

**SUPERIOR TRADE ZONE
REGULAR MEETING
October 27, 2015**

A meeting of the Superior Trade Zone was held on Tuesday, October 27, 2015, at 9:00 a.m. at the Maple Ridge Township Hall, 3892 West Maple Ridge, Rock, MI 49880.

PRESENT: City of Escanaba City Assessor Daina Norden, City of Gladstone City Manager Darla Falcon, Maple Ridge Township Supervisor Judy Trudell, Delta County Commissioner Patrick Johnson, Ford River Township Gary Boudreau, Forsyth Township Supervisor Joe Minelli.

ALSO PRESENT: City of Escanaba City Manager Jim O'Toole, City of Escanaba Executive Assistant Buffy Smith, Delta County Administrator Ryan Bergman, Chippewa County Commissioner Don McClain, Eric Wedesky with EUP Regional Planning, and Chippewa County EDC President Tom Ewing.

ABSENT: Marquette County Administrator Scott Erbsch, Bark River Township Supervisor Gregg Johnson, Chocolay Township Supervisor Gary Walker, City of Marquette Commissioner Sarah Reynolds, Ely Township Supervisor Carl Hosang, Garden Township Supervisor Ray Young, Ishpeming Township Supervisor James Nankervis, Marquette County Chairman Gerald Corkin, Nahma Township Supervisor Warren Groleau, Richmond Township Supervisor Scott Mills, and Wells Township Supervisor Robert Therrian.

ROLL CALL

Executive Assistant Buffy Smith conducted the roll call.

NO QUORUM

Meeting began at 9:20 a.m. Roll call was taken. Official meeting was adjourned due to lack of quorum.

INFORMAL DISCUSSION/UPDATE:

1. BOARD BY-LAWS:

Jim O'Toole began the informal discussion stating that at the last meeting a draft of the Board By-Laws was distributed. He suggested adding the Pledge of Allegiance to the rules and procedures. This addition will be reviewed for action as unfinished business at the next monthly meeting. No other changes or suggestions were made.

2. MARKETING PLAN/BUSINESS ATTRACTION:

Jim O'Toole stated Scott Erbsch met with the MEDC representative about the marketing grant that the MEDC had available, unfortunately due to budget cuts, the MEDC is no longer operating that program. He said website and logo design needs to be researched as a group. All Board members reviewed the I-69 International Trade Corridor website on screen as an example. Suggested links on our webpage will include success stories, available sites and buildings, and a regional summit. The Superior Trade Zone (STZ) will incorporate international symbols instead of words. The STZ website will be the front door to the Superior Trade Zone. The Board will have to hire someone to do the website design. Mr. O'Toole suggested working with MDOT on Marquette and Delta County regional entrance signs, stating a welcome to our region with the Superior Trade Zone website address listed. Once you enter Marquette or Delta Counties, the STZ website address will be located on the bottom of the sign creating awareness. Having billboards was another idea, which could create awareness for current businesses and businesses looking at coming into the area. Going forward, Board Members will be split into groups to talk to businesses to get their input on interests/needs and to promote the Superior Trade Zone at the same time.

Gladstone City Manager Darla Falcon questioned if all trade zones have a website and if there is a standard home page. Mr. O'Toole stated they do and creation of the website is dependent on what each region wants.

Ryan Bergman questioned if the Superior Trade Zone would RFP for the creation of the website and then hand over the responsibilities for updating and editing. Mr. O'Toole replied yes, to get the website built and then take over the day to day updates. He stated the website needs to be user friendly and will be created with the two (2) click rule. Also marketing the Superior Trade Zone to local businesses needs to be done with public service announcements using TV 6, the radio, and the newspaper. Gary Boudreau stated interface with real estate is a good idea.

Ryan Bergman suggested an invite should be offered to the 6 County Employment Alliance to attend a meeting in the future.

Mr. O'Toole commented the importance of getting volunteers involved to help with the website project.

Darla Falcon asked if a secure web address has been made. Ryan Bergman stated he secured superiortradezone.org.

Mr. O'Toole stated the seed money totaling \$40,000 by the cities of Escanaba and Marquette, and counties of Delta and Marquette have been forwarded to Marquette County and will be working capital to begin the zone.

3. MEMBERSHIP ADMISSION:

In the course of developing the Superior Trade Zone, two (2) townships have requested to join the Board; those being Humboldt and Negaunee.

4. AUTHORITY/STAFF COMMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mr. O'Toole stated the next meeting will be December 1st at 9:00 a.m. at the Maple Ridge Hall in Rock, MI located at 3892 West Maple Ridge.

At the meeting, guests from Chippewa County introduced themselves. Chairman of the Economic Development Committee for Chippewa County Don McClaine stated he met with Senator Tom Casperson to discuss and pitch the idea of international trade. Senator Casperson suggested Mr. McClaine connect with the Superior Trade Zone Board. Mr. McClaine is looking at economic development across the entire Upper Peninsula and he is looking into options beyond the steps already taken. He would like to know if the STZ will extend their way in the future. They are an international airport; they can offer strengths, and a lot of opportunities for the Superior Trade Zone. He would like to work together to help and benefit each other if possible.

Mr. O'Toole stated state law would have to be reviewed to see if this is possible. The law was introduced and written by Senator Casperson. The law is narrowly scoped for the central region. Mr. O'Toole would like to get established and obtain experience first.

Tom Ewing stated he would like to work together, which would be a benefit for everyone involved. On their webpage they could link the Superior Trade Zone website and market the Superior Trade Zone on their Facebook as well. He is amazed at all the Upper Peninsula has to offer. When people think of Michigan, they think of Lower Michigan. Creating awareness in the U.P is important and he would like to be involved with the Superior Trade Zone if there is a place. Because the STZ Board is in the early stages of development, it would be best to follow the progress for now and see if and where they fit in the future.

Mr. O'Toole stated the Superior Trade Zone will focus on creating businesses and jobs within the region.

Mr. O'Toole and Scott Erbisch are hoping to get the MEDC representative to attend the next month's meeting to give an update on what is happening with the MEDC with the recent layoff of workforce and restructuring, and to meet the new representative. And to also learn if there are initiatives coming that will fit with the Superior Trade Zone.

Ryan Bergman stated he would like a financial menu complete for the next meeting, showing what incentives the Superior Trade Zone will allow a business to do and how the STZ can give incentives to entice businesses. This will help guide the Superior Trade Zone toward their goal.

Daina Norden stated once the Superior Trade Zone meets with the MEDC representative, we can find out how many Renaissance zones a district can have. This is a large tax incentive for businesses. She also stated that on the STZ web page, we could include current businesses operating in the U.P. to create awareness of everything offered in the area, to help promote current businesses to work together, and to promote growth.

Mr. O'Toole suggested a manufacturing round table meeting can be looked at in the future, with the possibility of meeting one (1) or two (2) times per year. The Superior Trade Zone would be a networking hub and allow businesses to work together.

No additional comments were made.

Meeting ended at 10:10 a.m.