

**Manchester Area Chamber of Commerce
Meeting Minutes
November 12, 2007**

Present: Chris Fegan, Kari Newman, Ray Berg, David Brown, Carl Curtis, Karl Racenis, Sharon Curtis, Debie Johnson, Janet Larson, Jim Holland, Jesse O'Jack, Shawn Lewis-Lakin, Kathy Roberts, Pat Vaillencourt, Daniel Lai, Chris Kanta

Called to Order: 12:15

Welcome and Introductions

Program: "Washtenaw County Cultural Plan Input Forum"
Susan Badger Booth, Eastern Michigan University

A cultural impact study is being done within Washtenaw County and a strategic initiative plan will be put in place based on the outcomes. The question was raised: What makes Manchester – Manchester?

Some of the things cited were: friendliness, architecture, and events. The group was invited to talk about challenges facing the community. Members provided input regarding the loss of industry and the shift in becoming more of a bedroom community. Concern was voiced about the access to various services and the need to find a way to encourage people to come to Manchester, especially the 11 mile drive from I94. It was noted, that the economic driver is the volunteer based efforts, while financial resources are viewed as barriers. Shawn felt the schools were on par with other district in regards to the art programming. The perceptions of the music program are that it is strong and well received in the community. Chamber members were asked to give their thoughts on how they see Manchester 5 years from now. Suggestions included:

- To stay a warm and caring community
- No future strip malls and traffic lights
- Manchester will be a destination stop for tourists
- Capitalize on the asset of the river running through Manchester

Secretary's Report: The minutes were reviewed. Motion to accept: Sharon
Second: Janet

Treasurers Report: The treasurer's report reviewed. Motion to accept: Chris F.
Second: Pat

Manufacturers: Pat provided the update. Amcor is adding on and will be bringing back executive jobs.

Membership: Total membership in 2007 was 111. To date, 23 have renewed for the 2008 year.

Website: Karl reported that updates have been done.

Activities: Discussion on the upcoming Christmas in the Village. Decorations are up and everyone is invited to participate in the parade. New this year, is the downtown business sponsored make-and-take activities for children. Christmas trees canned food drive will be in all three banks instead of the Village offices.

DDA: The Village will be doing enhancements on Main Street with the \$770,000 awarded for the facelift. Work on M-52 will begin next year and the project will run into 2009.

Old Business

Police Steering: The steering committee spent time looking at contracts to help dissect the county costs to see what can be done in the future. The Village, Bridgewater Township, and Lodi Township are working collaboratively to share the resources of the 7 sheriff deputies housed at the Village. Manchester Township will review to see about joining.

Christmas in the Village Planning: Reported in Activities.

“Apple Tradition” Report: The Halloween “Apple Tradition” at the mill served over 1100 caramel apples. Alber’s Orchard generously supplied the apples. There were many groups and kids helping and carving pumpkins. Lines were shorter with the additional help.

New Business

President’s Initial Report: Ray reported on:

- Meeting with Washtenaw Council of Chambers on Oct 30. The Manchester website is being used as a model for its events calendar and clean and useful information.
- Will work on encouraging Manchester businesses that are part of other chambers to considering joining ours.
- Met other chamber leaders to consult with in future on M-52 project
- United Way is seeking chamber assistance in promoting campaign and sign ups
- On October 30 attended the Ann Arbor Convention and Visitors’ Bureau meeting. They can drive tourist traffic to our events also provide package discounts for hotel blocks during our events
- Will be starting up a newsletter to send electronically and working to update membership e-mail list.
- In the 2008 membership drive, encourage major manufacturers to join

Work on M-52: Ray suggested that the chamber take the lead during the rebuild. Of benefit would be to gather suggestions from other chambers to see what worked to aid the flow of business in other communities during the road rebuilds.

Announcements:

Kari Newman is the newly-appointed manager at Charles Reinhart in Chelsea

Nov. 16 - Christmas in the Village

Manchester Schools will have a public forum tonight at 7 p.m. -Shawn Lewis-Lakin

The Manchester Enterprise has an online resource with current news. Check out: www.manchesterenterprise.com. News updates are welcome. Contact Daniel Lai, editor.

Sharon needs input on membership's preference for the MACC plaque with annual year changes or window stickers.

Nov. 30 – 20th Annual CRC Volunteer Recognition Banquet sponsored by Chelsea Community Hospital

Adjournment: 1:25

Respectfully submitted: Chris Kanta