

**The Leelanau County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (LCBRA) held a regular meeting on Tuesday, October 17, 2023 in the Leelanau County Government Center, Suttons Bay, MI.**

**The meeting was called to order at 10 am by Chairman Dan Heinz, who led the Pledge of Allegiance.**

#### **ROLL CALL**

**Members Present:** D. Heinz, D. Allen, J. Arens, T. Eftaxiadis, R. Foster

**Members Absent:** G. Allgaier, D. King  
**(Prior Notice)**

**Staff Present:** T. Galla, Director

**Public Present:** Sarah Gruza, Brownfields Project Manager, U.S. EPA Region 5, Jeff Hawkins, Fishbeck, Scott Mitchell, GTB

Members welcomed Sarah Gruza to the meeting. Gruza said she has worked with Leelanau County for over a year.

**PUBLIC COMMENT-** None.

#### **DIRECTOR COMMENTS**

Galla reported that there is no movement on the West Shore project and to possibly start considering termination of the Plan next year after the developer's permits for the project expire, and after they provide notice to him that the plan will be terminated. Galla also reported that there has been no correspondence received from Ross Satterwhite on the reimbursement request for the Leland brownfield plan. Galla also mentioned that she has used ASAP.gov for years to draw down funds for grants. There is a new process that started in September which uses ID.Me to identify yourself when you sign in to draw down the funds. Galla is working with the Treasurer and the Finance Department to create an account. Allen said she has an account and they can work out a solution.

Allen asked Scott Mitchell to introduce himself. Mitchell said he is the environmental specialist for the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians and will be attending future meetings.

#### **CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA**

*Motion by Foster, seconded by Eftaxiadis, to approve the agenda as presented. Carried 5-0.*

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST** – None.

#### **CONSIDERATION OF SEPTEMBER 19, 2023 MINUTES**

Heinz pointed out a couple of typos.

*Motion by Allen, seconded by Arens, to approve the minutes as amended. Motion carried 5-0.*

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

*Motion by Eftaxiadis, seconded by Arens, to accept the consent agenda as presented. Motion carried 5-0.*

**OLD BUSINESS** – None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Update: Brownfield Plan – Bluebird (Telgard), Leland Township  
Public Hearing/Board of Commissioners Action**

Galla stated that she, Therese Searles and the Telgards attended the Leland Township meeting last week. Searles went through a PowerPoint and Galla addressed questions that the board had asked back in August. Searles also went through the brownfield plan and the capture of Tax Increment Financing (TIF). The Telgards gave an introduction on what their plans are and included the Early Bird business. They are in the process of removing asbestos and demolition is set to occur next month. Galla concluded that the township approved the motion with a 4-1 vote. The next step will be to hold a Public Hearing.

Galla stated that the Public Hearing will be held on Tuesday, November 21, at 6:00 pm in the Board of Commissioners room. Then it will be on the County Board agenda for action at the November 21, 7:00 pm regular meeting.

Heinz said he is excited to move forward. If approved, this will be the first fully approved brownfield plan since he has been involved. Kudos to Galla, Hawkins and Searles for all of the work over the past year and putting this together. This will be great for the Telgards, they've been involved in the community for generations and are a cornerstone of the community. They would be glad to put this back into business before the end of next year.

**Q&A with Sarah Gruza, EPA Project Manager**

Gruza is out of region 5 EPA in Chicago which covers Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana. They have opened a request for proposals for funding for the upcoming fiscal year of brownfield grants – assessment, assessment coalition, cleanup, etc. There are no new revolving loan fund proposals coming out this year because of investment in jobs acts and seeing unprecedented grants. They are looking to hire more staff to handle this workload. With regard to notice of funding opportunities, they also have technical assistance providers known as TAB. They look at procurement policies, grant applications, etc. and they are staying busy with that.

Gruza said she works with Leelanau County, as well as the state of Wisconsin Brownfield Redevelopment program, and also a few tribes in Michigan and Wisconsin. She works in technical assistance with coordination such as tapping into resources, doing site assessments, etc. She has worked with a county for housing marketing analysis and housing demands and what they look like. She has also looked at proformas for different brownfield sites where a grantee might be in a redevelopment project. There are different opportunities, throughout every step of the way. In addition, she has helped with looking at implementing climate resiliency, how can they work with our partners and grantees to implement things of that nature.

Arens asked for a definition of climate resiliency. Gruza said in broad terms, climate adaption by looking at preventing future climate impacts and adjusting to current impacts we are facing now. Whereas climate mitigation is looking at reducing from a source. Such as increasing storm water

management, green infrastructure. They can help along the way to plan or work with contractors to include those things in a brownfield plan for a site. Eftaxiadis asked as part of the cleanup grant, would storm water management be an eligible activity? If they were to excavate contaminated material and stormwater has potential to redistribute the contaminants. Gruza said, if it's part of the remediation plan, then yes. Depending on how advanced this would be, cleanup would only go so far and other sources might come into play. Perhaps with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). They might need to leverage other sources. Gruza gave the example of a couple of sites they looked at in Keweenaw Bay. She mentioned that flooding caused problems, such as erosion. They brought in contractors that worked with them and FEMA provided technical assistance to them to find nature-based solutions but that is not implemented yet, because it takes time.

Gruza asked how the Leelanau County Land Bank Authority (LBA) partners with the LCBRA. Sometimes you run out of time before you run out of money. The LBA is great tending to brownfield sites when looking for a developer or purchasing of a lot for redevelopment. Galla said one of their earliest projects was a property that the LBA acquired after tax foreclosure. The LCBRA was asked by the LBA to use EPA assessment grants to assess the property in order to clean it up. The LBA used the funds to demolish the site knowing they were not going to get that money back from the sale of the lot. They sold the property to Habitat for Humanity and had a family of four purchase the property - father was a veteran and the two kids go to a nearby public school. The LBA in other situations was able to sell a piece of property for more and in the end, they balanced out the demolition cost. Altogether, working with the LBA and Habitat for Humanity, they have built seven homes in Maple City.

Gruza said working with the LBA and EPA grants, as long as the county has a relationship with the brownfield site owner, it becomes an issue of navigating CIRCA liability. Because the LBA is a separate entity from the county and acquired property through tax foreclosure, it is an easy outlet to look at brownfield site redevelopment for sites that the LBA has acquired. There has been a lot of success stories.

Eftaxiadis asked if other areas of Region 5 have a brownfield or land bank authority. Gruza said she works with a coalition grantee in Kalamazoo County, and they work with the Land Bank Authority. Indiana and Ohio do but she did not think Wisconsin does.

Gruza has been involved with brownfields for three years now. She is still learning and there is a lot going on with the economic development side. She has a public health background and looks at environmental health, although she is not the one going out in the field doing the samples. Leelanau County has a great consultant with Fishbeck, and they are doing good work.

Heinz told Gruza that Galla is taking her around to two sites that they are currently using EPA assessment grants for, the Bluebird and Larry Mawby's Peninsula Housing site in Suttons Bay. He asked what does she hope to accomplish by these site visits. Gruza responded that she hopes to meet the people that are making things happen. That is one of the rewarding aspects of her job. Gruza continued, saying she could speak to challenges folks are facing. She has a very flexible office to work with in the regions and the communities. That's reflective on how they can change their proposals for grants and what to include, the cost cutting between Davis-Bacon Act, National Environmental Policy Act, and buying America, she wants to identify what the process has been like for Leelanau County, and to celebrate their success.

Heinz said he has spoken about the Bluebird and multigenerational activity there and its cornerstone of that village and Gruza will meet the Telgards today. They have done community forums and tried to get people encouraged to come forward and pursue grant use. Deb Allen went to some townships to encourage them to check out dump sites and other properties.

Heinz said they are right on schedule with their 3-year grant to use up the \$250,000.00. He said they have about two years to go, and asked if they are eligible to apply for additional grant funds at this time? Gruza replied that she could only give insight on the threshold amount of spending done prior to applying but she encourages they reference to the latest guidelines that come out. Typically, an applicant has to have spent 75% of their award amount before they apply again and that shows up in ASAP. When they get an applicant's approval, they look at current grants and what they have spent down. There's always a gap between what is spent down and what is allocated for contractors.

Heinz asked if Gruza encourages using some of the revolving fund for future projects? Does that preclude them from applying if they have that fund? Gruza replied, no. Eftaxiadis asked when you evaluate applications for a cleanup grant, if a project was assessed through EPA assessment grant and they determine a need for remediation and they apply for EPA cleanup grant – does the fact that assessment work was done under the grant, does it give it any extra points in the evaluation? And do the first reviewers see the background of what other federal funds they used for a site? Gruza said if they have a cleanup applicant saying they received funds at a certain site, the reviewers do go back and check that information. She cannot speak to whether or not that is highly looked upon. She is not part of the reviews but can refer them to the cleanup guidelines that were recently released.

Members thanked Gruza for her input and questions/answers.

#### **FINANCIALS**

Claims & Accounts \$5,310.84

*Motion by Eftaxiadis, seconded by Arens, to approve Claims & Accounts in the amount of \$5,310.84. Motion carried 5-0.*

Post Audit, Budget Amendments, Transfers – None.

**CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATION ITEMS** – None.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** - None.

#### **DIRECTOR COMMENTS**

Galla is looking forward to the tour this afternoon with Gruza.

**MEMBER / CHAIRPERSON COMMENTS**- None.

#### **ADJOURN**

Meeting adjourned at 10:49 am.