

MCHEMRY COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
JULY 31, 2008

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

Absent: Charlie Eldredge, John Jung and Craig Hubert

Also present: John Houseal and Devin Lavigne ; Barb Wheeler; County Board, Pete Austin; County Administrator, Pat Kennedy, Kim Willis, Tom Harding, Conor Brown, Tamara Valentine –Garza, John Darger, , Ersel Schuster, Pete Klosek

Staff Present: Matthew Hansel, Maryanne Wanaski and Cindy Sassaman

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Dreher at 6:05 p.m.

The Commissioners introduced themselves to the newest Commission member, Mike Rein. Mr. Rein stated that he is a real estate broker and has been in the business approximately 30 years.

Mr. Austin introduced John Houseal and Devin Lavigne. Their portfolio was provided for Commissioners. They also gave a brief overview of their previous work and background. Mr. Houseal explained that they are a planning, economic and early design firm with offices in downtown Naperville. They have been in the professional planning business for more than 15 years and have completed Prairie Grove, Marengo, McHenry, and the Route 47 corridor study. In addition, they have completed over 30 comprehensive plans in the last ten years, and as many zoning ordinances etc. Prior to the founding of Houseal and Lavigne Associates, Mr. Houseal was the director of planning for URS Corporation, an international consulting firm with offices in Chicago. He was also the Community Development Director in Wilmette and the assistant in Northbrook and prior to that a planner for the City of Phoenix. Mr. Lavigne stated he began his career with the Naperville Park District. He later worked as the director of planning for the Naperville Park District. He went to URS Corporation and left them to start Houseal and Lavigne. Last year Houseal and Lavigne won 3 of the 5 top honors from the American Planning Association, Illinois Chapter. They are very committed to their work and are selective about the work they pursue. They are familiar with McHenry County and are eager to work on this project. Their role will be facilitator/writer and to help pull all the work completed into a document that is attractive, effective and user friendly and articulates what the Commission has worked on for the past year and a half. The document will look like it has one authorship, professional style narratively and graphically. At this time they are working with staff to create a scope of work.

After the Commission briefly asked questions. Mr. Austin explained that he, along with Mr. Koehler, Ms. Wanaski, Mr. Hansel and Chairman Charlie Eldredge met with 5 firms. From the five, Houseal and

Lavigne was chosen to be brought in to the Commission. They are very capable. He stated that they intend to finalize a contract with Houseal and Lavigne and get started.

Mr. Dreher stated that the sooner they can begin attending meetings the better.

The Commission thanked Mr. Houseal and Mr. Lavigne for their time.

Public Participation

None

Director's Remarks

None

There was a short break from 6:55 p.m. to 7:10 p.m.

Old Business

Continuation of Review of the Agriculture Draft – They began discussion on LESA scoring system. Changes were made to the agriculture draft from the comments of the Commission.

Jim McNutt left the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

The Commission completed the review of the agriculture draft chapter and agreed to hold off on policy changes until the Commission hears from the Economic Development subcommittee.

The Commission reviewed the 5 findings and decided to review item #2 in more depth when time allows. "Urban Farming" was deleted. There will be a re-write of the wind farm section.

Mr. Harrison was prepared to show the Commission maps from the Economic Development Subcommittee at this meeting, but time did not permit. Economic Development will begin at the next meeting. Mr. Harrison will provide the Commission a draft as soon as possible.

Ms. Wheeler announced that the Planning & Development Committee is having a special meeting on Tuesday, morning prior to the County Board Meeting, to discuss the copies of the draft chapters of water resources and open space to discuss the broad ideas in each chapter. She encouraged Commissioners to attend if they were available. Ms. Wheeler explained that this will keep the Committee engaged as chapters are reviewed and passed forward. There was discussion on which version of the Water Resource chapter would be reviewed; version 1 which was reviewed by the Commission and version 2 which incorporated changes suggested by the Commission, but not yet reviewed by the Commission. Mr. Harrison was concerned that the information that would be presented by Mr. Dreher at the Committee meeting would be information not yet presented to the Planning Commission. Mr. Davenport stated that he understood that changes will be made and items will be revisited, however, he too would want to see said changes. Mr. Bauman stated he favored forwarding only one water resources draft. Mr. Harrison stated his concern of a PowerPoint

presentation at the special meeting and if information would be presented to the Committee that was not approved or reviewed by the Commission. Ms. Wheeler stated that the Committee is not signing off on chapter but would just get a broad review of information presented. She stated that the Planning & Development Committee needs to get informed on the chapters.

Commissioner's Comments

Ms. Schietzelt handed out an article regarding policy for water conservation.

Mr. Dreher noted that the APA "Planning" magazine from this month speaks about alternative waste water approaches and alternative stormwater techniques and encouraged everyone to read the magazine.

Public Participation

Kim Willis requested that this Committee ensure that documents on the agenda are posted on the website prior to the meeting. Economic Development is on the agenda but the documents on the website.

Pat Kennedy asked the Commission to remember that what is happening is planning not zoning. Gardens and subdivisions she lived in Coventry in Crystal Lake and had a back yard garden and noted that not much fertilizer is needed just composting and using drips hoses conserves water. TRD rights and LESA cannot be created or altered by this body and should be looked at after the plan.

Tom Harding spoke regarding Mr. Harrison's data on farmland. He noted that 2006 figures have decreased but not that much. He stated that most of McHenry County is considered by the market to be transitional land. The price per acre for farmland in McHenry County is \$12-\$15K per acre, which is substantially higher than its agricultural value. With the changing market, Mr. Harding explained that farms are being sold to investors or quasi-developers to be developed at a later date. It is very rare that it is sold to a farmer. McHenry County is an urban fringe area with 90% sold to absentee owners. He stated that to buy developments rights for this land is far too expensive. He is unsure that policy recommendation to buy development rights is the most prudent suggestion.

Connor Brown, Association of Realtors said he understands where municipalities are coming from in regards to planning and how some of this land is annexed and developed. He has issues with how making all development be within municipal boundaries would skew land prices and how that type of policy can discourage other property owners from being able to properly transfer other property for the highest potential dollar.

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

Meeting adjourned at 9: 55 p.m.