

**MCHENRY COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 13, 2007**

**Call to Order**

Chairman Eldredge called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

**Roll Call**

Commissioners Present: Charles Eldredge, Chairman; Dennis Dreher, John Jung, Jr., Bill Swenson, Jerry Davenport, Ronald Bauman, RB Thompson, Nancy Scheitzelt, Frank Harrison, Jim Coughlin, James McNutt, Craig Hubert, and Jeremy Shaw.

Commissioners Absent: Tim Culbertson

Staff Present: SuzAnne Ehardt, Maryanne Wanaski and Cindy Sassaman

Also present: Pat Kennedy; Ersel Schuster, Seneca Township; Tammy Valentine-Garza, Richmond Township; Jason Osborn, MCDOT; Anna Moeller, MCCG; Tina Hill, County Board Member; Ken Koehler, County Board Chairman and Pete Austin, County Administrator.

**Minute Approval**

Motion by Mr. McNutt, seconded by Ms. Schietzelt to approve the minutes of August 9, 2007 with one amendment, to change Mr. to Ms. on Ms. Schietzelt's motion. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

**Public Participation**

Mr. Koehler thanked everyone for attending. He is pleased to say that everything is moving along and having adjacent Illinois counties participating was greatly appreciated.

**Directors Report**

Ms. Ehardt thanked the surrounding county directors for attending. She explained that each county will have time to present their plan and questions will be held until the end. Ms. Ehardt also announced that the next regular meeting in October will feature speakers from Walworth County and Kenosha County.

Ms. Ehardt suggested an additional Thursday evenings for the Commission and would recruit help from Ms. Moeller from MCCG to help form municipal groups and schedule municipal meetings. The dates she gave were September 20, October 4, November 1 and November 8. Mr. Davenport reported that Intergovernmental Coordination had already held two municipal meetings (with township representation also) and a third meeting was scheduled for next

Thursday, September 20<sup>th</sup> with the City of Woodstock and the Village of Bull Valley. With the arrival of Mr. Bus from Kane County, Mr. Eldredge asked that Commission business be discussed later in the meeting so that the presentations could begin.

Mr. Adam Tegen began with an overview of Boone County's plan. He explained that the existing comprehensive Boone County plan focuses growth around existing villages with central services around three municipalities. The County has also includes planning for Machesney Park and Loves Park due to their location on the border of Winnebago County. A major goal of the plan is to preserve agricultural areas. He reported that all communities have adopted the County's plan, but are not necessarily following it. There is a big push for rail service from Elgin. He reported that the plan took 9 months with the help of a consultant but there was no public buy-in. He reported that a corridor plan is in the process. They have been contacting communities along the corridor. The corridor plan was slated to be completed within 9 months but so far has taken 16 months.

RB Thompson asked what the tan areas on the map represented. Mr. Tegen indicated those areas are the 100-year floodplain and growth is not encouraged there. Ms. Schietzelt asked if Poplar Grove's planning is in or out of the limits of the plan. Mr. Tegen indicated that it is in both areas and that includes 8,000 newly platted lots. Mr. Dreher asked if all commercial growth would be municipal. Mr. Tegen stated that a majority would be and he does not see Poplar Grove as a commercial area.

Paul Miller from DeKalb County commended the County on their approach. He explained that DeKalb County has 14 municipalities; the City of DeKalb is the center of the County. DeKalb began planning in 1972 with two approaches, preserve agriculture and encourage development near municipalities. Mr. Miller explained that they have agreements with all 14 municipalities and the County integrated what each municipality wanted in the comprehensive plan. In addition, DeKalb County paid for 9 community plans. In the past 11 years, DeKalb County has not approved any stand alone subdivisions. All development is annexed into municipalities. He explained that representatives meet monthly to keep the lines of communication open between the County and all communities. He reported that they will be updating the 2010 plan which will include evaluation on what changes the communities and the County want to make. This way the communities do not feel like they are in competition with the County.

He explained that agriculture zoning requires a 40-acre minimum per residence. There is a very limited number of agricultural parcels that exist as is and that would allow a residence to be built because of their non-conforming status. That results annually in one to two new residences on agriculturally zoned parcels. He noted that they win court cases because they have eliminated the exceptions.

He reported that 90% of the soils in DeKalb County are considered prime farmland. He explained that the courts are not so easy to convince that prime soils are worth keeping for agricultural purposes. He also believes that residential development does not pay for itself.

Mr. Bauman stated that in his opinion, DeKalb has an exceptional plan. He noted DeKalb County has a superior drainage system. Mr. Miller added that there are several drainage districts. Mr. Miller reported that the Stormwater Ordinance was adopted last year and a Groundwater Ordinance is slated to be adopted next year.

Dennis Sandquist from Lake County provided Commissioners with handouts. He reported that Lake County Planning Commission is celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. They completed their first plan in 1975. The last plan was completed in house and the 2-year process took 4 years to complete. When Lake County began its last comp plan, they did outreach and provided for public participation opportunities such as publishing a newsletter and business cards, maintaining a website that was interactive with the ability to comments on draft chapters. They also held community group meetings to present the plan and held public hearings in an open house format. Lake County's 52 municipalities and 18 townships were divided geographically into 10 "Cooperative Planning Areas". All 52 municipalities participated; two participated via email.

Mr. Sandquist showed the 2000 Land Use Map, Environmental Residential Inventory and the Future Land Use Plan. He also mentioned they have entered into intergovernmental agreements with Wadsworth and the Route 173/I94 Interchange group.

Mr. Hubert asked if Lake County's plan promoted agriculture preservation. Mr. Sandquist told the Commission that the American Farmland Trust did a study for Lake County. The report was titled, "Farming on Thin Ice". Even though ag preservation did not look hopeful in Lake County, the report noted that specialty and boutique farming should be encouraged were viable.

Mr. Dreher asked if the plan encourages development in incorporated areas of the County. Mr. Sandquist reported that the plan encourages intensive growth in the municipalities. However Abbott and Baxter, both corporate campuses, are located in the unincorporated areas. Because Lake County has a public works department development in the unincorporated areas is somewhat easier for the County.

Approximately, 60% of Lake County is still unincorporated. Larger lot developments are being proposed as conservation development, but this type of land form can discourage the extension of services.

Phil Bus of Kane County told the Commission the population of his County is approximately 500,000 residents and the NIPC [CMAP] forecast for the year 2030 is predicted to reach 800,000. The County is divided into three divisions; the urban and critical growth corridors and the agricultural rural area. Kane County Board is committed to updating the plan every 5 years. He felt that NIPC [CMAP] was inaccurate in its population figures. He mentioned that the *2030 Land Resource Management Plan* was adopted in 2004. This plan was more than an update, it was a standalone document and a companion to the transportation plan. Instead of working township by township Kane County created “planning partnership” areas to work with municipalities.

When examining the urban corridor county planners met with each municipality and identified all the good things the villages and cities were doing. He also noted that it has been difficult for the Planning Commission to get past the idea that low density is good and high density is bad. He indicated that a “priority place” on the map is an area with population of 10,000 to 15,000 residents, infrastructure, water and sewer. He reported that there are 15 areas within his County that are considered priority places. He also spoke about clustering development around train stations.

For the past nine years Kane County hosted an annual planning workshop. A brochure for the workshop was provided to Commissioners. The topics for this year’s workshop are housing for the future; traffic congestion, walkability, reduction of VMTs by 20% and sustainability of water supply. CDs from last year’s topic are available.

He stated that having municipalities and Kane County in the same room results in great partnerships which have produced jurisdictional boundary agreements and cooperation on road issues. He also said they have been able to purchase 4,000 acres of land for farmland preservation through riverboat gambling funds. He stated that Kane County has amassed a nice grouping of farmland. The ag preservation program has become very popular and presently has a waiting list of land owners interested in selling development rights to the county. He will provide information to Ms. Ehardt for McHenry’s newly formed Ag Conservation Easement and Farmland Protection Commission.

### **Open Discussion**

Mr. Eldredge asked how each of the counties react to conservation design. Mr. Miller replied that development is not a threat for DeKalb County so there is no need to react. Mr. Tegen said that his county likes it and does not like it; Boone County Board members like the concept but not the density. Mr. Bus replied that Kane County has done conservation design but cautioned that you need to proceed with care since this type of development consumes a lot of land. Instead, he spoke of a transit-oriented design over traditional design and how it could support a commuter rail system. He explained that if you want the federal government to extend rail services to a new station you have to generate

ridership. That ridership generally requires 8-10 units per acre within ½ mile of the train station which equates to buildings with 3 floors i.e., retail on the first level and condos or apartments on the upper floors. “Walkability” is key to transit-oriented development. Mr. Sandquist of Lake County agreed that conservation design has problems and does consume land. He mentioned that a transit-oriented plan designates areas for train stations and employment centers.

Mr. Dreher mentioned that McHenry County is looking for the 2030 Plan to be, as much as possible, resource based. In that regard, Mr. Dreher asked if in addition to identifying floodplain areas, if individual counties looked at sensitive recharge areas and hydric soils.

Lake County – Uses soils, groundwater, but data is not mapped.

Kane County – Uses ADID identified wetlands, (usually 90% hydric soils).

Boone County – Floodplains and greenways are identified and acceptable to farming community. They are getting closer to groundwater recharges areas becoming a concern.

DeKalb County – The map show floodplains in agriculture areas. Separate future transportation plans will include trails, floodplain areas and will recommend that no development occur in those areas. The first step in planning for DeKalb County is the adoption of a stormwater ordinance. Following that will be delineating watershed, recharge areas and then the County will develop policy guidelines.

Kane County – Mr. Bus stated that the County Board is not in the sewer and water business. Master planned communities required new water reclamation districts.

Ms. Schietzelt asked each county for their best advice for getting “buy-in”. Generally, the directors agreed on the following:

- work with municipalities and meet often,
- stick with it, it takes time and effort,
- agreements with municipalities are the key and getting cooperation from the ag community is essential.

Mr. Miller noted the biggest thing is to get municipal officials to spend time with the Regional Planning Commission. DeKalb County paid for municipal plans; that got their attention. Kane County works closely with McHenry County due to the interest with Route 47 and I-90.

Mr. Tegen, from Boone County, stated that what you see is what you get which is mostly agricultural use. Now that Motorola is gone, Capron is not expected to

grow. Mr. Sandquist, from Lake County, added that Lake's model continues to work fairly well for them.

Mr. Hubert asked what the county planning directors did not want to see. Mr. Miller replied that I-90 makes a perfect separation and it would be perfect if nothing developed south of I-90 in McHenry County.

Chairman Eldredge thanked all the Directors for attending and sharing their information. He felt the presentations were tremendously informative.

### **Old Business**

*LEAM Proposal* – Ms. Ehardt explained that there was a two-pronged approach for funding. A request for funding in the amount of \$100,000 was submitted to the CDBG Commission and it had also been included as part of a supplemental request of the Planning and Development's FY 08/09 Budget request. The CDBG Commission mistakenly thought that funding was already approved through the department's regular budget. The liaison committee corrected that mistaken information and has made the recommendation to the County Board. The Board will make its final decision on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September.

*Next steps in the planning process* - Ms. Ehardt requested more involvement from members of the Commission. Basically, subcommittees need to inform staff about upcoming planned agendas in order to ensure available meeting space and time for staff to prepare. The Intergovernmental Coordination meeting that has been scheduled for Thursday, September 20th conflicts with available room space. Ms. Ehardt suggested a central location for meetings but needs specific times and dates ahead of time and mentioned that security for the administration building also needs to be arranged.

Mr. Dreher thought tonight's meeting was great. He suggested sharing the information on the listserv by summarizing each plan. The slide showing the surrounding counties could be put on the website pending approval from each County.

Chairman Eldredge thanked Ms. Ehardt and Ms. Wanaski for coordinating the meeting with the surrounding counties. For future meetings the Chairman indicated that he prefers evening meetings. Ms. Schietzelt agreed with the evening meetings. Mr. Davenport agreed that evening meetings are good, but sometimes early morning or late afternoon meetings are better.

Mr. Dreher would like a more strategic plan/outline for the meetings with municipalities. The Commission should know upfront what the subcommittee wants to accomplish at the meetings. All Commissioners should agree on the geographic breakdown and layout for the proposed municipal meetings. Policy is

needed before interacting further. He offered to help create a summary and composite map of municipalities before going forward.

Mr. Davenport stated he was directed to meet with Anna Moeller of MCCG. It was his opinion that several meetings were needed with municipalities; the first was to review input, second for feedback and third to solicit comments on proposals.

Mr. Coughlin expressed his frustration. There were meetings held where all subcommittees did not have the ability to ask questions to guest speakers because they were not aware of the meeting. That is a missed opportunity in his opinion. These groups do not have time to keep coming back to meet at the whim of the Commission.

Mr. Dreher felt that all subcommittees should interact with the Intergovernmental Subcommittee. Chairman Eldredge stated that every municipality that does not “buy-in” to the plan is a failure on the Commission’s part.

Mr. Harrison said he is “meetinged out”. His subcommittee is near the end of meeting with groups and is prepared to start writing so that the Commission can react to what is presented. Mr. Dreher noted that the water resources group is prepared to begin writing as well. The joint Water Resource and Open Space October meeting will include a mapping demo by the County’s GIS Division. All members are invited to attend.

Mr. Dreher requested that staff arrange meeting times and locations for all subcommittees. Mr. Davenport stated he will cancel next week’s meeting, forward information to Ms. Ehardt and work with Ms. Moeller since she has the knowledge of when townships and municipalities have standing meeting dates.

### **Subcommittees**

*Agriculture* – No meetings have been held since the last Commission meeting. There is one more group meeting planned with the Land Conservancy and the Ag Conservation Commission.

*Communications* – Mr. Dreher requested that any names that could be added to list be given to the subcommittee. The subcommittee is looking for innovative ways to expand the base in which information is received. He also suggested that a press release be written documenting this evening’s meeting.

*Community Character* – Mr. Coughlin will copy and e-mail his report to Commission members. The subcommittee met with CAHMCO (Corporation for Affordable Housing). Next month they will meet with the Joint Council of Historic Groups and in October, the McHenry County Mental Health Board.

*Economic Development* – Mr. Swenson explained that the subcommittee met with Jason Osborn to discuss the status of roads and bridges. The subcommittee will meet on September 18<sup>th</sup> with Mr. Packard, the President of MCC to discuss the college’s future plans. On September 25<sup>th</sup>, Cort Carlson will

be there to discuss the tourism board's plans and on October 9<sup>th</sup>, Chris Manheim will talk about economic development.

*Water Resources* – During the last meeting they agreed on chapter outlines and goals and objectives. The subcommittee would like to use the 2020 plan as a framework; they also wanted to look at municipal plans for policies on water resources.

*Infrastructure* – There was no meeting August 6<sup>th</sup>. Due to work commitments, Mr. Culbertson asked to be relieved as the subcommittee's chairman. With Mr. Eldredge's approval, Mr. Swenson will assume that role.

*Intergovernmental Coordination* - Mr. Davenport reported a meeting was held with the municipalities of Marengo and Union along with the townships of Coral, Riley, Seneca and Marengo. The subcommittee also met with Spring Grove which was attended by the Village Clerk and the Planning Commission Chairman. Richmond Township's Supervisor was also in attendance. The meeting was informative, but the Villages of Richmond and Hebron, although invited, did not attend.

*Open Space & Environmental/Natural Resources* - Ms. Schietzelt reported that the first draft of the open space section should be completed by the September meeting. The subcommittee is putting together greenway maps from park and recreation districts that include bike trails. Ms. Schietzelt will be inviting park district officials and MCCD representatives to the October meeting.

### **MCCG**

Anna Moeller stated that MCCG is excited to start scheduling meetings. She mentioned she would be attending next Thursday's meeting. She also reminded everyone of MCCG's next dinner meeting on September 26<sup>th</sup>.

### **Members Comments**

None

### **Chairman's Comments**

#### *Summary of Action Items*

1. Work on meeting schedule with municipalities.
2. Start working on the plan itself.

### **Adjournment**

Motion by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Mr. Dreher to adjourn the meeting. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 10:25 p.m.