

## TIMBER ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

February 3, 2017

### Attending:

Rich Bowman, Gary Melow, Donna LaCourt, Deb Begalle, Bill O'Neill, Brenda Haskill, Tim Biewer, Jerry Grossman, Mike McCuiston, Charlie Becker, Larry Leefers, JR Richardson (conf. call), Nick Monkevich (conf. call), Scott Robbins, Ben Schram

Meeting started at 10:05 am.

Motioned by Mike McCuiston, seconded by Rich Bowman to approve with additions as noted to the agenda. Additions were to include a U&M update from Brenda Haskill.

### 1. **Marketing Program Update** - Bill O'Neill

The initial survey is back. Beth Fultz, MDNR) will be attending the next meeting with a wider report. She was unable to attend this meeting due to illness.

### 2. **Legislative Committee Update**

JR Richardson mentioned, and Gary Melow affirmed that 11 committees have freshmen chairs in the legislature. There could be some new opportunities for educational discussions about forestry and forest management.

- a. Michigan Forest Products Council (MFPC) is having a "capitol day" with lunch on March 20. There is a new pass card system at the capitol - \$20 to make visits and use facilities at the capitol.
- b. Bill O'Neill noted that last fall, the group decided to put on a presentation to the House Natural Resources Committee regarding the facts and figures of natural resources. It was postponed until the new year with new legislators in place. Discussion points: Should the presentation be generic and presented to both the House and Senate? Does the TAC want to do this? JR said that smaller groups with less formality work well. Caution over the TAC being seen as "lobbying" any legislators.
- c. Gary feels that the TAC should put the presentation together. Bill feels he can arrange something to appear with the help of Trevor VanDyke and Director Creagh. Bill will seek the best avenue to approach the legislature. Gary, Rich and Charlie will work on pulling the presentation together with assistance from DNR staff and Larry Leefers.

### 3. **Road Inventory Update** - Deb Begalle, MDNR

2016 PA 288 was passed last fall stating that the DNR would do a road inventory and provide a road map by the end of 2017. She noted that it had been part of the strategic plan and work had begun in advance of the bill. 80% of the work is done in the NLP with the rest to be completed soon. Inventory is the first part and considerations for restrictions will take place over the summer with the review of public meetings and input. The process will be started in the UP this summer with more challenges related to ownerships. Contract crew will be hired for QA/QC. Recreational users are highly interested in the road inventory.

- a. Rich hopes that once this is completed, then investment, funding, and budgeting can take place for the future of the state road system. Jerry Grossman asked if bridges and crossings are part of the inventory. Answer: No, just inventory of the roads at this time. This is an unfunded project assigned by the legislature.

- b. Rich noted his desire for TAC to be more involved in the project and linking it to an effort by MTU and MDOT that is analyzing the roads in the state. Everyone agreed that the road inventory is a great thing and happy it is underway. Two big concerns: which roads retain restrictions and which ones do not? In UP, the issue is what is a public road?
- c. Scott Robbins noted this causes issues for the logging industry. Coordination needs to happen to make the situation less problematic. Charlie Becker noted the need to educate the legislature and that FRD can't be saddled with the financial burden of long-term road maintenance and inventory. Rich noted that doing outreach work with the County Road Association of Michigan would be a good idea.

**4. MIFBI Conference - Forest Bioeconomy Conference Recap**

Scott, Charlie, Rich, Deb, Bill, Gary, & Brenda all attended.

- a. Charlie: big take-home was to go after low hanging fruit in the short run, and then other good prospects in the future. MIFBI needs direction to capture both. Industry won't support much beyond the low hanging fruit. Rich noted that he doesn't think MIFBI knows what problem it is solving. The problems and approach were well organized and understood under Project GREEN on the agricultural side. This is not the case with MIFBI. Scott feels that they should focus on making Michigan the place to come and be part of the movement. Gary feels similarly to Rich regarding the issue of where will money come from—lack of funding to continue the mission is the problem. What will MIFBI do and how will they go forward in light of a lack of funding? Donna said that MIFBI may be most useful in helping make those connections between government and industry and may help create a flow of information. There was a short discussion on bringing TAC, MFPC and Michigan Association of Timbermen (MAT), and all the leaders together to talk about how do we make Michigan the place to bring businesses.
- b. From a TAC perspective, the group has had the discussion in the past about where there are opportunities to add value to what is already here. Where are the gaps? Donna LaCourt urged the group to hone in on where the gaps are and they will start working on that.
- c. Charlie wants the TAC to spend time to develop a list for MIFBI and create items to talk with them face-to-face about the suggestions of the TAC. April may be the target to sit down with them.
- d. Deb asked the Council if Fridays are still good days for TAC meetings. Group felt that the Friday slot is still good.
- e. Rich added an agenda item for an FRD update regarding the forest economist spot along with update from U&M. Larry gave a brief update.

**5. Bob Heyd's Position – Forest Health (MDNR)**

Forest Resources Division (FRD) is working on filling that position but meeting some challenges. Position was reworked slightly with some changes to attract candidates to apply. A limited factor forestry position will be refilled for Grayling or Roscommon and will be posted soon.

- a. The FRD is purchasing more crane mats and temporary bridges.
- b. Forest economist position – extended the posting. First round of applicants was few. More applicants will be sought. Larry Leefers said the criteria for applicants may be the issue with a requirement for 4-year bachelor in forestry.
- c. Jerry asked about HRD and the update on movement of the outreach.

6. Deb reviewed the Good Neighbor Authority status with the Hiawatha NF. They stated that they have nothing for FY17 currently. This was said to be a result of extremely high turnover in the staffing at that NF. A discussion of the hurdles for GNA work on all NFs followed. Bill noted that those hurdles are being cleared.
7. Larry Leefers reviewed how Rich Bowman, Margaret Minerick and he revised the draft goals from the last TAC meeting. For discussion, they proposed: the mission of the Timber Advisory Council is to provide advice to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Director related to the forest products industries, management of forest resources, and the role of the industries in sustaining forest-dependent communities. Seven goals related to this mission are:
  - a. To promote policies that support Michigan forest products industries and foster new industries and technologies.
  - b. To develop and improve domestic and export markets for Michigan wood-based products.
  - c. To improve marketing of Michigan forest products.
  - d. To increase sustainable timber supply from private, federal and state lands.
  - e. To increase employment and the tax base associated with forest-dependent communities.
  - f. To increase vocational training in careers that support the forest products industries.
  - g. To support studies and monitoring related to the other goals.

These are DRAFTS. Rich noted that many of the items from the last meeting were “ideas” and not goals. He also noted that the goal is to create a framework and direction for the forest that is resilient to the changes government. Rich reviewed the 7 goals that were circulated to the group for review. Scott asked if metrics would be integrated and Rich said yes.

A lengthy discussion on how to, if at all, quantify the acreage enrolled in QFP over the next 5 years. Also, concern was raised that enrollees were not “new” additions if they were going to manage their land with or without the QFP.

- a. Scott noted that the state and feds should supply a consistent level of timber and then in good years, the industry can utilize more private land timber to harvest.
- b. Donna noted as related to goal 3, MEDC has new opportunities that can assist in the marketing of forest products that currently exist.
- c. Larry, Rich, and Margaret will rework them and have them ready for review again before the next conference call on March 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- d. Tim Biewer suggests that a list be compiled of all the various opportunities or gaps in the industry. Wood waste, species overruns, etc. Brenda and Donna will work together to get a basic list started.

Meeting concluded at 2:30 pm