

# Antrim County

## Economic Development Corporation

Mission Statement: Retain, expand, and promote County-wide economic growth and stability.

**August 20, 2019**  
**Minutes**

Members present: Dave Heeres, Veronica Welter, Rachel Krino, Sherry Comben, Mike Allison.  
Bonnie Robbins, John Meeske, Kathy Peterson

Members Absent: Pete Garwood

Others Present: Travis Youatt, Margie Boyd

### **1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 by Mike Allison, President.

### **2. Public Comment**

None.

### **3. Approval of Minutes**

Bonnie Robbins noted the misspelling of Joanie Moore's name at the bottom of page two (2).

**Motion by Dave Heeres, seconded by Veronica Welter, to approve the minutes of June 18, 2019 as corrected.**

**Motion carries - unanimous**

### **4. Presentation: East Jordan Chamber of Commerce**

Due to an emergency, the presenter from the East Jordan Chamber of Commerce cancelled the presentation scheduled for the August 20 meeting. The presentation will be rescheduled for the September meeting date.

### **5. Discussion: Antrim County Business Park Property**

Travis Youatt, Deputy Administrator, outlined the request from Alan Kostrzwa, the representative from Heritage Energy Solutions, to purchase the Antrim County Business Park property in Mancelona Township.

Sherry Comben, Antrim County Treasurer, said the first thing the County should do is get an appraisal. Ms. Comben also noted there is currently no policy in place to guide sale of County-owned property. She indicated there have been plans in the past to develop but there was no financial support to do so. Ms. Comben said there had not been any incentive to develop the property over the last several years.

Mr. Allison informed the members that Heritage Energy Solutions recently purchased easements from Community Resource Development (CRD) along adjoining property on Elder Road. He indicated purchased 20-acre parcels at Elder & Johnson roads for purpose of a wind farm and have also agreed to an option to purchase two (2) remaining lots around Tar Lake. Mr. Allison proposed clear-cutting the property and leasing to Heritage for twenty (20) years. He said if the

deal did not benefit the County after the lease expired, there would be no financial loss to the County.

Mr. Allison noted the property is currently unimproved, indicating it is too far away from city sewer for residential development. He suggested it would be worth getting the property surveyed and appraised to determine actual financial value to the property.

Rachel Krino said it was not uncommon for solar farms to offer incentives to local entities and residents for energy usage as a way to help lower usage bills for area residents. She said a potential increase in property value would benefit the County by increasing the amount of money back on tax rolls. She also said showing those looking to do business in Antrim County that the County is serious about renewable energy would help encourage businesses to relocate, bringing jobs with them. Ms. Krino said the property should be activated for economic development if it has been sitting vacant for so long.

Dave Heeres said the Board of Commissioners did not believe the offer was high enough to warrant selling the property. He agreed the vacant property was not generating money for the tax rolls.

Veronica Welter said the Board should consider how many jobs selling the property would bring into the County. Mr. Allison said the presence of renewable sources of energy is a draw to the younger generation in the workforce and could potentially increase the population of the County.

**Motion by Veronica Welter, seconded by Rachel Krino to recommend the Board of Commissioner have the Antrim County Industrial Park property appraised and surveyed, and direct the Administration Office to research any deed restrictions and mineral rights restrictions prior to considering any sale to the property.**

**Motion carries – unanimous**

Ms. Krino asked Commissioner Heeres to encourage the Board of Commissioners to consider what role Antrim County can play in the growth of the region in terms of workforce housing.

## **6. Various Matters**

### Wetzel Lake

Mr. Youatt informed the committee he was contacted by a representative of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regarding any future plans for improving property surrounding Wetzel Lake in Mancelona Township. Mr. Youatt said the agreement with the State of Michigan included two development phases. The County did not complete the development of a trail and overlook phase of the agreement. He indicated the Board directed the Administration Office contact the North Country Trail Association (NCTA) to inquire about redirecting the current trail to include Wetzel Lake. Mr. Allison said the CRD would be interested in the development of the trail at Wetzel Lake. He will approach CRD board to gauge their feelings on trail development.

Ms. Comben suggested it could be worth considering resurrecting the committee that considered the Wetzel Lake lease. She said it would be beneficial to the County to consider a joint effort on the east side of the county, similar to that which governs Glacial Hills Natural Area.

### Road Map Update

Ms. Krino told the committee the printer that printed past maps no longer does topographical printing. Administration Office was directed to contact Burt Thompson with the Antrim County Road Commission regarding this issue.

## 2019 Housing Summit

Kathy Peterson, Bonnie Robbins, Dave Heeres, Mike Allison, and Veronica Welter expressed interest in attending the October event. The Administration Office will register the members.

### **7. Public Comment**

Ms. Peterson told the committee that the Northern Lakes Economic Alliance (NLEA) is hosting a forum on short-term rentals at 10:00 a.m. on August 26, 2019 at The House Next Door in East Jordan.

Ms. Krino said the Bellaire Chamber of Commerce received three (3) calls from businesses interested in commercial property to purchase in Bellaire area. She let the members know the annual Rubber Ducky festival was a success.

Ms. Comben told members she recently sat down with Sara Lucas from Housing North, Elise Craft from Statecraft, and Pete Garwood regarding land banks. She said more information is needed before moving forward.

Mr. Allison said the ribbon cutting for the new sidewalk in Mancelona will be held on August 28.

Commissioner Heeres asked that mission statement be added to the agenda template as a reminder of the focus

**Motion by Veronica Welter, seconded by Bonnie Robbins, to adjourn the meeting.**

**Motion carries - unanimous**

*Meeting was adjourned at 10:12 a.m.*