



EAST CENTRAL REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
100 Park Street South
Mora, MN 55051
February 22, 2016
7:00 P.M.

Commission Members Present:

Karen Amundson – Kanabec Co. Public Interest
Greg Anderson – Isanti Co. Commissioner
Loren Davis – Isanti Co. Public Interest
Carla Dunkley – Tribal Representative
Kathi Ellis – Kanabec Co. Commissioner
Linda Evans – Mille Lacs Co. Public Interest
Steve Hallan – Pine Co. Commissioner
Steven Kimmel – Chisago Co. Public Interest
Tom Lawlor – Southern School Board
Dave Patenaude – Kanabec Co. Townships
Genny Reynolds – Mille Lacs Co. Commissioner
Bill Schlumbohm, Sr. – Chisago Co. Municipal
Thom Walker – Mille Lacs Co. Municipalities
Glen Williamson – Pine Co. Townships

Others Present:

Leonard Bonander-Northern Lights Express

Commission Members Absent:

Gordon Gullixson – Kanabec Co. Municipalities
Richard Hansen – Isanti Co. Townships
Kirsten Kennedy – City of North Branch
Diane Larkin – Chisago Co. Townships
Tom Lawlor – Southern School Board
Ben Montzka – Chisago Co. Commissioner
Steve Odegard – Northern School Board
Marlys Palmer – Isanti Co. Municipalities
Barb Welty – Mille Lacs Co. Townships

Staff Present:

Bob Voss – Executive Director
Bob Bollenbeck – Transportation/TZD Program
Jennifer Russell – Economic Dev. Director
Trish Rydlund – Office Manager
Penny Simonsen – Community Development

1. **WELCOME:** Vice-chairman Hallan called to order the meeting of the East Central Regional Development Commission at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed Loren Davis as the new Isanti County Public Interest representative to the ECRDC. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. **AGENDA APPROVAL:** Moved by Evans to approve the agenda with a change to move item 9 - Open Forum after item 13 - Other Business. Williamson seconded – motion carried.
3. **NORTHERN LIGHTS EXPRESS (NLX) PRESENTATION:** Leonard Bonander gave a project status report on the progress of the Northern Lights Express project.
4. **MINUTES APPROVAL:** Ellis moved to approve the minutes of the October 26, 2015 meeting. Davis seconded – motion carried.
5. **TREASURERS REPORT:** Commissioner Ellis presented the October 2015 through January 2016 Treasurer's report. Kimmel moved to approve the Treasurer's Report to include the checks written along with ACH payments from October 1, 2015 through January 31, 2016, check #8818 through #8904. Palmer seconded – motion carried. General Journals were reviewed and approved for the time period October 1, 2015 through January 31, 2016.
6. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** Voss provided a written report which a number of items including updates on the MAD0 DevelopMN project; the Mille Lacs Scenic Byway; and

the upcoming 5-year assessment that RDCs are statutorily required to submit to the State. Voss also highlighted the following:

- a. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POSITION:** Economic Development Director Jennifer Russell has been offered and accepted a new job with Springsted & Associates in the Twin Cities. Her last day of employment with the ECRDC will be on March 8th.
- b. **APPOINTMENT OF PINE COUNTY PUBLIC INTEREST REPRESENTATIVES:** Hallan moved to appoint Jeanette Kester as the new Pine County Public Interest representative. Williamson seconded – motion carried.
- c. **CEDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE:** Voss stated that significant turnover has occurred on both the ECRDC Board and the CEDS Advisory Committee since the last appointments were made. There have also been changes in EDA’s guidance for the CEDS Advisory Committee to be representative of the economic interest of the region. The Committee must include a majority of private sector representatives. The remaining members can be public officials, community leaders, workforce development groups, higher education, minorities, labor groups, and/or private individuals. The following individuals were contacted and/or recommended and have agreed to serve on the CEDS Advisory Committee.

NAME	REPRESENTING	COUNTY
Rebecca Perotti	Workforce	Pine
Joe Mulford	Higher Education	Kanabec
Karen Amundson	Community Leaders	Kanabec
Richard Baker	Public Official	Mille Lacs
Thom Walker	Private Sector	Mille Lacs
Loren Davis	Private Sector	Isanti
Steve Kimmel	Private Sector	Chisago
John Schlager	Private Sector	Isanti
Frank Christopherson	Private Sector	Pine

7. **PERSONNEL AND BUDGET COMMITTEE (P&B):** The P&B met prior to the Commission and brought before the full Commission the following recommendations:
 - a. **LIFE INSURANCE:** The agent for the ECRDC’s employee group life insurance policy indicated that most carriers are no longer writing small group policies with fewer than 10 employees. The Committee directed Voss to look explore other options that might involve little or no additional cost to the ECRDC such as joining with one of the counties or cities; adding to the PERA policies that the employees voluntary pay for; etc. before any further consideration.
 - b. **GPS 45:93 FISCAL AGENT DUTIES:** Hallan reported that, after approximately 12 years, the fiscal agent duties for GPS45:93 (formerly Northern Technologies Initiative) are being moved from the ECRDC to the Chisago County EDA.

- c. **2016-2017 BUDGET DISCUSSION:** The Committee discussed parameters for the upcoming 2016-2017 agency-wide budget. Voss shared some of the comparable pay information gathered from other regional development commissions. The Committee also discussed levy increases, the ECRDC's projected fund balance, and the merits of continuing the administrative match to the Central MN Council on Aging. The Committee directed Voss to check with the various counties and cities in the region to see what cost-of-living adjustments are being considered or approved for 2016. Also to prepare a draft budget for the next meeting.
 - d. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POSITION:** With the resignation of Jennifer Russell, Economic Development Director, Voss discussed possibly waiting to fill the position and begin the process of drafting the 5 year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) himself as it may be difficult to get a new person trained in time. The Committee generally agreed on the basis that it would allow time to meet with the local units of government to see what sort of skill sets might be useful in terms of economic development. The consensus was, however, that economic development is a key function of the Commission and steps should be taken to fill the position sooner than later.
8. **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:** Simonsen reported on the following items:
- a. **TOWNSHIP BROADBAND PROJECT:** The ECRDC applied for and received \$13,000 funding from the Blandin Foundation to work with up to 5 townships in Pine, Kanabec, or Mille Lacs counties to bring more internet services to the townships. Presently, we are working with Wilma Township, Pine County on a MESH model implementation.
 - b. **TAYLORS FALLS SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL:** A new Safe Routes to Schools funding cycle was announced in October 2015. The community of Taylors Falls applied for SRTS planning funding, which the ECRDC would provide. Additionally Braham and Lindstrom have applied for infrastructure funding.
9. **TRANSPORTATION:** Bollenbeck brought before the Commission a recommendation from the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC).
- a. **Metro and District 3 Area Transportation Partnership (ATP) Representatives:** Motioned by Walker to have the following represent the ECRDC on the ATP: Richard Heilman (7E Engineer for District 3), Barb Welty (7E elected official), Craig Rempp (transit for District 3), Bob Bollenbeck (ex-officio), and Ben Montzka (Metro). Kimmel seconded – motion carried.
 - b. The TAC met February 1, 2016 to review candidate projects for federal funds through the ATP process. Projects were reviewed from Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, and Mille Lacs Counties. A total of 17 projects were submitted. The task of the TAC was to develop separate prioritized lists for our region's projects for District 3 (FY 2020 & 2021); Metro projects (i.e. Chisago County); and a District 3 Transportation Alternative Program TAP projects. The target amount of funds for our region in District 3 was \$1.1 million per year for road and transit projects. Dunkley moved to approve the recommendations as presented. Reynolds seconded – motion carried.

Region 7E TAC Project List

Region 7E Metro ATP Projects		
Description	Federal Dollars	Total Project Cost
Chisago CSAH 30 road improvement (TH95 to CSAH 10)	\$2,000,000	\$5,500,000
Lindstrom TAP construction multi-use trail project	515,952	644,940
Taylor's Falls pedestrian safety TAP project	146,849	183,561

Region 7E District 3 FY2020 Projects		
Description	Federal Dollars	Total Project Cost
Isanti Heartland Express vehicle replacement	\$120,800	\$ 151,000
Timber Trails Transit vehicle replacement	65,600	82,000
Isanti County CSAH 10 overlay project	683,600	854,500
*Kanabec CSAH 3 reconstruction project	263,240	1,600,000

Region 7E District 3 FY2021 Projects		
Description	Federal Dollars	Total Project Cost
Isanti Heartland Express transit vehicle replacement	\$124,800	\$156,000
Timber Trails Transit vehicle replacement	67,200	84,000
*Kanabec CSAH 3 reconstruction project	941,240	1,600,000

Region 7E District 3 TAP Projects		
Description	Federal Dollars	Total Project Cost
Mille Lacs Band Safe Routes to Schools sidewalk project	\$240,040	\$300,040
Mille Lacs County Soo Line trail TAP paving project	640,000	800,000
Princeton pedestrian bridge	327,000	450,000

*This is the same project over a two year period for total federal dollars of \$1,204,480.

10. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** Russell gave a presentation on DevelopMN. The plan has been completed and a link can be found on the ECRDC website, www.ecrdc.org. This plan is the result of a collaborative effort of the members that make up the MN Association of Development Organizations (MADO). It was developed in order to align strategic economic development efforts throughout Greater Minnesota, and leverage resources at all levels for a greater overall development impact. This plan will also be incorporated in every region's CEDS to help identify the needs and strategies for Greater Minnesota.
11. **TOPICS OF REGIONAL INTEREST:** Reynolds shared with the Commission information on Mille Lacs County's consideration of the Greater MN Transportation Sales and Use Tax (Local Option Sales Tax) for the purpose of funding county road projects.
12. **ADJOURNMENT:** Vice-chairman Hallan announced the next meeting held will be April 25, 2016 at the ECRDC office in Mora at 7:00 p.m. Kimmel moved to adjourn the regular meeting of the ECRDC. Evans seconded – motion carried.



Robert L. Voss, Executive Director



Steve Hallan, Vice-chairman