



SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN PLANNING COMMISSION

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

FROM: K. John Egelhaaf

DATE: August 13, 2020

RE: Staff Report for the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission August 25, 2020

General SWMPC Updates

- A. New Ex-Officio SWMPC Board Member
 - a. SWMPC Board Member Seat Reserved for Economic Development Representation
 - b. Zach Morris – Kinexus Group
 - i. Market Van Buren Director
- B. Website Redesign
 - a. Following Steps Completed
 - i. Refreshed Branding for SWMPC
 - ii. Discovery – SWMPC Research by DotThink
 - 1. Who's our audience?
 - 2. SWMPC Vision, Goals?
 - 3. Why is SWMPC needed?
 - 4. What services does SWMPC provide?
 - 5. Main objective of SWMPC online presence?
 - 6. Top 3 reasons website visitors should learn from SWMPC site?
 - 7. Top 3 actions visitors should take when they visit the site?
 - iii. Basic Site Design Motif
 - b. Step Currently in Process
 - i. Site Mapping
 - 1. Every page mapped and described (there are many!)
 - 2. New narrative written for most (consultant is doing this)

Project Updates

- A. EDA CARES Act
 - a. Invitation-Only Economic Development District (EDD) Funding
 - i. Application Approved July 31, 2020
 - ii. \$400,000 for Economic Resiliency Plan
 - iii. Two-Year Project Term (beginning July 1, 2020)
 - iv. More Detail Will Be Provided During "Planner Presentation" Portion of August 25 Meeting

SWMPC Staff Report – August 25, 2020

- A. EDA CARES Act (continued)
 - a. Competitive Funding Process
 - i. First Round of Submissions Completed August 6th
 1. 8 Applications Received
 2. Strong engagement of the CEDS Committee (two meetings to discuss)
 3. 1 project (City of New Buffalo) to move onto EDA application
 4. Those not selected received feedback from the CEDS Committee on how to produce a stronger application/project
 5. EDA investment priorities)
 6. Round two is open through Friday, September 18th
- B. Van Buren County Recreation Plan Update
 - a. Contract Executed
 - i. Interesting Twist: Project Funded by South Haven/Van Buren County Convention & Visitors Bureau
- C. Cass County Recreation Plan
 - a. Requested Proposal Submitted to Cass County
 - b. Awaiting Decision
- D. Infrastructure Asset Management
 - a. SWMPC Collaboration with the Michigan Infrastructure Council (MIC)
 - i. SWMPC will be the Way that MIC Tools & Practices are Translated to Action in SW MI
 - b. Restarting Outreach to Help Communities Complete Self-Assessment Survey
 - c. Region-Wide Effort
- E. Regional Food Branding
 - a. Successful Grant Application to USDA (\$65,000)
 - b. Process will Involve Consultant
 - i. Study the Region
 - ii. Work w/Farmers, Restaurateurs, Processors, Vintners, Brewers, Distillers
 - iii. Develop a Brand for SW MI Food
 - iv. Establish a User Guide across all Media
- F. Scenario Planning for Rural Places
 - a. Partnership w/Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Univ. of Michigan, CommunityViz, SWMPC
 - b. How Can Scenario Planning Be an Asset for Rural Places?
 - c. Opportunity to Innovate
 - d. Opportunity to Develop a Valuable Partnership
- G. Amtrak Pere Marquette Follow-Up
 - a. Pere Marquette Passenger Service has Restarted (Thank You All!)
 - b. Funding for Pere Marquette Engineering Study to Link w/Blue Water & Wolverine
 - i. Outreach to Legislators during FY2020-2021 State Budget Hearings
 - ii. \$250,000 has been included in Budget
 - iii. Now Working to Have the Funding Allocated to SWMPC – Still in Process
 - iv. Meeting w/Legislators, KJE & MDOT August 17th.
- H. US 12 Heritage Route Garage Sale
 - a. 180 miles of garage sales August 14-16 (SWMPC Manages the Event)
 - b. Largest sale we've hosted (211 registrations), Facebook post had 47,000 page views.