



CASS COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION & BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Minutes

Wednesday, March 27, 2024 at 8:30 AM

Cass County Building
120 N. Broadway
Kincheloe Room
Cassopolis, MI 49031

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Chair Anderson.
2. **Roll call:** Kevin Anderson, Arrell Chapman, Hope Anderson, Rick Russworm, Sam Barrera, Les McClelland and Sheryl DeLuca were present. Lauren Thurston, Edwin Johnson, David Kring, Jeff Nelson, Douglas Dallich Jr. and Alexis O'Flynn were absent. Katie Multhauf and Courtney Michalka were present on behalf of Market Van Buren. Ambrosia Neldon was present and took minutes.
3. **Approval of Agenda:** Chair Kevin Anderson moved the Market Van Buren Performance Matrix next in the meeting.
4. **Ad hoc committee report/update on Market Van Buren Performance Matrix :** Commissioner Sam Barrera has heard feedback from county residents concerned about how Market Van Buren is being measured. Barrera reached out to the concerned citizens, asked if specific metrics were needed. Hearing no feedback, he worked with Market Van Buren and learned that they had already been utilizing a dashboard of metrics. He thought this would be a great starting point for the EDC to build on.
 - a. The committee would like to see a narrative of local entities' needs and how they are being addressed, as well as a pipeline of projects.
 - b. Barrera suggested that the EDC review reports once submitted by MVB, provide some feedback in a cover letter, and then submit to the BOC.
 - c. Hope Anderson said the report needs to show that MVB's efforts are worth what the county is paying, and evidence that MVB is pursuing an agenda identified by the county, rather than their own personal agenda. She is happy to see that MVB is working with local municipalities, but reminded Katie and Courtney that the county is paying the bill, and county efforts – like the Land Bank and Brownfield Redevelopment Authority – should also be addressed.
 - d. To recap, Kevin Anderson said communication should flow in this way:
 - i. From Market Van Buren to the Economic Development Commission in the form of a report, at least every other meeting (so three times per year).

- ii. EDC will then refine and comment on the report, then present to the Board of Commissioners.
 - iii. The Board of Commissioners (specifically Commissioner Barrera, as a member of the EDC) should communicate concerns from the BOC to the EDC and MVB.
 - e. McClelland commended Commissioner Barrera for his long-term commitment to the EDC, pointing out that previous commissioners typically served for one year and then moved on. Kevin Anderson pointed out that MVB's partnership is paid in part by other grants and other taxing agencies, but because the BOC has made a large contribution and commitment to MVB in order to help the EDC do its work, the EDC owes it to the BOC to communicate.
 - f. The committee agreed on the report format and will expect its first report at its next meeting in May, then report to the board.
- 5. **Financial Report** – Treasurer Rick Russwurm gave the report.
 - a. Kevin Anderson moved, McClellan seconded, CARRIED, to accept the report as presented.
- 6. **Strategic Planning Discussion**
 - a. Kevin Anderson proposed two tracks: meeting as an EDC to develop a plan, or working to involve other community partners in a larger summit setting. The committee agreed to start with a meeting of the EDC. Chapman offered to host a meeting at MEC.
 - i. Russwurm commended the BOC for its support, and said in his 10 years with the EDC, the commission has asked for support like this. Now that the EDC has the BOC's backing, he asked what is next?
 - ii. The committee agreed that the next step is to determine its goals for the future and the metrics by which those goals should be measured. Once this is defined, other community partners can be invited to the conversation to develop an action plan.
 - iii. Kevin Anderson will reach out to the committee to request a date in the next four to five weeks that will work for a three- to four-hour meeting to develop a strategy.
- 7. Rick moved, Arrell seconded, to adjourn at 9:51 a.m.