

Washtenaw County
Community Action Board (CAB)
Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Monday, March 20, 2006 **Time:** 6:00 PM

Meeting Location: Washtenaw County Michigan Works! Service Center, 304 Harriet Street, Ypsilanti

Members Present: Christina Montague, Cyril Berry, Elette Collins, Shoshana DeMaria, Cynthia Maritato, Brenda McKinney, Hurley Myers, Suzanne Shaw, Rolland Sizemore and Donn Wolf

Members Absent: Robert Brackenbury, Mike DuRussel (excused), Joe Dulin and Juanita House

Liaison Present: Steve Gulick, Washtenaw County Workforce Development Board

Guest Present: Ronnie Peterson, Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners

Staff Present: Trenda Rusher, Jenny Bivens, Susan Sweet Scott and Rana Al-Igoe

1. Call to Order

Montague called the meeting to order at 5:59 PM.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Shaw moved to approve the meeting agenda. Myers supported. Meeting agenda approved.

3. Approval of the Minutes

Shaw moved to approve the minutes from the 01/23/06 meeting. McKinney supported. Meeting minutes approved.

4. Report of the Chair – (Montague)

A. Announcements

- Montague welcomed Commissioner Peterson to the meeting and noted that Board members greatly appreciated him taking the time to attend. Peterson was at the Michigan Works! Service Center (MWSC) for a meeting with the Ypsilanti Gateway Community and Economic Development Corporation (YGCEDC) leaders earlier and Montague asked him to attend the CAB meeting to present an update. Peterson thanked Montague and stated that earlier in the month, County Administration and members of the YGCEDC met to discuss future of the YGCEDC and to discuss options. The hope is that the CAB welcomes the YGCEDC to ETCS. One of the things that are unique is that if the YGCEDC is successful, then it could be a model for the rest of the County and the rest of the Country. Peterson noted that this is an opportunity for County departments to work together. The meeting today was successful; a plan was developed and Peterson hopes that Rusher will share the work of the YGCEDC with the CAB.
- Peterson noted that Gulick gives an excellent report to the Labor Council regarding the activities of the Boards of which he is a member.

- Shaw asked about the empty Exemplar building nearby and its affect on the Gateway Area. Peterson replied that the original owner lost the property to creditors and, from a report presented by the City Manager today at the YGCEDC leaders meeting, learned that the property is on the market. Peterson noted that it would be great to see the land developed. He added that with the reduction of the asking price for that property, he hopes that there will be more activity. Peterson also noted that during the meeting with County Administration, Guenzel felt comfortable with Rusher taking a leadership role with the YGCEDC. Peterson added that he would like to meet regularly with the leadership of the CAB to discuss how they can help assist the YGCEDC. The CAB consists of a large group and every bit of help from its members will be great.
- Board members indicated that they were concerned with the possibility of funding cuts and its affects on ETCS programs. They recognize that there are issues with the County cutting ETCS's general fund appropriations this year without informing the department beforehand, and that these funds will be restored next year, and that as a result of the County's action, there may be cuts in programs that are vital to citizens in the County. Board members really need the Commissioners to take on issues that will keep ETCS operating. There were a lot of concerns that the CAB identified. Members particularly noted the lack of jobs available to youth and various community projects ETCS is working on in the County.
- Montague thanked staff for their hard work in organizing the Joint Annual Meeting. Board members felt that staff did a great job on the event. The retreat was especially beneficial, particularly Bill Miller's presentation. The sharing of the information was also great. They noted that we all need to do what we can with the resources that we have. Having the right information and knowing what is available is very important.
- Montague thanked Wolf and Rusher for their hard work, especially during their recent conference and national Board meetings in Washington DC.
- There is a flyer in the meeting packet for the upcoming Walk for Warmth that ETCS is organizing. Montague noted the real need for energy resources in the community for those who are most vulnerable. The Walk for Warmth is very beneficial. Montague asked members to make a donation if they could.

B. Michigan Community Action Agency Association (MCAAA) Updates – (Berry)

- The next Quarterly Meeting is scheduled for April 23-25. It will be a joint meeting held in conjunction with the Michigan Head Start Association (MHSA) in Lansing.
- One of the events planned is Community Action Day. There will also be an awards ceremony. Two individuals were nominated from Washtenaw County.
- There is a new MCAAA Director, Doreen Woodward. She had a press conference with the Governor to proclaim February 19-25 "Keep Michigan Warm Week" and to encourage participation in "Walk for Warmth" projects. The latest edition of the CAPsule was included in the meeting packets for Board members to review with more information.
- Rusher added that Woodward is a dynamo State Director who is on top of things and hasn't missed a beat. Woodward is working with the CAAs at the National level as well as those in the State.

5. **Report of the Board of Commissioners** – (Sizemore)

A. Updates

- Sizemore thanked Peterson for his work on the Aerotropolis. Commissioners Peterson and Prater have been a driving force working with Wayne County towards creating the

Aerotropolis. The Aerotropolis consists of the area around both airports (Detroit Metro and Willow Run) that is in the planning stages of development. The area consists of tens of thousands of acres and is going to be developed into light industrial space, office space, retail establishments, hotels, restaurants, recreational areas/facilities and housing. Sizemore again thanked Peterson for his help in the group effort. Peterson reiterated that the Aerotropolis will bring more business to the area.

- Sizemore noted that if ETCS can make the partnership with the YGCEDC work then it will be a great benefit to the area. Sizemore would like to see ETCS help with Liberty Square as well. Peterson agreed that coming together will make a huge difference in the area. There is no question that coming together will be essential. The project with the YGCEDC is a demonstrative project that can be used to set an example for other areas.
- Montague noted that since the project with the YGCEDC is a demonstrative project, maybe we should bring in Liberty Square as well. Sizemore outlined some of the problems with Liberty Square. Montague asked Sizemore to bring more information.
- Sizemore announced that twelve computers were given to the Foster Grandparent Program. Washtenaw County's Director of Information Technology, David Behen, will take over the program in place of Sizemore, who is becoming increasingly busy. Sizemore added that Head Start is taking some computers as well. It is a good program; the computers do not cost much and it is a win-win situation for all involved.
- Sizemore noted that the City of Ypsilanti is part of the Urban County. Sizemore added that, as most may know, he has been working with new water mains in the area. In the Township, members are going to the BOC and asking for dollars for those who are income eligible to pay for the water main construction.
- Sizemore is Co-Chair of WATT (Washtenaw Area Teens for Tomorrow), a new County-wide youth development initiative. WATT had a County-wide dance recently and is organizing a lock-in at Eastern Michigan University. The purpose is to give kids something to do. The hope is for WATT to take on different interest areas throughout the County, such as internships and issues with transportation. One area of discussion is getting a new youth recreation center. Collins asked where the center was going to be located. Sizemore replied that it would be somewhere on the eastern side of the County.

6. Report of the Executive Director – (Rusher)

A. Updates

Federal

- Last week was a busy one on the Hill. The original budget included a slashing of labor dollars and a deterioration of CSBG (Community Services Block Grant) dollars. The work that went into the budget discussions was outstanding. David Bradley spearheaded the effort to not make cuts and to restore all of the funding to 2005 levels in the Senate. In the end, we got 10 million dollars put in the resolution. It was a tough fight yet we are only halfway there.
- The LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program) budget is going to the President's desk next. It is looking good for us.

State

- Earlier, Berry talked about the new MCAA State Director who was with the Governor during the press release. Rusher added that she is working with the Workforce Development Board on the Governor's MIOP (Michigan Opportunity Partnership). The goal of MIOP is to retool Michigan's job training programs and steer unemployed workers toward high-demand careers.

Local

- Rusher noted the upcoming Walk for Warmth that Montague talked about earlier. A copy of the Walk for Warmth press release was provided in the meeting packets for Board members.
- ETCS is helping Washtenaw County citizens file their taxes and helping those who qualify in claiming the EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit). Shaw noted that the rules for the EITC are strict. She suggested that we ask our lobbyists to change the rules so that if one is working past the age of 65, then they should qualify for the EITC. Rusher replied that many of the rules for 65-year-olds and older need to be looked at. She added that we need to do more to help our seniors. A copy of the EITC press release was provided in the meeting packets for Board members.

B. Ypsilanti Gateway Community and Economic Development Corporation (YGCEDC) Update

- The leadership of the Board of Commissioners (BOC) and the County Administrator has asked Rusher to form a closer working relationship with the YGCEDC as Peterson discussed earlier.
- Included in the CAB meeting packet was a model of what ETCS will look like in order to take the YGCEDC where it needs to go. ETCS will help the YGCEDC by doing the things that it's able to as the local Community Action Agency.
- Sizemore asked whether the problems were resolved with the City Council. Rusher replied that, without naming names, those who proposed problems are not involved in the transition. Rusher added that the City Manager was at the partnership meeting held earlier that Peterson was a part of.
- The Vision for the YGCEDC is for it to be a long-standing viable entity known for its strong track record of innovative community improvements in the Ypsilanti Gateway Area. The Area is bound by the highway (I-94) to Michigan Avenue and from Huron Street to First Avenue. It includes the Michigan Works! Service Center (MWSC).
- The strategy is for Washtenaw County to form a legal subsidiary under ETCS. This will allow the YGCEDC to participate in the CACDE (Community Action Capital Development Enterprise) project. A flyer with information on the CACDE was included in the meeting packets for Board members. Rusher noted that ETCS already belongs to the NCAF (National Community Action Foundation). She added that both Jackson and Oakland Counties have a similar relationship between their CAAs and local EDCs. ETCS staff and County Corporation Council have been researching such partnerships. Rusher added that the State has already begun to gather the CAAs that are doing this so that they can meet to discuss their work.
- This is a big job and staff will be working on building the relationship and implementing the changes. The implementation steps for the formation of the subsidiary will be as follows:
 - a. Washtenaw County forms a subsidiary under ETCS.
 - b. Once the subsidiary is formed, ETCS becomes very active in the national enterprise and capital ventures.
 - c. Some staff will be needed to move in order to provide support to the YGCEDC. There is some minute revenue stream and ETCS will need to help them get off the ground. Staff will work with the Office of Community Development to facilitate the CHDO status of the YGCEDC.
 - d. ETCS would be the parent organization and it will be expected that the YGCEDC will be responsible for their own revenue generating activities. Rusher made it very clear to members of the YGCEDC that this was imperative.

Rusher added that she suggested to the YGCEDC that perhaps some joint fundraising with the CAB would be possible. There was a lot of excitement from the YGCEDC leadership team who felt that this would really work.

- e. The YGCEDC will aggressively recruit board members.
- f. Ongoing partner meetings will ensue.
- An organizational flowchart was included in the packets demonstrating the relationship with ETCS, the YGCEDC, workforce development and community action.
- Hopefully, this will become a model for other areas to follow nationwide.
- Berry expressed hope that the Township and City would work together on this. Rusher noted that at this point, only the City is involved and hopefully we could have the Township become a partner. Rusher added that a short term plan will be put in place and a long term plan will be developed.
- Sizemore noted that Rusher should talk with Gunn about Liberty Square. He added that we need to work together as a unit.
- Wolf added that he is in full support of this. He added that he attended a workshop in DC about this. This gives ETCS a 501c3 edge that will allow it to qualify for some grant dollars. Wolf asked whether ETCS staff could handle this; he asked whether ETCS had the capacity to take on this project. Rusher replied that ETCS does not have the capacity to handle this under its current capacity and would be hiring a staff person as part of the implementation plan. County BOC leadership and Administration have agreed to help ETCS with this capacity building activity.
- Montague added that a travel policy will need to be developed to allow more people to experience these workshops. Montague asked Sizemore to work with the CAB on this. Sizemore replied that the travel policy will need to allow Board members the opportunity to network and learn a lot.

Shaw moved that YGCEDC be accepted as a subsidiary under ETCS. DeMaria supported.
Motion passes.

DISCUSSION

- Berry asked about the YGCEDC losing its CHDO. Rusher replied that when the office of Community Development was established, they made their own requirements and the YGCEDC lost its local CHDO status. One local requirement is for them to have a full time staff member. Rusher noted that the YGCEDC maintains its State of Michigan CHDO status.

C. Resolutions

These resolutions have already been taken to the BOC.

- i. Approval of the ETCS fiscal year (FY) 2006 Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) application to the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) in the amount of \$899,553 for the period of October 1, 2005 through September 30, 2006.
 - o These funds are used as an umbrella to continue services through the various community action programs. Programs are offered to low-income households at or below 125% of poverty throughout the County.
 - o Such services include the Summer Food Service Program, the Senior Nutrition Program, the Foster Grandparent Program, Emergency Services, Home Weatherization, Home Rehabilitation and The Emergency Food Assistance Program.

- ii. Ratification of the Chair of the Board's signature on the ETCS application for the FY 2006 Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC)/MCAAA Energy Assistance Program in the amount of \$94,000 for the period of December 7, 2005 through July 31, 2006.
 - o These funds are allocated to CAAs to enable them to respond to the emergency needs of low-income households at or below 200% of poverty.
 - o A majority of the funds, about \$79,000, are used towards metered service. The rest goes to deliverable fuels.
- iii. Ratification of the Chair of the Board's signature on the ETCS application to the 2006 Michigan DHS for the 2006 MPSC Weatherization Assistance Program in the amount of \$95,353 for the period of January 16, 2006 through August 31, 2006.
 - o The MPSC supplements Federal dollars from the Department of Energy.
 - o These dollars are used to weatherize homes for households at or below 200% of poverty level. Funds also allow ETCS to provide client energy assistance classes.

Shaw moved to approve the three resolutions. Myers supported. Resolutions pass.

D. Program Updates

i. Emergency Services – (Bivens)

A written report was provided in the meeting packets that covered Emergency Services including the Emergency Food Assistance Program, Energy Assistance, Deliverable Fuels, County Funds and the Summer Food Service Program.

- o The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
 - Bivens thanked Board members who helped with the distribution of federal surplus food on February 16.
 - People who have come in for food have come back to volunteer. Volunteers help unload the food, bag the items and help carry food out to cars.
 - Commodities were distributed to over 650 households, which demonstrates that there are a lot of low-income people in our County.

ii. Housing and Energy Programs

A written report was provided in the meeting packets that covered the Community Development Block Grant Program, the Weatherization Assistance Program and the Weatherization Client Energy Education Classes.

iii. Senior Services, Foster Grandparent Program and Michigan Enrolls – (Scott)

A written report was provided in the meeting packets.

- o Planning is underway for the Foster Grandparent Program Annual Recognition Luncheon. The event is scheduled for Friday, April 28 from 11:30 AM to 2 PM at the Kensington Court in Ann Arbor. CAB members will be receiving invitations in the mail soon.
- o The twelve computers that Sizemore mentioned in the BOC report earlier were distributed to Foster Grandparents (FGs). Computer classes are being arranged for the FGs through Washtenaw Community College.
- o ETCS published 20,000 2006 Older Adult Services Resource Directories. The directories will be distributed throughout the County. A copy of the directory was included in the meeting packets. Wolf noted that the telephone directory is really helpful. Board members agreed and noted that they appreciated the large

font. McKinney asked Scott to mail copies of the directory to her. Montague suggested that a similar directory be developed for children services in the County.

- Scott reported that in the Michigan Enrolls program, ETCS exceeded its enrollment goal for the year 2005.

7. Report of the Officers, Committees and Liaisons

A. Workforce Development Board (WDB) – (Gulick and Wolf)

- Gulick reported that Rickey Banks was going to attend the meeting today to talk about what he does as the AFL-CIO Community Services Liaison. Banks was to focus on a linkage between what he does and what the CAB does. Gulick would like everyone to work more closely together on the areas that overlap. Hopefully, Banks can attend a later meeting.
- Keith Peters held his first meeting as Chair of the WDB on March 16. At that meeting, he reported that there are a lot of innovative projects underway at the Ypsilanti Area Chamber of Commerce. There may be some development going on across the street from the MWSC at the Exemplar building as Peterson mentioned earlier.
- In the labor sector, jobs are steady in the County.
- The WDB modified its Bylaws to bring them up to date.
- The WDB is looking at developing more programs and partnerships.
- The WDB has been successful at working with youth. The WDB approved funding for a youth mentorship program. The first year of the program was concluded recently and was such a success that the WDB approved funding for another year. WDB members recommended that the youth who went through program talk with their peers about their experience. Gulick recalled the presentation given by Bill Miller at the Joint Annual Meeting.
- The WDB is rolling out a mega agreement with Ann Arbor SPARK and other organizations in the County. The Ann Arbor area, and Washtenaw County, is being developed as the innovation hub of the Midwest. The WDB is going to roll out the agreement with its partners at its May meeting. SPARK is merging with the Washtenaw Development Council (WDC) and will be a partner in the agreement along with Eastern Michigan University (EMU). The partners will be working together to recruit talent to the area and bring workforce development and economic development together.
- The NSK Corporation laid off a number of employees. ETCS organized a rapid response through the MWSC.
- ETCS is closely monitoring the manufacturing sector.
- Rusher noted that she participated in a session hosted by Phil Powers at the University of Michigan recently. One of the things participants did was look at how we could build on Michigan's shore line. Other areas of discussion were focused how to keep the high school and college graduates and retirees to stay in the area.
- Gulick added that the Aerotropolis idea is really catching on. This will create a mini-city and bring a lot of companies and jobs to the area.
- Gulick noted that we are the model in the Country for other WDBs to follow.

B. Head Start – (Collins)

- They just finished up their federal monitoring report. Everyone is working on getting things up to standard.
- The Head Start parent training will be held in Detroit. They are trying to recruit a lot of trainers to help.

8. Other Business/Announcements

- Shaw asked when the Bylaws Committee was going to meet to discuss the changes that were brought up at the November Board meeting. It was decided that anyone interested in serving should contact Al-Igoe. Montague noted that she has a number of items she wants to add to the agenda.

9. Upcoming Dates to Note

- A list of important dates was provided in the meeting packets for board members to note.
- The next CAB meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 22.

10. Adjourn

Shaw moved to adjourn the meeting. DeMaria supported. Montague adjourned the meeting at 7:25 PM.