

Appendix E

Otsego County Quality of Life Assessment Community Assessment Team (CAT) September 26 & 27, 2012

Team Members:

Lynnette Benjamin graduated from Central Michigan University in 1991 with a major in Public Health Education that began her career with District Health Dept. No. 2 as a Health Educator. Her first 11.5 years were spent overseeing multiple health promotion/disease prevention programs and grant projects that brought 6 million in resources to the 4 northeastern counties. Staff for projects were vertically aligned and employed within a health care consortium created in response to community assessment efforts. She then moved to North Central Oregon to conduct community assessment work and then after about 2 years as a Public Health Director in The Dalles, came back as the Health Officer for District Health Department No. 2. Since her return she has been resurrecting collaborative efforts to address priority health problems including community assessment activities. One project in particular is Ogemaw Health Matters, a task force to address heart disease and obesity with plans to replicate throughout the health district. Lynnette is a wife and mother of 3 boys living on 40 acres in Lupton near the 'Rifle River Recreation Area'. She loves her healing time with nature which has led her to current studies in the naturopathic field. In March she graduates as a Therapeutic Bodywork Practitioner.

Tino Breithaupt, Manager, Michigan Retention & Growth Michigan Economic Development Corporation. Tino has 21 years of experience in the economic development field. He spent his first eight years at the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce in the small business and Canadian attraction business units. He then joined the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) in 1997 and held several positions in the CDBG, Business Retention & Attraction and Technology Development business units at the MEDC. He also spent one year on special assignment to develop and implement the State's Alternative Energy initiative NextEnergy. Tino left the MEDC in 2006 to return to his home town of Traverse City to join the Traverse Bay EDC. During his five-year period at the Traverse Bay EDC, Tino led the four-county regional economic development division of the Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce, assisting with more than 80 successful expansion and attraction projects representing more than 1,500 new jobs created, 2,500 jobs retained and \$500 million in new private investment. In November of 2011, Tino re-joined the MEDC as the regional manager for Michigan Retention and Growth. He has responsibility for a 36-county territory in Northern Lower Michigan and the Upper Peninsula.

Michael Cain is a native Michigander from the southeastern part of the state who was transplanted to Traverse City in 1971, where it was not unusual to see Governor Milliken jogging by his home. He earned his AA degree from Northwestern Michigan College and BA and MPA degrees from Michigan State University. He has served in local government management in communities across the state for nearly 35 years, including his current position as the City Manager for the City of Boyne City since 2002. During this time Boyne City became a Michigan Main Street community and has become much more vibrant, not just downtown but throughout the City. Boyne City was one of the few Cities' in northern Michigan to gain in population during the 2010 census, even outgrowing Traverse City. He actively served in committee and leadership positions with the Michigan Municipal League, the Michigan Local Government Management Association, the Boyne Valley Lions Club and is an active member of the International City Management Association. Mike is married with four daughters, two of whom are currently attending the University of Michigan. He hopes to be able to retire one day.

Edward Kerr received his BS from Central Michigan University studying education, recreation and music. Upon graduation he was granted a Fellowship from the Mott Foundation to study education with an emphasis on community leadership. After receiving his MA he spent the next nearly 30 years as a public school administrator. Shortly after his retirement, Michigan State University offered him a position as Community

and Economic Development Educator. During his 10 year tenure with MSU he held the position of Executive Director of Clare County Enterprise Community. His responsibilities included overseeing a 2.5 million dollar grant intended to help create living wage jobs, develop a housing plan to assist with the establishment of affordable housing and provide guidance in the areas of education and health care. Ed retired a second time in 2009. He resides on Budd Lake in Harrison, Michigan with his wife Kathy. In his spare time he has picked up his trumpet after a 30 lay off and performs with 3 community bands and provides special music for his church.

I. Overview session on September 22 at the Otsego County Building - Commissioners Room

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Project Overview - Phil Alexander
2. How can we improve our local economy by creating jobs here that pay a family-living wage? - Jeff Ratcliffe
3. Are we adequately preparing our youth for an ever changing world?
Cheryl Wojtas
4. Youth Voice - Student input during Spring Break 2012
Dana Bensinger and Bethany Prykucki
5. How can we create more awareness and understanding about the quality of life in Otsego County? What are some strategies we could implement to help residents become integrated into our community and play a more active role? - Paul Gunderson, Herald Times 2012 Guide; Maureen Derenzy, Otsego Community Connections; Lorraine Manary, 2-1-1
6. "Healthy Community" is a broad concept that is much more than absence of disease and availability of medical treatment. What are our major positive and negative attributes? - Jane Sundmacher, District Health Department

II. County Tour

Farmers Market en route to County Bus
Stops at the Otsego County Sportsplex and Library
Drive by: Airport, Industrial Parks, Alten Zimmer Senior Center, Elk viewing, Aspen Park, United Way building, and Otsego Memorial Hospital

Lunch and tour at the University Center and M-TEC
with Susie Marshall and Luann Mabarak

III.

Scatter Tours

1. Ed Kerr with Charlie Bono & Maureen Derenzy: Vanderbilt
2. Mike Cain with Mary Sanders & Jim Akans: Elmira
3. Lynette Benjamin with Lorraine Manary: Waters
4. Tino Breithaupt with John Burt & Bethany Prykucki: Johannesburg

Exit Report Summary
Gaylord City Hall - Council Chambers
September 27, 2012

1. FOCUS ON POSITIVES! -- Build on our strengths -- don't take them for granted. Don't dwell on what's gone wrong (negatives) and those things we don't have control over e.g. GP closing - move on.
2. Continue sharing information, talking together and asking questions - they are invaluable & we should congratulate ourselves on this first BIG step.
3. Help existing companies succeed /stay & grow (business retention). Keeping existing businesses happy will create spokespersons for any new interest in the area and incoming businesses.
4. Transportation: Railroad, Airport, and I-75 all assets. Road conditions don't seem worse than other counties.
5. Utilities and infrastructure are good and continuing to improve.
6. Gaylord has to be the focus of area marketing. It has name recognition and is our "Brand" for the entire county.
7. Lots of goodwill - people know each other on a first name basis.
8. Good intergovernmental cooperation.
9. Engaged population / current leaders are aging - that's a concern
10. Healthy living - strengths include Otsego Memorial Hospital and EMT. Obesity was no worse here than State of Michigan.
11. Lots of community directories - key & critical pieces are in place for a great community resource directory. (e.g. 2-1-1, Herald Times Guide, Chamber of Commerce community profile, otsego.org Community Connection) Someone needs to coordinate the compilation of the various directories.
12. Update websites regularly. Keep information current. Identify lead agency to organize marketing materials and resource guides. Example - Web splash page with links to multiple partners (City, DDA, County, School, Chamber). No wrong door to our community. Link existing web sites. Community calendar is difficult to do and maintain.
13. Economic Dev. - Economic Dev. Gardening initiative. Identify businesses who are stage 2 ready to grow (9-99 employees and \$1mil in revenue) Helps business owners focus on strategic growth /increase their number of employees. Explore exporting to new markets. Tino will work with Jeff Ratcliffe / Otsego County Economic Alliance to identify these and begin working with them. He was very impressed with Sklarczyk's seed potato greenhouse operation in Johannesburg.
14. Pure Michigan Connect Program (three legs) - procurement with Michigan suppliers, Business to business program, and request for services.

15. Crossover opportunities between education and businesses. talent.org reaching out to high school alumni. Mich Again - recruit Michigan high school and college grads to return to Michigan to live and work. Recommended doing the same thing locally with Otsego high school graduates.

16. Teachers & Counselors - partnering with businesses, tours (strategic) to show students the new economy & what modern manufacturing looks like. (or retail, etc)
Junior Achievement? Gap in high school vocational education programs - hospitality & medical care in particular (prevalent in our community). Consider dual enrollment with M-TEC for trades. Not all students are college bound. See Manistee for example of private sector and education working close together. High school students tour local manufacturing plants. Students learn about what skills are needed for local jobs.

17. Feed elk where people are directed (via signage) to see them! Take a "sleeper" or diamond in the rough and make it a star.

18. Signage / Way Finding - Overall needs to be addressed
Challenge - how do you capture people coming to or driving through the community? (signage), more events and festivals?, getting event attendees to connect to community. Don't even know where to park....

19. Full time DDA or "Main Street" director - this is not a part time job.

20. Promote the heck out of the Groen Nature Preserve and the North Central State Trail.

Where We Go From Here

1. Mobilizing for Action Through Planning & Partnerships (MAPP), Jane Sundmacher
2. United Way's Community Impact Connect

CAT Members reporting: Tino Breithaupt, Mike Cain, and Ed Kerr. Lynnette Benjamin participated on county tour but was unable to attend exit report session.

In attendance: Jim Akins, Phil Alexander, Erma Backenstose, Dana Bensinger, Charlie Bono, John Burt, Maureen Derenzy, Luann Mabarak, Lorraine Manary, Mary Sanders, Randy Stults, Jane Sundmacher, Sandy Tarbutton, Jack Thompson