognizes the industry may be in conflict with current federal law.

## **6. Public Comment**

Gina Nicholas, Keweenaw Community Forest Co., described this successful business that owns and manages lands in the county, allowing lands throughout the Keweenaw to be in local control. Like some conservancies, KCFC lands may require limited access. EDC members discussed concerns with the nature of limiting access, namely the removal of culverts and road systems that can potentially change drainage and results in reduced access for residents and visitors to the county. While the EDC recognizes and respects the rights of private property owner, the groups need to work together in the future to ensure that land use changes are open to public comment and do not negatively affect the beauty of the Keweenaw.

## **7. Adjourn**

*Motion to adjourn* at 8:27 pm by Sam Raymond, second by Tom Bryant. All in favor, *motion carried*.

Next meeting Wednesday, December 5, 2018 – 6:00 pm, Eagle River, MI

NOTE: The EDC will not meet in January 2019.