

**MCHENRY COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 12, 2008**

Call to Order

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Chairman Charlie Eldredge, Bill Swenson, Jim McNutt, Jerry Davenport, Ron Bauman, Nancy Schietzelt, Jeremy Shaw, Craig Hubert, Dennis Dreher, Anna Moller and John Jung

Commissioners Absent: Frank Harrison and RB Thompson

Staff: Matthew Hansel, Maryanne Wanaski and Cindy Sassaman

Also Present: Peter Austin; County Administrator, Lisa Haderlein, Patricia Kennedy, Kim Willis, Ersel Schuster, Iris Bergan, Tom Harding, Tammy Valentine-Garza, Pete Klocek, Conor Brown, Kathleen Bergen Schmidt, John Darger

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Mr. McNutt, seconded by Mr. Hubert to approve the minutes of May 8, 2008 and May 22, 2008 meetings. Mr. McNutt asked that a statement is added that Ms. Ehardt will not be working with the Commission. Ms. Schietzelt pointed out that this statement is included in the minutes. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

Ms. Schietzelt mentioned that she did not receive a copy of the PowerPoint presentation by LEAM. Ms. Wanaski will contact the university.

Public Participation

Pat Kennedy suggested that the Commission bring their discussion to an end by 8:30 p.m. so the rest of the meeting can be finished by 9:00 p.m.

Staff Remarks

Ms. Wanaski mentioned that the Commission has some housekeeping issues that need to be addressed. The Commission's bylaws require that a motion is made to amend the bylaws at one meeting and then voted on the amendment at the next meeting. This amendment is to allow MCCG as an ex-officio. The bylaw revision will be presented to the Planning & Development Committee at their next meeting. Motion by Mr. Hubert, seconded by Mr. McNutt to recommend amending the Regional Planning Commission bylaws to allow MCCG to be an ex-officio member of the Commission. All members present voting aye. Motion carried. This item will be forwarded to the next Planning & Development Commission meeting.

Mr. Austin announced that Matthew Hansel and Maryanne Wanaski have been appointed co-acting directors of the Planning and Development Department and the County has initiated an executive search for a new director for the Department.

Old Business

Open Space – Draft Review (continuation)

Ms. Schietzelt reported that she has been able to secure copies of the Summary of the Biodiversity Recovery Plan from the Chicago Wilderness. They will be sent to the Commissioners at no charge.

In the Open Space section there was a statement from the natural areas protection guide from MCCD about the natural areas inventory that since 2005 three of the high quality natural areas were destroyed by development. The first was Pingree Prairie in Crystal Lake near the new train station which was destroyed when an office building was built on the site. The second was Emery Woods on State Highway 176 between Marengo and Crystal Lake that contained 6 acres of white oaks. The third is Lotus pond in the McHenry County portion of Fox Lake where houses were built.

Ms. Schietzelt also brought information confirming that the Blanding Turtle is native to Illinois according to the Field Guide of Reptiles of Illinois.

She also noted that Antioch and Third Lake have instituted phosphorus bans. And, more recently the Village of Lakewood has adopted the same ban.

Review began on the Open Space Draft on page 11. Changes were made based on comments made by the Commission. The Commission completed the review of the Open Space Draft at 8:00 p.m. and took a short break.

The meeting reconvened at 8:15 p.m. and began reviewing the Agricultural Discussion Draft.

Mr. Bauman explained that the first three pages of his draft are what were presented to the County Board in December. He then reviewed each section for the Commission. Maps were provided that showed vacant (A-1) 5-10 acres parcels created prior to November 1, 1979 and improved A-1 properties. This map also shows vacant subdivisions. Mr. Davenport asked if he could see the same map with the LE score of above 85 to see the difference. Mr. Hubert would like to see the Kishwaukee and Nippersink river valleys added as well. Ms. Wanaski felt it would be helpful if there was a digital map where these layers could be added and removed. The digital map will be available at the next meeting.

The Commission asked if the Planning and Development Department had any information on Windfarms. Ms. Wanaski informed the Commission that staff has completed a white paper on the subject and she will forward the information via e-mail.

Chairman Eldredge mentioned that there were telephone interviews with prospective writers for the 2030 Plan. The County has spoken with 5 candidates and has narrowed them down to two. The County and Mr. Eldredge will be meeting with them in the next week and will then bring them before the Commission to make a selection. He is hopeful that a new writer will be on board within the next month.

New Business

Mr. Davenport reported that the ad hoc committee has been meeting every Thursday. They have completed the capacity analysis and at what capacity municipalities could accept new development. Work on projections has also been completed, copies were provided. He showed the population projections for the six county region and made comparisons. The Commission will pass this information along to CMAP and compare their differences. They will be looking for a reaction from CMAP due the difference in projections.

MCCG

Ms. Moller stated that she has all but four of the municipal zoning maps that were requested at the last meeting.

Member's Comments

Ms. Schietzelt stated that she could only see one map on the LEAM website and had difficulty making comments on the website. Ms. Wanaski explained that there was only one map for the Commission to view to see if there were any discrepancies in the layering. Many Commissioners did not logon within the 7 day window. It was requested that another 7 day window be granted for the Commissioner's to gain access to the website.

Mr. Dreher noted that he is still working on the Water Resource Chapter and would like to put it on the next agenda. Ms. Wanaski suggested that all topics have an initial review before going back to the Commission for a second review. Mr. Dreher said they already discussed this a while ago where the Commission would send the chapters to the Planning & Development Committee in chunks to make it easier for their review. Ms. Wanaski suggested that the decision be made by the Chairman and the writer.

Chairman Eldredge agreed and directed the Commissioners to bring their sections back, however, he would not make any further rulings today. He understood that we would be sending the items to the Committee piece by piece. There was some discussion on who would be writing the chapters if the information is presented in bullet points. Again there is a time factor to consider.

Mr. McNutt mentioned that at that last meeting the issue of communication was discussed. He stated that the Defenders newsletter has reserved a column for the Commission to place information. Mr. McNutt has written an article that has been read by several commissioners and the Chairman. It was the consensus of the Commission that the article would be put in the Defenders newsletter. Chairman Eldredge suggested that the newsletter be added to the 2030 website. Mr. Baumann said the Farm Bureau has a weekly newsletter and Mr. McNutt's write up will be added to it. Mr. Austin suggested that it be sent out to the County Board.

Additional Public Comment

John Darger made comment regarding the cost of transportation and moving to McHenry County. He said housing is less expensive the farther you move from the metropolitan center. People go where they can get good education and afford to live. He feels that this analysis should be used. Mr. McNutt said they had a meeting about affordable housing which will be addressed in Community Character. Mr. Darger was directing his comment toward energy and affordable gas.

Tom Harding said he is constantly looking for major criteria for why people buy and where people buy. He noted that he has not seen any articles or agendas that say things about the cost of transportation. The major priorities are schools, shopping, and means of transportation but rarely transportation cost, unless it is the lowest rung which is the bottom 20%. Ms. Moller stated we have never seen energy prices this high and that all previous trends are almost irrelevant due to this. Mr. Harding did not agree that trends would be irrelevant.

Mr. Brown requested a copy of the article by Mr. McNutt. He encouraged the group to meet with the Northern Illinois Commuter Transportation Initiative with Dave Taylor from Boone County. They have agreed upon a route from Big Timber through Huntley, Marengo, Rockford and possibly farther west. He also asked for clarification on the open space land application ordinance that with the new conservation design ordinance that they filter obligation under that so it's not in addition to.

Kim Willis thanked the Commission for having the drafts on the website. She would like clarification on how upcoming drafts are going to work. Will the professional writer write a draft and bring to the Commission for review? Or, will all that is evaluated is a list of bullet points. Chairman Eldredge said that has not been determined and he would like to discuss this issue with the professional writer before committing to anything. He mentioned that one of the candidates is a writer and one is a planner, as well as, a writer. They will give the Commission the option before selecting one option.

Pat Kennedy asked the Commission members to remember every statement does not have to apply to every situation. In the Agricultural review draft, on page 5, water recharge it would be tremendous for anyone who reads the plan to be able to know that so many inches of water equals so many gallons. She requested the 75 LE score map be in place to see the effects. She also asked if subcommittees have been meeting. Mr. Dreher said they have not met in months. Mr. Davenport mentioned that his meeting is an ad hoc meeting. Ms. Wanaski explained the Ad Hoc meeting does not constitute a majority of a quorum, therefore posting was not required. However, the site capacity group meets most Thursdays at 8:00 a.m. and of course anyone who wishes to attend is welcomed.

The next meeting will be discussing the Ag Draft in depth and Economic Development is scheduled next.

Ms. Schietzelt requested that the next chapter for review is a fleshed out chapter for the Commission to review, not just a list of points.

Ms. Wanaski reviewed the action items:

- LEAM PowerPoint presentation to be made available to the Commission
- Another 7 day window for access to LEAM Website
- Forward Proposed Amendments to Bylaws to Planning & Development Commission
- Forward white paper on Windfarms to the Planning Commission
- Economic Development is the next chapter for review after the Ag Draft

Motion by Mr. McNutt, seconded by Mr. Bauman to adjourn the meeting. All member present voting aye. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.