

MINING METHODS, ENVIRONMENT AND RECLAMATION
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES
December 3, 2020

Roll Call

Jim Kochevar – present
Hal Fitch – present
Evelyn Ravindran – absent
Peter Rose – present
Adam Wygant – present
Steve Kesler – present
Susan Bishop – present

Others attending

Rick Duncan, citizen
Dave Behrend, Fishbeck
Aaron_____

Review and Approve Meeting Minutes of October 9, 2020 Meeting

A motion was made by Adam Wygant to approve the October 9, 2020, meeting. The motion was seconded by Steve Kesler. The minutes were approved.

Review and Approve Meeting Minutes of November 6, 2020 Meeting

Some committee members did not get a chance to review the minutes, so they should review them so they can be approved at the next meeting.

Report Structure/Possible Assignments

We currently have five topic categories. We have approximately 9-11 months left to deliver the report. We have about six months to complete the report. We need to focus on assignments and bring in subject matter experts if needed. What will the end result be? We spent eight months coming up with topics, and we need to decide if subtopics, research, and other topics need to be put together. Is the document going to the legislature to make mining more feasible in the state? This is covered under item a, recommendation to strengthen mining include evaluation of the government policies that affect mining. We need to make the general public aware of this. Item d, advise on the development of partnerships, has lots of favorable opinions. We might need an item six to develop a partnership.

We need to go forward with the committee advisory unit to see what it would look like. There is a difference between the two states driven by iron ore mining. We have one

operating mine. We need to make a recommendation to have Minnesota present. We have one operating mine.

We need to be an advocate for some part of the partnership to be present. Aggregates are in most counties; there is stone in the UP and lower Michigan. With a mine partnership, we have hard rock mining issues, and aggregate participation would be good.

Michigan Manufacturing Association has worked to have the Mining Policy Committee, but there is no steady voice for mining overall. The convening piece is good for transparency and communication to receive information from the public. This hits item four; we can model after item four. We need to start defining participants. Under whose purview does it fall? We need to draw an outline of interested parties and participants of who owns this. It should be a recommendation. Who is the primary convener? That is the goal of this committee. We need to talk to others to see who the convener of that group is. That's a great concept to develop a partnership. Could they work with diverse mining?

All involve moving rock and making a mess. It might be useful. Step one is to decide what the principle function is. Is it communication with the public? Communication with legislation? Communication with the public? Education? It needs to be more expansive with the community to provide transparency. If they met quarterly people could find this a value. Companies might be interested in what other companies are doing. Sharing information and transparent conversations would hold value. An individual, like permitting actions, involves EGLE. We need to understand mineral right implications and environmental trends. We have to articulate the value in the report. To start a mine land partnership as an entity is agnostic to anything. We have a mission statement for that group. If Hal's group suggests regulatory reform, then it stays there. Steve: Wouldn't the recommendation fall to the legislature to put the group together?

If it's a partnership, do we feel its value to have a partnership? We need sustainable goals and resources. Would that include oil and gas? Oil and gas is part of the legislative submit. The principle was MEDC. We identified the need for a partnership, and there are several ways to go about it. Would it include oil and gas, separate groups for hard rock and aggregates? Our duty as a committee/subcommittee is to identify concerns and give options. Who will start this? There is a separate Michigan mining association, but it didn't get off the ground. The challenge is to get someone to start this.

I see the difference in branches of extracted industries, but all kinds need to be lumped together. If we want better communication with the public, we need to be transparent. What does this organization do if it exists? A strong economy is important to the industry, like Jim's company. We need to accomplish climate change goals like lighter

materials, and methods for electrification, and value in partnerships. The iron range in Minnesota is different. Does it impact reclamation decisions?

I have been involved in mine land partnerships that receive funding for project work. It is formed with the vision of life after mining. As mines exhaust themselves, how do we reclaim the land? The funding source is there to help. Do grant taxes go back to the mining company to support them? Laurentian Vision started outside the industry through the Chamber of Commerce and citizen's participants. This was started with residential areas. Most weren't left to be developed as recreational. Funding had iron range board there to tie in.

The Department of Iron Range, Resources, and Rehabilitation has Laurentian Vision as a public partnership. There is value in both. There is no funding source or reuse of some of those areas. My mind goes to the range land board as it has values. I don't know what the subcommittee thinks. We can't be Minnesota in the number of iron mines we have, but it is beneficial to look at the pieces to see where they fit.

The alternative is to have an ombudsman to organize a partnership rather than a whole office or division. Jim Earnhart was similar to that. He had conversations with tribes to see what could be done with a community in the mine. It may be a recommendation. We have the Clean Water Advocate and the Climate Change Advocate at EGLE now.

Would this be an extension of this committee if we created it with a defined timeline for the purposes listed in the agenda? This is a group of interested parties. Can existing memberships be added or reduced? Evolving into a partnership by bringing in representatives, Chamber of Commerce and see what potential we have.

We're talking about another commission. The challenge is to call for volunteers, an enterprise approach, and the organization can be pulled one way or another. It is hard to keep it going if there are no volunteers. We need local citizens, and the local government involves. We need structure and continuity. Minnesota had independent consultants, correct? Some were volunteers, but others were available as a funding source. The objective is to facilitate operations. We might have unnecessary legislators. Is that where you're with it?

We are trying to get a group to have a finger on the pulse with longer lived development items and the ability to react to changing times. A rapid response or other things are needed for action. We can draft a vision of what this is and level it open ended as to how it forms. Any ways to do this. We are all in agreement in the value and need. ICC mining team was good and had value. It is good to see continued value.

The consensus applies to all four subcommittees. We would identify the highest priority from our list. Any new legislation is needed. We want to see broader charges. The

recommendation for a partnership or ombudsman is item d. I think reclamation and the environment are the main items. A partnership may be needed.

The Social, Economic and Labor Opportunities subcommittee is looking at this? It's a crossover. We can cross communicate with other groups. CMMF recommendation is not a subcommittee recommendation if you're talking about a partnership. It is a cross from the Mining Methods and Reclamation and Social, Economic and Labor Opportunities subcommittees. We need to make sure the concerns are covered.

How will we merge our four items with a, b, c, and d duties? Item b, are we doing or plan on doing that? We can add item d here. What polices affect those things? In Tim's Research and Mapping subcommittee, we need a funding source, so we have it available with an eye towards the mineral resources we have. We have a lot of research and mapping needs it in Tim's committee. It will be a recommendation of the committee as a whole.

Does item 1 from the top provide/design for post mining? Is there a policy today that hinders or helps? Brownfield – is there a policy that helps or hinders this? We can handle a, c, and d, but we aren't doing anything with b. Item 1 is right for b. What I'm hearing in our conversation for reclamation isn't the least cost to spend. It's beyond compliance as an agency to require Cliffs to complete stabilization. How much can we do before mining companies push back? It might be a regulatory gap.

There are no regulations for minerals from sand dune mining. Should we read the current statues as a committee and things not favorable or are we operating independently according to item b. We have identified five topics to look for regulatory gaps. These are important. If we have gaps, where do we identify and how do we advocate for action in these areas. We can't get it all done. What's required is beyond compliance? We are thinking about land being useable after mining.

Let's hear from Jim or others on the regulatory side. We're not expanding or mining more due to the regulations upon us. Sustainable mining is a robust economy. We're landlocked. Iron mining isn't going to start. We are not looking to expand due to no demand. Part of our mission is to protect the environment. The environment regulations don't hinder our decisions today.

The committee, as a whole, needs to look at duties. This committee is beyond the compliance concept. What can industry do to further their efforts? Every mining company has to abide by regulations. We need to look at post mine use. A park is not suitable at every site at the end of a mine. We can have a partnership or guidance to have a conversation.

A regulatory agency does not dictate what land use will be utilized. Regs can't say when looking at feasibility. We need to look at our options. The Mining Method subcommittee says that industry should look at this. There are lots wrapped into this. Different sites have different values after mining. Companies look at feasibility. Conversations need to be had at the beginning. For example, if Cliffs went through two years of activity then Cliffs shut down, it would be a bad outcome. Is there anything that helps?

We can't compete with Minnesota? Is there pseudo iron formation to help Michigan compete with Minnesota? Iron mining does not a lot of expansion or growth. This committee is about preservation. It wasn't a regulatory choice; it was an economic choice. I don't have a regulatory reason. Is there a reserve tax in Minnesota? No, everything is taxes without a reserve component. Ours is based on reserves. The tax structure can impact it, energy costs, and labor costs. I don't have an ask to fix these things. Our new project is to directly reduce pellets; it's silica content.

We're looking forward to a smooth path for active continues mining in Michigan. Our charges is to make sure opportunities to expand mining. It's not a regulatory policy or infrastructure. We need to look at ways Mining Methods and Reclamation to make things more feasible.

The tax mine is complicated. We don't have that here. It's difficult to impose a tax on reserves. Are they even feasible to be mined? We need to address this with the Regulatory Policy subcommittee. What are the hurdles for tax potential minerals? If a farmer has filed with rock, and they are taxed, they couldn't afford it. We need to move mineral activity on land and hold it indefinitely.

In the statue we should take a look at iron, any reclamation or piece of research that relates to mining methods that would hit the goals to make it more mineable. Are we missing a vein of research in mining that isn't regulated? We can reuse less quality materials. Tim's group will look at this. Is there a vein of that, this group takes up? Is there research that makes this more attractive? We call it research, because no one knows the answer. Reduce waste, remove silica more effective can help. The National Research Institute in Minnesota researches mining methods and product use. They are finding results and achievements we would be privy to. We have another committee looking to foster this.

We have a strong economy and investment climate. A decade ago, Michigan Iron nugget partnered with Coby Steel, but they failed to not launch due to not enough technology. Leachate mining might not be an option for iron. I'm pointing this out as an option. What prohibits leachate mining today? It looks like a regulatory gap or question to look at. Mining could be promoted. Reworking tailings and waste rock are examples. It's a gap not covered.

Brownfield s are valuable since they are re-entered. There are bits and pieces in other statues in wetlands and lakes that are great examples. If you can't reserve mining, it prohibits what you're talking about. We are not to do stabilization or reclamation, because it will bite them in the end.

We can pick up next meeting at this end point and put meat on the bones regarding a Board of Commission or ombudsman. When is our next meeting? It's January 12, 2021. We can rehash this conversation when we have the whole committee meeting. the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 14, 2021 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Public Comments

None

Future Meeting

January 12, 2021.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:48 a.m.