

Alpena County Heritage Route Team Meeting Notes

Date: 11-20-06

Time: 1:30 PM

Location: Alpena City Hall

Present: Greg Sundin (City of Alpena), Eric Cline (City of Alpena), Rich Sullenger (City of Alpena), Doug Vam (Sanborn Township), Deb Pardike (CVB), Lynn Kolasa (DDA), and Denise Cline (NEMCOG).

Eric Cline presented a preliminary annual operating budget for the Welcome Center. He outlined what he had come up for relevant line items after meeting with Greg Sundin and Karen Herbert (City Clerk/Treasurer). Also included in Cline's report was a cost allocation per stakeholder. Only the stakeholders who contributed to the cost of the architectural plans were included as a worst case scenario of no other stakeholders coming on-board the project. The percentage allocation will change as new stakeholders are brought into the project. Cline used the Depot project in Standish as a basis for the development of the budget. Other costs, such as insurance and utilities, would likely be assumed by the City of Alpena.

The group agreed that a five-year commitment was needed from the current stakeholders. Since operational funds would not likely be needed until 2008, this commitment would be an agreement to contribute funding beginning in 2008. Deb Pardike noted that the CVB budget begins in January, so she would need to discuss this with her Board soon. It was recommended that all stakeholders discuss the project with their Boards soon so that letters of commitment can be included with the Transportation Enhancement grant application for construction of the facility. MDOT would need to know that there is operational funding available to make the project a viable one. If any of the original five stakeholders will not commit to the project, the group will have to discuss this and possibly re-allocate percentages or look for additional stakeholders. Lynn Kolasa noted that the DDA needs to be cautious about how their funds are used outside of the downtown area.

Greg Sundin spoke with a representative of the Besser Foundation about the possibility of contributing seed money for operational costs at the beginning of the project or funding for construction in the event that the local MDOT TSC does not assume the 20% match. The possibility of Besser Foundation contributing operational funding is being looked into.

The City of Alpena Engineering Department will put together a preliminary Transportation Enhancement grant application. Eric Cline stated that MDOT has scaled back their budget for Heritage Route projects noting that NEMCOG has also had their funding scaled back. Rich Sullenger pointed out that the earliest he thought the project might be funded would be the fall of 2007. Deb Pardike suggested that the grand opening of the Welcome Center coincide with National Tourism Day during the second week of May.

The committee discussed the Alpena website for the Heritage Route. The group agreed that, if the current logo is used, it needs to be modified to identify it with the community of Alpena. Denise Cline will begin work on modifying her recently published Road and Bicycling Guide to only include the US 23 corridor. The group also suggested that some history be included on the website.

Before the next meeting, additional stakeholders should be contacted to try to bring them into the project. In the meantime, the current stakeholders need to discuss making a five-year monetary commitment beginning in 2008.

Next meeting: Wednesday, January 10, 2007 at 1:30 in City Hall.