



Minutes

Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
FULL COMMISSION MEETING
Tuesday, April 18, 2023, 9:30 a.m.

Meeting Held in Person at Cass County Road Commission

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Marchetti, Roseann, Chair, Cass County Commissioner
Doroh, Kurt, Vice Chair, Van Buren County Commissioner
Gundersen, Kristen, Alternate Secretary, Berrien County Representative
Remus, Richard, Treasurer, Berrien County Representative
Petersen, Jan, Alternate Treasurer, Van Buren County Representative
Catherman, Rick, Van Buren County Representative
Curran, Jim, Berrien County Commissioner
DeLong, Don, Cass County Representative
Dodd, James, Cass County Representative
Fette, Dan, Berrien County Representative
Freehling, Teri Sue, Berrien County Commissioner
Hanson, Sandra, Van Buren County Representative
Newton, Matthew, Van Buren County Representative
Pantaleo, Paul, Berrien County Representative
Patterson-Gladney, Gail, Van Buren County Commissioner
Torzynski, Robert, Pokagon Band Representative
Tyler, Doug, Cass County Representative
Wood, Gary, Berrien County Representative
Wuerfel, Julie, Berrien County Commissioner

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Preston, Linda, Secretary, Cass County Representative
Leary, Tina, Van Buren County Representative
Stauffer, Dick, Berrien County Representative

GUESTS PRESENT:

Baumann, John, Proxy for Dick Stauffer

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Roseann Marchetti called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance. Office Manager, Maria Vettraino took roll and a quorum was present.

2. ACCEPTANCE AND/OR REVISION OF CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Marchetti presented the Consent Agenda. Jim Dodd moved to “**ACCEPT THE CONSENT AGENDA.**” Kurt Doroh seconded. A roll call vote was taken, the motion carried unanimously.

3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Director Egelhaaf presented the Executive Director’s Report, shared updates on personnel changes, and opened the floor for questions.

Kurt Doroh wondered if Zach Morris or Sarah Snoeyink might be used to fill the available Ex Officio seat for economic development on the SWMPC board. Egelhaaf stated he will see if either might be available.

Gail Patterson-Gladney asked for more information on Rural Transportation Funding, specifically the TAP. Director Egelhaaf gave more details on this funding.

Richard Remus inquired on the cost of the Regional Economic Resiliency Plan Video. Egelhaaf stated the cost is about three thousand dollars. Remus also asked about SWMPC’s responsibilities for the Michigan State Housing Plan. Egelhaaf explained the plan and shared that we will most likely not be placed as the regional lead on this project.

Jan Petersen moved to “**ACCEPT THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT.**” Paul Pantaleo seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

4. 2023 OVERALL WORK PROGRAM

Director Egelhaaf presented the 2023 Overall Work Program. Matthew Newton moved to “**APPROVE 2023 OVERALL WORK PROGRAM.**” Sandra Hanson seconded the motion, which carried unanimously by roll call vote.

5. 2022 AUDIT

Director Egelhaaf explained the status of our 2022 audit. It initially appeared that the SWMPC would be in single audit territory but after research and discussion with our auditors, in fact, we are not. He stated the audit would possibly be ready to be approved in May and we anticipate the need to set up an Executive Committee meeting for that approval.

6. FACILITATED BOARD DISCUSSION

Your Big, Audacious Ideas for SW Michigan

Director Egelhaaf walked through the IJA and presented some federal funding themes and amounts, how it can be tapped, and who is eligible. He touched on some of our regionally specific assets and opened the floor for ideas.

Robert Torzynski suggested passenger rail from Grand Rapids to Kalamazoo. Egelhaaf said this passenger rail is being considered by Amtrak in their long-term strategic planning. Kurt Doroh would like to see more advertising/greater recognition of passenger rail and implement multimodal transportation to and from the train.

Jan Petersen shared her experience as a farmer and talked about our need for a more equitable and robust food system. She would like to see more regenerative agriculture and farmscapes to better sustain farmland and possibly develop a map to see where the best places are to produce more high-quality food.

Matthew Newton suggested we expand on a current project and use funds to survey all known contaminated properties proximate to transmission lines and public institutions, to see whether those can be redeveloped for solar production in order to offset cost of public institution's energy bill.

Gary Wood talked about the need for infrastructure to support EV stations. He shared ideas to extend the trail from Marquette Greenway to Kal-Haven, and to look for fish farming as an economic development theme.

Kurt Doroh talked about mental health and the need to find ways to help our youth. Matthew Newton built upon this issue of lack of mental health resources/providers. He proposed better online resources to find a mental health provider.

Don DeLong proposed using the Heritage Trail to create connections. Rick Catherman built upon this idea of connections, wondering if there is a better way to connect young adults to places such as educational institutions, jobs, and mental health resources; to create more accessible transportation.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

8. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Chair Marchetti wanted to acknowledge Jerrid Burdue as an outstanding member of the SWMPC staff. Gary Wood motioned to create and pass a resolution to honor employees, Jerrid Burdue and Kristopher Martin. Matthew Newton moved to **“CREATE AND PASS A RESOLUTION TO HONOR EMPLOYEES, JERRID BURDUE AND KRISTOPHER MARTIN.”** Kurt Doroh seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Matthew Newton moved to adjourn the meeting. James Dodd supported the motion. The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 10:55 am.

Respectfully submitted by:



K. John Egelhaaf, AICP

Date: April 18, 2023