

Committee Notes January 2008

Small Business Council

The Council will meet on January 11, 2008, therefore there are no meeting notes to report at this time.

Transportation

A meeting summary from December 18, 2007:

Attendees: Joe DeKoning, Mary Gillis, Gerry Harsch, Fred Hoisington, Herb Lemcool, George McBath, Matt McCauley, Peter Read, David Skibowski, Randy Tucker, Jamie Callahan.

I. Welcome and review of November 20th Notes.

Randy Tucker opened the meeting and asked for review of notes. No changes were made.

II. 2008/2009 Agenda Planning

Tucker led the committee in laying out tentative plans for issues to address in the upcoming year broke out by quarter.

It was decided to put the Grand Vision as a monthly update item on the agenda. Matt McCauley will likely give the updates. The Grand Vision newsletter will be coming out soon. When it does, it will be referenced in a weekly email update.

Q1 2008

- There is a trail summit in January and then another trail related event on Feb 27. Touch base with Patty O'Donnell. More on trails – safe routes to schools project – Michelle in Garfield Township is contact with private citizens group.
- Rail update – Mike Bagwell of Federated Railways – possibly promote to general membership
- Need to set up a meeting with MDOT on right of first refusal for rail (Sen. Allen bill). Jamie Callahan will look into setting a date with MDOT and Fred Hoisington to try and figure out miscommunication that seems to be going on.
- Combining city and county parks. Decided was a Government Affairs Committee issue.

- Road funding (Mary). Asset management – January
- Construction season update from MDOT/5 year plan – March

A county commission delegation will be going to DC on March 1 to talk to congressional members. Is there anything that the Chamber would like presented?

Q2

- Possibly rail meeting in Q2 instead
- Airport update. The comment by the president of Interlochen Arts Academy at the Chamber Winter Retreat on the number of parents of Interlochen students that use air service was noted. Is there more information on this?
- Grand Vision update. What are the main scenarios? Funding update. Should this one be promoted to general membership?

Q3

- Transportation funding update. Discussion on Safety LEU (spelling??) and highway transportation funding. Federal staff (Levin, Camp, Stabenow) updates on federal changes, updates, funding levels, etc
- Update on Boardman dam project in June or July
- Possibly do a survey or two. Focus on Grand Vision and Boardman River dams to gauge education level of membership. Possibly another survey on what people's perceptions are on how transportation money is spent.

Q4

- Asset management report on roads – NWMCOG
- Rail update with Federated Railways and Mike Bagwell
- MDOT traffic signal modeling presentation
- North region ITS, intelligent traffic systems, road weather information and alert systems, traffic management center, changeable message signs, congestion with cameras presentation.
- Kent county has an asset management truck. Maybe they could bring it up and do a demonstration. Talk to Herb Lemcool or Mary Gillis to help facilitate with contact.

Q5 2009

- How does the Grand Vision and Boardman dam projects get implemented – where do we go from here?

III. Committee Chair Update

Callahan reported that the names for new committee chairs have been sent to incoming Board of Directors Chair Ed Ness, with an official announcement to be made soon.

IV. Next meeting

The idea of whether to keep the same day and time of the committee meeting for 2008 was discussed. One point of note in particular was that meeting on Tuesdays hampered the ability of Jamie Callahan to work on Senate session or House committee meetings on the Tuesdays that committee is held as he would be unable to be in Lansing that day until midday. The committee was open to looking at other possibilities.

One suggestion was to do the third Monday of the month at lunch with a brown bag lunch format. It was decided that Callahan would do an email survey to the entire committee, as many were absent.

At this point, the committee will continue to meet on the third Tuesday of the month with the next meeting to be January 15, 2008, 7:30 a.m. at the Chamber office

Jamie Callahan presented Randy Tucker with a gift box from Cherry Republic in appreciation of his tenure as committee chair.

The meeting then adjourned.

Government Relations

A meeting summary from December 7, 2007:

Members present: Tony Anderson, Ross Childs, Jim Feil, Brandon Fewins, Bob Gluszewski, Kathleen Guy, Fred Hoisington, George McBath, Tom Menzel, Steve Perdue, Steve Rawlings, Matt Schmidt, Representative Howard Walker, Joseph Zayaz, Jamie Callahan.

I. October 26, 2007 Notes

Notes were offered for review by Tony Anderson. No changes were offered.

II. BATA and TCAPS millage election results review

Jamie Callahan gave an analysis of the November 6th vote on the TCAPS and BATA

portion of the millage votes. Turnout was very high with BATA getting a substantial vote and TCAPS doing equally well.

III. Capitol Report

Jamie Callahan gave a report on the following issues:

- Services Tax repeal update: The vote was repealed on December 1st and replaced with a surcharge on a businesses Michigan Business Tax liability.
- Individual Market Reform update: No update. The bills are in the Senate and will be given a more thorough review than what was given in the House.
- Water diversion legislation. This is the next hot issue of discussion
- City center investment bills: Sen. Allen just introduces a series of bills that will give additional tools to cities that wish to revitalize their downtown business districts.
- DNR and DEQ budget holes: Different proposals have been put forth, but no updates on either situation.

IV. 2008 Planning

The committee supported the idea of having presentations on issues to get out in front of issues more and work towards being proactive on issues instead of strictly reactive. Some issues that were presented for possible presentations: Energy regulation, health care, insurance reform. It was mentioned that the Health Care committee has formed a legislative subcommittee which would make recommendations to the Government Relations Committee for consideration and support, among other things.

- Legislative Agenda 2008. Jamie Callahan discussed that work is underway to develop the 2008 agenda for the Chamber and Alliance and that he would like to add additional items to the agenda that are important northern Michigan issues, such as tourism funding and agriculture. Other topics that were brought up for inclusion were equity in education funding, and workforce and economic development. The formulation process from previous years for the agenda was brought up and whether that process was going to be used again for 2008.
- The Old Town parking deck was brought up. Question was asked if the Chamber has taken a position on the project. It was relayed that Hagerty Insurance is looking to add 500 jobs over 5 yrs. Consensus was that the committee would be interested in getting an update on the status of the project and possibly take a formal position as well as what actions and support can the committee or chamber lend to support the project, considering recent parking deck proposals and city commissioners opinions regarding parking decks. Jamie Callahan said he would talk to Tino Breithaupt at the EDC as to his availability to come and update the committee. The

committee agreed to find a date prior to the next committee meeting to convene for the update as part of a more proactive approach.

VI. Old Business

- Last call for any interest in being committee chair. If someone is interested, notify Jamie Callahan or Doug Luciani right away.
- Discussion continued on how the committee can be more involved and have input on fast moving policy issues. The most popular communications options were legislative emails and conference calls. The group felt that background information with the email alerts would be helpful. Conference calls were deemed very popular and more feasible to involve committee members on short notice instead of trying to get people physically in a room. Jamie will work on setting up a standard conference call number and code for committee conference calls.

It was mentioned that the committee's role is to make recommendations to the Board of Directors for consideration, where the Board will act as they deem appropriate one way or the other, and that the Board is the governing body.

- Discussion continued on information sharing with other chambers and how to do that and to what degree. Many agreed that the more info sharing the better and that such action was good for the sake of regionalism.

It was brought up that much of the legislative communications, such as weekly email updates in the chamber newsletter are a benefit of membership (though the government relations updates are available to everyone on the Chamber website). What is the balance between the services we provide our members and the value that comes as a benefit of membership, as well as the value and benefit to members of the Northwest Michigan Regional Chamber Alliance.

It was noted there needs to be a threshold to determine what issues make the regional importance cut and which ones do not, so as not to overburden the system. What categories/issues are important to regional communications?

It was concluded that Jamie will continue to map out a balance between priorities on a regional basis that are worthy of action or informing as many people as possible and those which are exclusive to chamber and Alliance members.

VII. Other Items

- Rep. Howard Walker gave an update on recent activities in Lansing. Says it has been very difficult with the back and forth between political parties in Lansing. On the budget, there was a gap between the problem and the solutions which were huge. But

they finally got budget done. The service tax was finally repealed. During the whole negation and waiting process, there was lots of unknowns with most members not knowing the status of what was going on – on both sides of the aisle. Rep. Walker opined that a great deal of the dysfunctionality is due to term limits and lack of relationships and a lack of trust between members. This was evident even after the deals were made. He feels the opportunity to amend the term limits was missed.

He reported that there may be a bright spot with his renewable energy initiative. Renewable portfolio standards is becoming a topic of interest that may see action in 2008. He feels with adoptions of RPS, that Michigan will see an influx of entrepreneurs and jobs. It was relayed that his wind generation siting legislation is gaining attention as part of the RPS discussion. The main issue of local control will need to be addressed.

General discussion on term limits followed. Tom Menzel spoke of the book “The Second Civil War: How Extreme Partisanship Has Paralyzed Washington and Polarized America.” Comments followed on how the media may have helped contribute to this. George McBath lauded Rep. Walker in his efforts to work in a bi-partisan manner in Lansing.

- Brandon Fewins of Sen. Stabenow’s office reported that the 5-yr transportation plan is coming along. Language will be added to allow the other outlying counties to be an official part of the Grand Vision project. This will happen with a voice vote in the Senate later this month. He also reported that the entire Michigan delegation voted to override the President’s veto of the Water Resources Development Act, which authorized projects for the NMC marina, Soo lock replacement, and Chicago electric invasive species barrier.

VIII. Next Committee Meeting Date

- The next committee meeting will be a special meeting of the committee to discuss the Old Town Parking Deck initiative on December 21 or a date close to that. After that, the next meeting will be January 25, 2008.
- It was the consensus of the group that the current meeting day and time schedule should be continued for 2008.

Health Care

The Health Care Committee met on Wednesday, January 2, 2008. The discussion pertained to the upcoming seminar “Safety Means Savings” sponsored by Accident Fund on Tuesday, January 22. Two sessions will be offered to members FREE of charge (non-

members pay \$50). 7:30 – 9:30 a.m. (breakfast provided) and 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. (lunch provided). The seminar topics include injury prevention, ergonomics, getting employees back to work, workplace safety and slips/falls, how to handle injuries once they happen, working with your insurance company and accident claims, fraudulent claims and a question/answer session. Expert speakers will be Dr. Darryl Lesoski, M.D. of Munson Medical Center and David Hintz, CSP of Accident Fund. Registration is being taken online at www.tcchamber.org or call Cristin Popelier at the Chamber 231-995-7101.