



# Minutes

Southwest Michigan Planning Commission  
FULL COMMISSION MEETING  
Tuesday, December 21, 2021, 9:30 a.m.

Meeting Held in Person at Southwest Michigan Planning Commission Office and Remotely Via  
Zoom

## **MEMBERS PRESENT (in person):**

Freehling, Teri Sue, Chair, Berrien County Commissioner  
Marchetti, Roseann, Vice Chair, Cass County Commissioner  
Akinwale, Yemi, Treasurer, Berrien County Representative  
Preston, Linda, Secretary, Cass County Representative  
Gundersen, Kristen, Alternate Secretary, Berrien County Representative  
Remus, Richard, Alternate Treasurer, Berrien County Representative  
Curran, Jim, Berrien County Commissioner  
Doroh, Kurt, Van Buren County Commissioner  
Laylin, Leon, Cass County Representative  
Pantaleo, Paul, Berrien County Representative  
Stauffer, Dick, Berrien County Representative

## **MEMBERS PRESENT (via Zoom):**

DeLong, Don, Cass County Representative  
Fette, Dan, Berrien County Representative  
Foerster, David, Van Buren County Representative  
Hanson, Don, Van Buren County Commissioner  
Morris, Zach, Van Buren County Economic Development Ex-Officio  
Payne, Gloria, Berrien County Representative  
Patterson-Gladney, Gail, Van Buren County Commissioner (Remote by medical necessity)  
Torzynski, Robert, Pokagon Band Representative  
Tyler, Doug, Cass County Representative

## **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Meeks, Donnie, Berrien County Commissioner  
Hanson, Sandra, Van Buren County Representative  
Janssen, Judy, Van Buren County Representative  
Stover, Jim, Berrien County Representative

## **STAFF PRESENT:**

K. John Egelhaaf, Executive Director  
Marcy Hamilton, Deputy Executive Director/Senior Planner

## **GUESTS PRESENT:**

Jay Wesley  
Graham Woodhouse Award Recipients

## **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Teri Sue Freehling called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m. and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance. Board Secretary, Linda Preston took roll call and a quorum was present.

## **2. ACCEPTANCE AND/OR REVISION OF CONSENT AGENDA**

Chair Freehling presented the Agenda. Kurt Doroh moved to **“ACCEPT THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED.”** Paul Pantaleo seconded. Unanimous consent.

## **3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Director Egelhaaf invited the board members to ask for further detail on any portion of the report. Kurt Doroh asked for detail on the progress of the Palisades Economic Recovery Strategy. The work is in the data collection and analysis part of the project. In mid-January the first phase of the data analysis will be presented to the Palisades Citizen Advisory Panel (PCAP). Also, a website is being designed and a social media page developed to engage the public in the work.

Rich Remus asked for detail on the Build Back Better Regional Challenge grant application that was not awarded. Egelhaaf responded that the partners who participated in the application have agreed to prepare a strategy for subdividing the application into individual applications that can be submitted to appropriate grant programs at EDA. Those meetings will continue and the work as well.

Roseann Marchetti questioned the GEO software and its purpose. Egelhaaf explained that the software is a tool to model scenarios for the provision of broadband internet to specific areas. It estimates the cost based on a series of variables. Berrien County is at a stage in their exploration of countywide broadband where the software appears to be useful. They contracted with the SWMPC to reimburse for the purchase and implementation of the tool. The software developer (GEO Partners) offered to provide a license for all three counties at a cost lower than they had quoted for Berrien alone. This offer was made because we are the first licensee in Michigan. In exchange, the SWMPC will share our experience with the software to our fellow regions across the state. In the future, if Cass or Van Buren Counties want to make use of the software, the time spent responding to requests in those two counties will be separately accounted for and billed accordingly (not to Berrien County).

Teri Freehling asked for clarification on the SWMPC’s Mobility Management work mentioned in the report. Egelhaaf responded by explaining that the SWMPC is managing a process for MDOT wherein they are seeking a consultant to develop a statewide mobility management methodology and standards. The SWMPC will help build an RFP and oversee the process of processing the proposals and organize the evaluation, interview, and selection process.

Yemi Akinwale moved to **“ACCEPT THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT.”** Roseann Marchetti seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

#### **4. GRAHAM WOODHOUSE AWARD**

The annual intergovernmental effort award was given to the collaborators responsible for the Dowagiac River Restoration and Water Trail. There were seventeen organizations among those celebrated.

#### **5. WELCH LACKEY AWARD**

The annual award for exemplary leadership was given to Cass County Commissioner Roseann Marchetti.

#### **6. 2022 INSURANCE OPTION**

Annually the board is asked to consider three options for how SWMPC insurance costs will be shared between staff and the organization. The three options were presented by Egelhaaf along with the projected 2022 costs associated with each option as well as the changes in cost from 2021 to 2022. The three options considered by the board were: a hard cap, an 80/20 split, or an exemption that would allow for the continuation of the previous 98/2 split.

Paul Pantaleo moved to “**APPROVE AN EXEMPTION TO THE 80/20 OR HARD CAP COST SHARE**” Leon Laylin seconded the motion, which carried unanimously by roll call vote.

#### **7. 2022 PROPOSED MEETING SCHEDULE**

The 2022 meeting schedule was briefly discussed. Meeting dates and location were included. Egelhaaf added that he has prepared directions to the Cass County Road Commission that will be included in future meeting packets.

Kurt Doroh moved to “**APPROVE THE PROPOSED 2022 MEETING SCHEDULE.**” Yemi Akinwale seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

#### **8. AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORT**

Roseann Marchetti discussed the Executive Director evaluation that was managed by the committee. The committee recommended a four percent salary increase for 2022 for Egelhaaf. Several positive comments were made regarding Egelhaaf’s performance.

#### **9. RESOLUTION 2021-3 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CONTRACT EXTENSION**

The resolution to extend Egelhaaf’s employment contract for another year through 2022 was discussed. The recommended salary increase was included in the resolution. The board considered the term of the extension. There was general agreement to place consideration of a multi-year provision on the February SWMPC meeting agenda.

Kurt Doroh moved to “**APPROVE RESOLUTION 2021-3.**” Gail Patterson-Gladney seconded the motion, following a roll call vote the resolution was passed unanimously.

#### **10. PLANNER PRESENTATION**

Egelhaaf presented a report on the Infrastructure & Jobs Act (IIJA) & the status of the Michigan High Speed Internet Office. The presentation included the financial impact of the new infrastructure Act. Some clarity was provided on the subject of how much funding will pass through the standard distribution formulas and how much will be available based on competitive grant awards.

#### **11. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None offered.

#### **12. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR**

Leon Laylin offered departing thoughts as he has elected to retire from public office and step away from his appointment to the SWMPC board. It was noted that his contributions and wisdom have been appreciated. He introduced Leon Dodd who the Cass County Commission is considering as his potential replacement.

Kurt Doroh wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Linda Preston expressed that all the applicants for the Graham Woodhouse Intergovernmental Effort Award were spectacular this year. But finally, the Dowagiac River Restoration project was particularly spectacular.

Roseann Marchetti invited the board to see the results of the wonderful downtown Cassopolis work.

#### **13. ADJOURNMENT**

Kurt Doroh moved to adjourn the meeting. Leon Laylin supported the motion. The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 11:06 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:



K. John Egelhaaf, AICP

Date: December 27, 2021