

McHenry County Regional Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
December 11, 2008

Commissioners Present: Chairman Charlie Eldredge, Ron Bauman, Dennis Dreher, Jim McNutt, Nancy Schietzelt, Jerry Davenport, Craig Hubert, John Jung, Jeremy Shaw, Frank Harrison, RB Thompson, Mike Rein and Bill Swenson

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: Matthew Hansel, Maryanne Wanaski and Cindy Sassaman

Also Present: Ken Koehler , County Board Chairman; Pete Austin, County Administrator; Jim Heisler, Vice-Chairman County Board, Ersel Schuster, County Board member; Dennis Sandquist, Anna Moeller, Robert Ludwig, Pat Kennedy and Kim Willis

Chairman Eldredge called the meeting to order at 6:12 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Mr. McNutt, seconded by Mr. Rein to approve the November 13, 2008 and the November 20, 2008 Regional Planning Commission minutes. Mr. Bauman requested an amendment to the minutes of November 20th, page 4, the paragraph above Open Space, the designation "LESA" be changed to "LE". All commissioners present voting aye. Motion carried.

Mr. Koehler thanked the Commission for all their work on the 2030 Land Use Plan. He made mention of the reading and preparation for all of the meetings. He mentioned that Mr. Jung is no longer on the County Board and that he is disappointed that Mr. Jung will not be included in the finalization of the plan. He introduced Jim Heisler, Vice-chairman of the County Board as the new liaison to the Planning Commission and has asked him to pick up where Mr. Jung left off. Mr. Koehler expressed his appreciation of the time he will put forth in this effort. He also introduced Dennis Sandquist as the new Planning and Development Director. He mentioned that Mr. Sandquist previously worked for Lake County and presented their plan to the Commission last year. He welcomed Mr. Sandquist as part of the team.

Mr. Austin also welcomed Mr. Sandquist and looks forward to him starting on Monday. He also thanked Mr. Hansel and Ms. Wanaski for steering the ship for the past six months and appreciates all their work.

Mr. Heisler said that the plan will be completed and he will help out in any way that he can.

Mr. Sandquist addressed the Commission and stated that at the presentation 15 months ago before this Commission he noticed that McHenry County is on the fringe of development and will facing be

incredible growth pressures and there are many opportunities. He has been with Lake County for ten years and has been involved in county planning for his entire professional life. He explained the importance of planning, looks forward to working with everyone and will hit the ground running on Monday.

Public Participation

None.

Chairman's Comments

Chairman Eldredge also thanked everyone including staff for their hard work. He suggested that the Commission set aside the text for tonight, take it home and be ready to review at the next meeting.

Mr. Dreher and Ms. Schietzelt felt that it was important that Houseal Lavigne be present at the next meeting to hear comments first hand. Mr. Harrison and Mr. Swenson also agreed. Mr. Dreher mentioned that this topic came up at the communications meeting and was discussed at great length. He felt that it was important for the writers to be present.

Mr. Koehler said that this is a difficult situation because the budget is capped and will not increase due to the state of the economy. Mr. Austin stated that the cost for the writers to be at every meeting would drain the budget. He could sit down and review the budget and see where they stand and how many meetings are left. He understands that they should be at meetings on a frequent basis, but was hesitant to commit to every meeting. When they were hired the contract stated they would attend on an as needed basis. The Commission suggested at least one meeting per month and that the writer is the attendee.

Mr. Bauman felt that there was no reason that 3 or 4 rewrites could not be reviewed in one meeting and the writers could be present for that meeting.

Ms. Wanaski will submit the Community Character subcommittee write ups. Houseal Lavigne suggested weaving this information throughout the entire document.

Mr. McNutt suggested a conference call instead of the writers coming to each meeting. Chairman Eldredge agreed that that could be an alternative some of the time.

Mr. Davenport suggested that areas where housing should occur should be noted. Mr. Thompson said that in twelve years he has seen several types of designs for development. Mr. Thompson asked if anyone envisioned any other types of styles other than conservation design in the next 22 years as far as subdivisions are concerned. There was mention of neo-traditional development and the cluster development. Mr. Dreher explained that conservation design was created to allow more flexibility.

Director's Remarks

Ms. Wanaski explained that contents of the packets included the revised vision statement, a draft, open space draft and Mr. Swenson's infrastructure draft. She asked the Commission to review those items and be ready for the next meeting and to try to keep comments limited to the important points.

Chairman Eldredge asked the Commission to stick to the concepts and principles during the review. Any commentary on the style can be emailed.

Infrastructure – Mr. Swenson gave an introduction to the section. He stated that they wanted to make McHenry County a place that people would be drawn to. The County lacks prime jobs to reverse the roughly 70% of the people that leave the County to go to work. Of those, 65% of the people would like to work in the County. He explained that they look at 4 areas; transportation network, energy and utilities, wastewater and sanitation, and technology and communication. A common factor in all the sections was the lack of money. This will continue to be a major problem in the future. There are several pages that describe the transportation network. They used the County's 2020 Transportation Map and they introduced 15 modifications to transportation issues. The subcommittee thought the northern bypass should be brought back. East and west roads such as Kishwaukee Valley Road for example could have turn lanes. He explained that encouraging larger roads near I-90 encourages more companies to locate in McHenry County. He gave the example of Harmony Road and proposed that starting near Algonquin make a four lane to at least Route 23 to obtain companies that bring higher paying jobs to the County. He explained that it is not needed now, but planning and zoning needs to start now to designate these areas. Improved transit is needed along with the encouragement for people to use it. He asked that everyone read the transit plan from 2005 and look at timeframes and examine Pace and other bus lines. The conclusions need to be reevaluated based on the population figures. He noted that the County does not have a way to move people east and west and noted several different Metra lines and where they are located. Light rail also needs to be investigated in the County. It uses electricity, does not create smog and will keep more cars off the road. In addition, this type of transportation will help the low income and the increasing aging population. The relief airport that is referred to is needed for small executive jets that will save commuting time for businesses located in McHenry County. The Lake in the Hills airport is not large enough for these types of aircraft. Bicycle trails should be required to be added to any new road constructed and also within new subdivisions. He felt that an energy grid is something that needs to be implemented in the County. Zoning and land use needs to be looked at on these types of alternative energy uses. Compressed air energy is something new and we should take a look into this as well. He also spoke on wastewater systems and noted that he feels that areas like Marengo need to get their system down to I-90 for the business corridor and get the legalities out of the way so that when it is needed it can be expanded. As for wastewater and sanitation, the subcommittee also spoke about the County looking at existing septic systems every 4 or 5 years as to their viability especially near flood prone areas. The County should be looking to ways to help smaller communities. Technology is needed to get companies to look at

McHenry County. He stated that in his opinion there are tremendous changes that are going to take place in the next few years and the Commission has the obligation to the citizens of the County to have zoning laws in place that will allow for the some type of technology improvements anywhere in the County.

Ms. Schietzelt asked if there were any maps to explain the 15 road projects. Mr. Swenson said there are maps that will be presented.

Ms. Schietzelt suggested that this section wait until January due to the extensiveness. Chairman Eldredge said that they will attempt to finish this section at the next meeting after Houseal and Lavigne. Mr. Dreher asked about the 15 projects and if they are identified. Mr. Swenson noted that the Huntley project is not in the plan, but others are in the plan or from the council of governments. The Harmony Road project was discussed with economic development. He also mentioned that many of the projects have been on the table for quite some time. Mr. Shaw asked if road improvements are made within the County which would result in having more employers locate here with high paying jobs, could this encourage the people from the north come here to work? Mr. Harrison noted the golden tech corridor of Naperville to Aurora and suggested something of that nature. But that plan has to be laid now. That would be similar to the Lake County who had a medical equipment and supply corridor. Mr. Koehler agreed with Mr. Shaw's comments in that making these changes will help make it easier for County residents leaving the county. It was noted that Route 47 is developing and the next natural area to develop in the next 10-15 years will be Route 23. This will be developed when an interchange off I-90 is created. Route 47 is engaged with Kane County and Huntley and there will be a full interchange in Kane County in the next 2-3 years. He also informed the Commission that in regards to a northern bypass, Camp Algonquin facility was bought in conjunction with MCCD and the County invested 1 million dollars of transportation funds to preserve a corridor that runs through Camp Algonquin for a time when it is needed. It is a flexible corridor that can be moved to accommodate the needs. Chairman Eldredge feels that corridor preservation needs to be done.

Timeline

Ms. Wanaski said this topic was the suggestion of the Communications subcommittee. Mr. Dreher explained that the Commission needs to layout where they need to be and when. It was suggested to keep up with the twice monthly meetings with the option for a third meeting. If MCCG and townships are engaged, a full third meeting might need to be scheduled. With the LEAM presentation in January, townships could be invited. It was suggested that small groups could be brought in to daytime meetings. Mr. Shaw thought the idea was to give them our initial impression and get their input.

Mr. Hansel, Mr. Davenport and Ms. Wanaski are attending the mayors group with MCCG and will teach them how to view LEAM information and be able to leave comments on the website. Mr. Davenport will also show his population models during that meeting. There will be a large meeting with LEAM to see what the scenarios look like and to get a general idea of where the stressed areas are and where the issues are located. Then the Intergovernmental subcommittee will meet with the municipalities that are

in those areas specifically for LEAM to look at on a one on one basis. The map is currently being put off so that the focus is now on the policy document.

Chairman Eldredge asked for Mr. Dreher to come up with a timeline to be finalized by the next meeting. Mr. Thompson suggested scheduling the 2nd, 4th and 5th Thursdays in January.

The meeting on the 22nd will be the LEAM presentation with municipalities and townships present. On January 29th the Commission will start with the consultants.

Ms. Moeller briefed the Commission on the meeting for tomorrow.

Members comments

Mr. Dreher reengaged the subcommittee last night and met with Devin Lavigne. He would like to re-engage communities and use the listserv. It was also suggested to add components to the website to allow a participant to be added to the mail list. They will use MCCG as a tool to communicate with municipalities. Essentially, all planners in McHenry County will be included in the planner contacts. Devin Lavigne will provide a more expansive list of communication tools. The timeline needs to be developed along with a more specific calendar of meeting dates that can be shared. A recommendation from Mr. Lavigne was to develop a resolution of support to all the important governmental entities asking them to endorse the plan. When the draft plan is available, sub-regional forums should be set up. Re-engage the press when the draft maps are produced and the final draft text is completed. It was suggested to use Twitter to engage those under 30.

Additional Public Comment

Pat Kennedy said there was talk about light rail which used to exist from Harvard to Lake Geneva many years ago. She asked if updated drafts are on the RPC 2030 website. She felt if it is on the agenda then it should be on the website. Mr. Shaw felt that Commission needs to review drafts prior to public review and communities should also have the opportunity to review prior to the public. The documents will be linked to the agenda on the website. There was a brief discussion on best times for municipalities and townships to meet. Mr. Shaw said there was a good turnout when the meetings were in the late afternoon.

Kim Willis asked if the Infrastructure draft would be on the website. Ms. Wanaski stated that it would be added to the site.

Bob Ludwig requested that if the drafts are hot linked to please test them.

Ms. Wanaski followed up on the names for the listserv. The APA has strong language about copying email and addresses as a list to send out. The Illinois Chapter would be happy to keep an "ad" running. However, for January, if there is a write up that could be printed, the Commission would be able to receive feedback. The Commission asked Ms. Schuster if she could contact the townships and keep

putting information in the newsletter. She stated that she would continue as requested. Mr. Hansel was asked to contact MCC about getting younger people engaged. Mr. Swenson suggested a newsletter to the high schools.

Mr. Austin has been successful in working through the Regional Superintendent of Schools Office. Mr. Austin suggested brainstorming with Mr. Goeglein from that office to come up with suggestions on reaching the younger crowd and getting them engaged.

Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Baumann, seconded by Mr. Davenport to adjourn the meeting. All members present voting aye. Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.