The Benzie County Planning Commission met in a regular meeting on February 14, 2013 in room 206, Benzie County Government Center, Beulah, MI, 49617

MEMBERS PRESENT: Planning Commission Chair Peg Minster, Vice Chair Nena Bondarenko (arrived at 7:42pm), Secretary Susan Zenker, Don Tanner, Glen Rineer, Lori Hill

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Adrian Poullisse

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Chris Olson – Benzie County Administrator, Kathy Ralston - Recording Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT: Betsy Evans-Joyfield Township, Ted Wood-Joyfield Township, Deb Lindgren-Joyfield Township

I. Chair Minster called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance at 7:30 p.m.

II. Approval of Agenda

Add Update on Economic Development (proposal from Grand Traverse Chamber of Commerce) under Item B (Update Master Plan) as B.1.

Motion by Tanner seconded by Zenker to approve the agenda as amended.

Ayes: Minster, Zenker, Tanner, Rineer, Hill
Nays: None. Motion Carried

III. Approval of Regular and Work Session Minutes from January 10, 2013:

A. Approval of work session minutes

Correction on page 3, line 17 to change the spelling of the name “Caron” to “Carson,” so corrected.

Start time for the work session was stated as 8:10pm. Time was corrected to read 7:10pm.

Motion by Tanner seconded by Minster to approve Work Session minutes from January 10th as corrected.

Ayes: Minster, Zenker Tanner, Rineer, Hill
Nays: None. Motion Carried

B. Approval of Regular Minutes:

Motion by Tanner seconded by Zenker to approve the regular minutes from January 10 as presented.

Ayes: Minster, Zenker, Tanner, Rineer, Hill
Nays: None. Motion Carried.

IV. Public Input-Items on Agenda: None

V. Unfinished Business

A. Planning Commission Openings and Appointment status

The County Commission has appointed Glen Rineer (County Commissioner) to represent the Board of Commissioners (BOC) on the county Planning Commission (PC).

Lori Hill (Benzie County Central School Board member) has been appointed to represent the school’s interests on the PC.

With these two new appointments, the PC has a full compliment. There are no openings at present.

Ralston passed around a sheet with space for the commissioners to fill in all missing contact information. She will redistribute the complete and correct list.
B. **Benzie County Comprehensive Plan (BCCP) Base Document Update-Cooperative Effort with Manistee County Planning staff and NMCOG.**

**Olson:** Said Rob Carson (Manistee County Planning Director) sent the Master Plan base document in PDF format with his comments inserted. This should have been received by all commissioners.

**Tanner:** Asked if a fee for service has been established for proposed work by Carson.

**Olson:** Answered that it still needs to be established. He will contact Carson again and find out what his proposed billable hourly rate is. He will also find out when Mr. Carson can return to a BCPC meeting to proceed on the update process. Olson noted that Carson emphasizes the evaluation of implementation efforts since the plan’s adoption.

**Ralston** stated she is a member of the PC’s grant research and writing committee although not a voting member of the PC. The grant committee (Bondarenko, Poulisse and Ralston) met with Matt McCauley at the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments (NMCOG) at the beginning of the month to explore funding possibilities or grant opportunities that may be coming up in the next year to help the master plan updating or rewriting process. Also discussed at that meeting were services the NMCOG could provide to the PC free of charge. Ralston reported that Mr. McCauley said the COG could assist with updating any census or demographic information within the BCCP Base Document. The COG has easy access to all recent census data. Mr. McCauley said that he or his staff will review Mr. Carson’s submitted comments in the base document and would be willing to begin review to determine where new demographic data can be inserted.

**Bondarenko arrived at 7:42pm**

**Olson:** Reported that the Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce (TCCC) is currently entering into more intensive regional economic development efforts. One of their main areas of focus is how to create more employment opportunities throughout the Grand Traverse region. Olson spoke with Doug DeYoung (Senior Director of Government Relations for the TCCC) and Robert Richardson (Licensed Attorney, Special Projects Director for TCCC). The Traverse Bay Economic Development Corporation (TBEDC) is affiliated with the TCCC. Its role is specifically to provide assistance and services to start-up or existing businesses in areas such as site location, low interest financing, business counseling, business resources, and tax incentive assistance. After the initial conversation with Mr. Olson, the TBEDC subsequently produced and submitted to him an “Economic Development Strategic Planning Proposal” for Benzie County. The document is dated December 17, 2012 and was authored by the following members of TBEDC: Robert Richardson, Doug Luciani, Laura Galbraith and Doug DeYoung. Olson explained that the Benzie County and Traverse Bay Economic Development Corporations (EDCs) had both previously been the custodians of revolving funds within each county. The original source was state funding. The loans were intended to be used mainly for start-up funds for new businesses within these counties. The revolving loan funds will now been regionalized for the 10 county northwest lower Michigan region. Out of this 10 county region, Benzie and Grand Traverse are the only counties to have had revolving loan funds administered through their EDCs. Due to this, Benzie and Grand Traverse Counties will each get two voting members on the governing board of the resulting regional entity since our two counties are providing the dollars. The other eight counties in the region each have one member. Out of Benzie’s revolving loan fund, there was approximately $244,000 in active loans and about $772,000 in assets at the time the state informed the counties that these funds were to be regionalized.
The state has said that there will be an administrative fee attached to the funds. Olson and Benzie County Treasurer Michelle Thompson have posed the question to state officials as to whether some of the funds paid by the county in the form of administrative fees can go toward the creation of a comprehensive countywide strategic economic plan. They are currently awaiting an answer.

He further commented on the TBEDC written proposal and said that he is encouraged by the desire to do measureables. This means monitoring actual results and benefits of specific programs. He cited loans currently available through the TC Area Chamber Foundation

- Revolving Loan Fund
- Chamber Foundation Development Fund
- Energy Efficiency Fund
- Micro revolving loan fund (less than $7,500)

Olson said another thing to consider for inclusion in an economic development plan is high speed internet access and fiberoptic cable. Benzie now has fiberoptic along US31. We also have public safety communication needs and there is the possibility of utilizing the fiberoptic cable to develop that infrastructure. We may not need to build as many towers if we have a high speed conduit going right to central dispatch. This is an area that could be of interest to entrepreneurs. High speed communication capability is now a critical infrastructure component. If there is an interest from the business community, from our public safety entities and others, there’s a potential to develop this resource cooperatively and to fund it through multiple entities.

Minster summarized a few action steps to move toward the completion of data in the base document:

- Olson will get information of an hourly rate from Rob Carson from Manistee
- Olson to determine when Mr. Carson can return to speak to the PC
- Determine the departments or agencies that have digitized GIS layer maps that can then be provided to Carson. He has said he will compile the digital maps to update the plan.
- Bondarenko will call NMCOG and/or Michelle Foster to nail down details (when/where) their part of the data updating process will occur.

C. Planning Commission Budget Report

Olson said we are 33% into the fiscal year and the PC has spent 13.5% of budgeted funds.

D. Goals, Objectives and Timeline for statutory guidelines in 2013

1. Capital Improvements Plan (CIP)

Minster handed out the draft of the CIP letter that will go to entities budgeted through the county. The letter will be sent shortly after the next regular PC meeting in March.

Ralston passed around a draft recipient list. This is in an Excel file so that a mail merge can be done for the final letter. Olson is reviewing the list to ensure that all appropriate entities are included.

Ralston will complete an attachment for the recipients to fill in information on projects planned, conceived or underway.

There was discussion that both the letter and the attached form should ask for information on brick and mortar construction and on technology upgrade projects. Plans for new vehicles should NOT be included. It’s also important to include projected annual operational and maintenance costs for the project once it is completed.

2. Annual Report
There was discussion on various formats for annual reports. Minster provided an example of the Colfax, Weldon, Thompsonville Community Planning Commission’s annual report from last year. She asked the commissioners to look at examples and provide input and ideas at the March meeting.

**Tanner**: Said the annual report should basically contain a report of what you have done for the year, what you are working on and what you plan to do for the next year. That leads into your budget request. For the years that you are undertaking major master plan amendments etc., you may need to ask for more funding. During the other years, your funding needs should be less.

### 3. Annual Budget Request

The request should fit with the annual report. There was discussion on the importance of the PC doing whatever it can to find funding for programs in the form of grants and assistance from other agencies such as NMCOG and Michigan State University Extension (MSUE). This should be included in the report so that the County Commissioners know that the PC is making that effort.

**E. BCPC Grant Research and Writing Committee Report**

**Bondarenko**: Reported that when the grant committee met with Matt McCauley at NMCOG, Mr. McCauley said the NMCOG staff will be available to plug in all 2010 census data wherever needed into the BCCP Base Document. Bondarenko and Minster were told that the staff member from NMCOG will be Michelle Foster. She was scheduled to attend the PC meeting tonight and didn’t make it possibly due to weather. Bondarenko further commented that she has reviewed the Base Document with comments from Rob Carson. Chapters 1 through 4 have data that can be updated with more recent census data from NMCOG. Chapter 5 is entitled “Principles, Strategies and Policies.” Chapter 6 is entitled “Plan Implementation.” Carson basically asks in his notes what principles, strategies, policies and implementation steps have we, as a county followed through with.

Mr. McCauley also informed the committee that there through NMCOG, there is the New Designs for Growth: Community Growth Grants program. The due date last year was September 7. It is scheduled to be offered again this year. McCauley thought there was a good chance that the county could receive some funds for the update of the Socioeconomic Profile and Jobs and Economic Plan. He also suggested that we speak to the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation. They may have funding available for community planning.

McCauleys also commented on the long term maintenance and work involved with a master plan like Benzie’s that is very data heavy. He commented that for the future, the PC might want to try to streamline the plan which could make the updating process more manageable.

**Ralston** said Mr. McCauley suggested that it’s a good idea to include the county Brownfield Authority as well as the EDC in the creation of economic development plans. He also said it’s a good idea to have plans for an industrial park included in the finished plan. This can put the county in a better position to receive federal dollars for the completion of that kind of project down the road.

**Tanner**: Said the consultant to get the Brownfield Authority and program underway, Marc Florian has significant experience with economic development projects and is potentially a valuable resource for economic planning.

### F. Benzie County Brownfield Redevelopment Status Report

**Tanner**: Mr. Figura, Attorney for the county has completed draft bylaws for the Authority. There is now a list of applicants to serve on that board. These will be reviewed and the appointment process will begin shortly. The process is close to completion.
G. **MSUE Citizen Planner Course-BC Planning Commissioners Progress Report**  
**Minster:** Stated that all planning commissioners need to take the MSUE Citizen Planner Course. It is part of the PC’s annual budget. There’s an online option available to complete the course. There are in person options throughout the state at various times but it is sometimes difficult to get a course scheduled in our area. Minster will send the link for the course to Rineer and Hill so they can take a look.

H. **Planning Commission Files/Records**  
**Zenker:** Reported that she and Ralston have been discussing an overall organizational plan for the space formally used by the planning department on the lower level of the government center. To start with, Zenker and Ralston plan to begin an inventory of all the materials that are there. Then decisions can be made as to what should be archived, what can be thrown away and what should stay in the office.

I. **Lakes to Land Report**  
None of the commissioners have attended recent meetings. Betsy Evans and Ted Wood were present at the last meeting representing Joyfield Township. At the PC’s request, Evans reported that the communities are all moving forward with the master planning process. They are at various stages of completion. The Convention of Communities is scheduled for **May 10 at Crystal Mountain 8:30am-4:30pm.** Not all the communities will have their master plans complete but the main purpose of this meeting will be for them to present their top priorities. They will then look for commonalities in the stated priorities amongst the municipalities. The plan is to have potential funders and volunteers present at the convention to help with implementation of the identified common priorities.  
She also reported that Placemaking was discussed as a very important planning concept at the state level. They discussed scheduling a local training on that topic through MSUE. 
She also reported that the **Small Town and Rural Development Conference will be held at Crystal Mountain from 3:00pm Monday April 22 through 11:30am Wednesday April 24.** It is an annual conference hosted by the Michigan Rural Council. Consumers Energy has offered to send interested elected and appointed people that are part of the Lakes to Land Initiative to the conference. They can register through the Alliance for Economic Success. Those present were asked to let anyone in government know about the conference who may be interested in attending. More information for the conference is available online at [http://rural.cedam.info/conference/](http://rural.cedam.info/conference/)

**New Business**

J. **Education event/forum hosted by PC**  
**Tanner:** Will ask Marc Florian to give the PC an overview on Brownfield. He will be going out to municipalities around the county once the Authority is up and running.  
**Discussion:** When Florian comes to speak to the PC, they can decide if they may want to host an informational forum at the county.  
**Bondarenko:** Said she will ask Matt McCauley what a minimum number of participants might be for him to conduct a grant writing workshop hosted by the PC.

VI. **Correspondence**

A. **Green Lake Township Public Hearing-January 28, 2013-Received**
B. **Long Lake Township Letter to notice the beginning of master planning process-Received**
C. **Invoice from Record Patriot for publication of BCPC 2013 meeting schedule-Received**
D. CE opportunity-Pipeline Safety-March 13 in Traverse City-Received
E. Kellogg Center-Citizen Planner Workshop-Advanced Academy, Placemaking seminar June 13-Received

VII. Presentations and Announcements
There was discussion on providing materials to the new planning commissioners
The entire BCCP (Base Document and all white papers) is online now at http://www.benzieco.net/cmt_planning_commission.htm. The Planning Commission Ordinance is also on the PC webpage. The current bylaws are available via email or hardcopy and will be provided to the new commissioners by the March meeting.

VIII. Public Input
Betsy Evans-Joyfield Township: Said on the county planning commission webpage, it looks like there’s an extra page in the Agricultural Report that looks like it doesn’t belong there. Zenker said she would check it and get it corrected.

Next regular meeting of the planning commission is March 14 at 7:30 pm in room 206 of the government center.

IX. Meeting was adjourned at 9:39 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

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Susan Zenker – Secretary                           Kathy Ralston – Recording Secretary