

## **Alpena County Heritage Route Team Meeting Notes**

**Date:** 10-9-06

**Time:** 1:30 PM

**Location:** Alpena City Hall

**Present:** Greg Sundin (City of Alpena), Eric Cline (City of Alpena), Rich Sullenger (City of Alpena), Marie Twite (Alpena Township), Ken Gauthier (Sanborn Township), Doug Vam (Sanborn Township), Richard Donakowski (Alpena County), Dave Langhorst (MDOT), Kevin Schaedig (MDOT), Bev Bodem (Senator Stamas' Office), Deb Pardike (CVB), Jeff Gray (Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary), and Denise Cline (NEMCOG).

A revised cost estimate for the Heritage Center was presented to the committee. This estimate now includes a canopy and restroom improvements. However, an additional \$21,500 needs to be added for the parking improvements that would be included as part of the project. The total cost for the architectural drawing is \$3,200. Greg Sundin will inquire into whether a preliminary interior sketch can be created for the remaining \$300. UP Engineers & Architects has given a preliminary estimate of \$7,500 for specifications and \$12,500 total (including the \$7,500) to bring the project to completion.

Eric Cline presented the committee with a staffing plan for the facility. He has identified issues that still need to be addressed. The facility will need an estimated 1.3 employees to run it sufficiently. Cline stated that at least one of those positions needs to be a paid employee of the city. He has spoken with the Experience Works program which has shown an interest in the project. Their hours are limited to 20 and are paid by the federal government. Cline is still looking into the possibility of volunteers including senior citizens or college interns. An operational budget for the facility will need to be developed to address staff, utilities, supplies, custodial, as well as other issues.

The committee discussed stakeholders of the project as well as potential sources of grant money/sponsorships such as the Besser Foundation, Presque Isle Gas & Electric Co-op, DTE, the Community Foundation, LaFarge, the Chamber of Commerce, NOAA, and additional private companies that could possibly sponsor such a facility. It was determined that a commitment would be needed from the current stakeholders as well. Greg Sundin suggested that a five-year commitment with a five year renewal might be the best option.

Dave Langhorst addressed the issue of the Transportation Enhancement application. He stated that the committee is ready to begin the grant application review process. The committee currently has enough information to submit an application. The review process will start and will take six months to one year as MDOT will make comments back to the committee that will need to be addressed. After a letter of conditional approval is issued, then the detailed design and specification work should begin. He also stated that TE projects are averaging a 30% match. If the grant is approved, MDOT will have a contract with the City of Alpena.

One issue that needs to be addressed on the application is the direct benefit that the project will have to MDOT and its transportation systems. This will be addressed by the types of things that are found in the building. Deb Pardike stated that displays interpreting US 23 and how it relates to tourism would help to address that issue. Also, having NOAA as a stakeholder in this project will be a great benefit.

The group discussed the benefit of having multiple partners to show support for the project. A resolution would also be needed from the City Council. The group will aim to get the application finished by the end of the year.

Denise Cline suggested that, by the next meeting, everyone think about ideas that they would like to see incorporated into the Heritage Route website, which NEMCOG will develop.

Eric Cline, Greg Sundin, and Denise Cline will meet with Karen Hebert (City Finance Director) to come up with an operating budget. A five-year commitment for operating costs would be the goal for a stakeholder agreement.

The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, November 9 at 1:30 PM** at City Hall.