

# Antrim County

## Economic Development Corporation

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

**September 20, 2016**

### **Minutes**

Members present: Dawn LaVanway, Mike Allison, Sherry Comben, Pete Garwood, Dave Heeres, Andy LaPointe, Kathy Peterson, Bonnie Robbins, and Veronica Welter

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Mike Crawford, Janet Koch

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

The meeting was called to order at 9:04 a.m. by Dawn LaVanway, President of the Economic Development Corporation (EDC).

#### **2. Public Comment**

None.

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

**Motion by Mike Allison, seconded by Kathy Peterson, to approve the minutes of July 19, 2016 as presented. Motion carried – unanimous.**

#### **4. Frontier Communications**

Janet Koch, Associate Planner, said Lisa Mecheau from Frontier Communications was not able to attend the meeting but was planning to attend the October EDC meeting.

#### **5. Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) Update**

Ms. Koch said she'd spoken to Dave Lorenz, Vice President of Travel Michigan, on July 22 about options regarding an Antrim County CVB. Mr. Lorenz had said there is no method to "share" CVB memberships. There were four different options:

- 1) Public Act 263, which allows counties to tax hotel rooms up to 5%. However, Antrim County doesn't meet the act's population requirements, which are a county population of less than 600,000 and a city of at least 40,000.
- 2) Create an Antrim County CVB without participation from Kearney and Custer Townships
- 3) Work to move Kearney and Custer Townships out of the Traverse City CVB. This would require a minimum 40% vote from the assessment district.
- 4) Add the remaining townships in Antrim County to the Traverse City CVB.

The EDC and Mike Crawford, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners, discussed the options and other possibilities. Ms. Koch added that Mr. Lorenz had said he was willing to assist the EDC with their efforts regarding a CVB. Mr. Crawford suggested that instead of working with Traverse City, working with counties to the north might be more compatible to what is offered in Antrim County.

Ms. Koch said she would contact the Charlevoix Area CVB and ask if a representative could attend an upcoming EDC meeting to talk about their experiences with a CVB.

**6. County-wide Promotional Brochure**

Ms. Koch said the Finance Committee had approved the EDC's budget with no changes, which will be formally approved at the October Board of Commissioner's meeting. The EDC's budget included \$1,500 for brochures, which was enough funding for purchasing over 10,000 brochures.

A theme for the brochure was discussed. Mr. Crawford recommended "Antrim County: A Land of Experiences," and the EDC agreed. A number of ideas were suggested for inclusion in the brochure. Ms. Koch said she would bring a first draft to the next meeting.

**7. Public Comment/Various Matters**

Ms. Koch asked if the EDC was interested in having Deana Jerdee, Executive Director of Paddle Antrim, appear at an upcoming meeting to talk about the economic impacts of the event. The EDC indicated they would be interested.

Andy LaPointe asked about tapping Realtors regarding an organized plan for county-wide economic development. He said the County could take a leadership role in creating a source for step-by-step experiences in Antrim County. Ms. Koch said schedules for full weekend experiences could be created with different audiences in mind; families, young couples, active groups, etc. Mr. LaPointe said monthly emails could be mailed out to subscribers listing events across the County.

Mr. Allison said many people were working hard toward economic development in Mancelona with the US 131 corridor project, including a new website. He mentioned the fall color train that was scheduled to stop in Mancelona on October 8; the local tickets were already sold out. Ms. Peterson mentioned the park projects in Milton Township; the expansion on Elk Lake and the Maple Hurst project.

Ms. LaVanway said the new building in East Jordan will house a new Louisiana-style restaurant. It is planned to have 175 seats and 20-35 employees. She also mentioned that there are two new businesses in East Jordan and that the Marathon gas station is now open 24 hours a day.

Mr. Crawford noted that the Rotary organization is shifting to encouraging more collaboration. Mr. LaPointe offered a number of ideas, such as providing social media training and voice-over commercials that would get press and media exposure and provide momentum. Mr. LaPointe said a Rotary grant could provide assistance for that type of effort.

Mr. LaPointe and Ms. Peterson described events and business expansions in Elk Rapids. Ms. LaVanway noted that the condition of the County's roads are an economic issue.

**Motion by Mike Allison, seconded by Bonnie Robbins, to adjourn the meeting**  
**Motion carried – unanimous.**

Meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.