

**MCHENRY COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 11, 2008**

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

Absent: Frank Harrison and Bill Swenson

Also present: Peter Austin County Administrator, Barb Wheeler, Randy Donley County Board Members, Brandon Nolin and Devin Lavigne, Houseal & Lavigne; Kim Willis, Pat Kennedy, Chris Manheim, Lisa Haderlein, Katherine Bergan Schmidt, John Darger, Tammy Valentine Garza

Staff Present: Maryanne Wanaski, Matthew Hansel and Cindy Sassaman

The meeting was called to order at 6:08 p.m.

Minute Approval

Motion by Mr. McNutt, seconded by Mr. Bauman to approve the minutes of the August 14, 2008 and August 28, 2008 Regional Planning Commission meetings with the elimination of the duplication of Chris Manheim's name on the August 14th minutes. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

Public Participation

Chairman Eldredge informed the public that they would follow the County Board's rule during public participation would allows each person 3 minutes to speak.

Kathy Bergan Schmidt from Crystal Lake mentioned that after reading the economic development chapter for the second time she felt there was something left out and that is the Fox Valley Waterway. Agritourism has been brought up but not a mention of tourism around the waterway. She asked if this should be brought up. She suggested maybe someone could come along and design a system where power is generated from the river. She would also like to comment about trying to get a 4 year college to locate in the county. She did not think we would be getting a 4-year university between now and 2030 and there is not enough money to fund that type of school and it is an unrealistic goal.

Patricia Kennedy presented her comments that she delayed from the last meeting. The ag business section has 2-3 sentences on agriculture as a whole and yet a full page on ag tourism which seemed unbalanced in her opinion. Aglime which doesn't really pertain to McHenry County since it is only produced in a very tiny area. The rural nature of Boone County is rapidly building out and they are not the big open space that the Commission keeps referring to. It was the opinion of Ms. Kennedy that nationwide there is a rapid decline in 4 year schools. She also mentioned that many people from the Chicago are moving to Boone County and passing up McHenry County.

Presentations

Houseal Lavigne & Associates – Chairman Eldredge expressed his excitement in having Houseal & Lavigne at the meeting. Mr. Austin spoke briefly and provided the Commission with the scope of their project and the timeline.

Devin Lavigne elaborated on the scope of the project and the proposed project schedule. He stated that his firm was hired to provide technical assistance to the Commission. One of their goals is to step back and read through the chapters. If there is technical jargon they will identify ways to make it more readable. They make sure the document is user friendly and provide a common tone throughout the document. They will come back to the Commission whenever they need clarification. They will be utilizing the chapters that were written although not necessarily in their exact form, all previous plans, all documents that are on the website, the LEAM model, the County Zoning Ordinance. They will be looking for any transparencies, inconsistencies in dates or gaps in the data that needs to be collected as they move into the next step of the process. They will spend a few days taking photographs, looking at land uses, infrastructure and natural resources. The photos will make their way into the final document. He noted that it is important in any plan to identify where you are, where you want to be and how you plan on getting there. In reviewing the subcommittee chapters it is implied where the County wants to be headed. But it is critical to put this information up front to show and identify the vision for McHenry County. They will craft a narrative description of the County in 2030 and how important this plan is in creating the vision. After that they will take the subcommittee reports and refine them and give them a standard format. Some chapters will be standalone and some may be blended. This will be unknown until all subcommittee reports are met. They will also be developing maps and graphics. They have all of the County's GIS information. The goal is to have all of this to the Commission by the end of November to give the Commission the first part of December to review the document. There are some things are not handled by subcommittees such as how McHenry County is situation between Chicago and Rockford, the history of the County and the importance of planning. This would be the introduction chapter and will then describe the purpose of the plan and the purpose/role of County government. He then explained other optional tasks available to the Commission.

Mr. Huber asked when the document is brought back to the County for review who would that be, the Commission or County Board. The Chairman explained that they are consultants for the Planning Commission and it will be presented to the Commission.

Ms. Schietzelt asked what documents have been provided to the writer's and if they would seek out the Imagine McHenry County Survey. Ms. Wananski explained that they have all the documents that are posted on the website and that survey is on the website as well. They have also just received the affordable housing study.

Mc. McNutt asked which maps the writers would use in the plan. They stated that they would use the maps that have been provided to them and dress them up.

Ms. Scheitzelt asked about the water resources map by Cassandra McKinney, Water Resource Manager; this they already have.

Mr. Hubert asked if he heard correctly that information may be blended throughout the plan. Mr. Lavigne said that it is possible that chapters that have already been created could possibly be split. He also stated topics that were covered in other counties that are not covered in the chapters would be brought up for the Commission to address. Mr. Lavigne also noted that the 2020 McHenry County Transportation Plan will be incorporated into the plan.

Ms. Schietzelt asked what a land use chapter would be. Mr. Lavigne explained that it would be an executive summary.

A subcommittee should be arranged to complete the Community Character information. Mr. Swenson and Mr. Thompson are on the subcommittee as it stands.

Mr. Lavigne asked for the core objectives information to allow them to begin the process.

Mr. McNutt raised concern with garbage disposal and feels this should be addressed.

Mr. Rein mentioned that St. Charles actually had energy produced by the Fox River. Could it be a possible producer of power and maybe should be discussed in the "green" chapter. Mr. Thompson also mentioned that the river could be used for recreational purposes as well.

Ms. Schietzelt asked why economics of open space recreation, waterways, bird watching and hiking were not mentioned. Mr. Davenport said they had mentioned it during their meeting process, but then left it out when presenting their information and that it was an oversight. He thanked her for bring up the subject. Mr. Schietzelt has some information that she will provide to the Commission.

Ms. Schietzelt asked if Houseal Lavigne would meet with subcommittees. Chairman Eldredge said that the subcommittees no longer meet and they will meet with the Commission.

The Open House is defined as the 4 corner meetings. Mr. Austin was asked who will host those meetings. He stated it is a question that has not been answered.

It was asked if the writer's will double check all facts and figures. Mr. Lavigne stated that they will not triple check numbers, but if something looks out of whack they will investigate.

LEAM Update

LEAM had technical problems but the site is now up and running. Ms. Wanaski will e-mail the website and the login to Commissioners. LEAM requested the Commission get comfortable and look at the website. Ms. Wanaski asked that the Commission not hold up the consultant, to finish the foundation chapters and then move onto LEAM. Chairman Eldredge asked that when the site is available to the public that a press release be sent out.

Ag Policies

Chairman Eldredge asked that the Commission vote on these policies today.

Economic Development Draft

The Commission began reviewing page 5.

MCCG

No one present.

Action Items

None

Public Comment

Pat Kennedy mentioned that if the consultant/writers are to speak with subcommittees that it will be in public. She asked if the public will have a chance to see the remaining subcommittee ideas? She said that this is the first time she heard that there are subcommittees of one and wondered why this has not

been corrected. Traffic and industrial uses are a great impediment to farming. It was her opinion that Industrial uses are a safety risk being so far out from services, not only sewer and water, but fire and police. This would be an issue to work with municipalities. In regard to the water issues, it was her understanding that Baxter and Woodman stated that the County cannot use the deep aquifers they are tapped out at their current usage. She stated that in her opinion the Commission should reach out for the best of what can be done not the current market driving forces.

Mr. Thompson reported that he was on a subcommittees with Mr. Swenson making the previous statement about a one person subcommittee incorrect.

Kim Willis stated she has several comments but would limit them. Industrial in remote areas necessitates a heavy reliance on automobiles. It is her opinion that the problem is the heavy reliance on automobiles, not that there are not enough roads. Quality of life issues are affected by nearness of the workplace to retail and restaurant space which would provide daytime customers. Also having the workplace close to home provides the opportunity to walk or ride. She mentioned the new study from Hartland Alliance and read an excerpt from page 82. They ask that all the municipalities, townships and the County collaborate both horizontally and vertically and invest time and resources into countywide planning and coordination for affordable housing. She stressed how important it is to find those good relations with the municipalities. She mentioned that just because they are not doing this for the municipalities, does not mean they do not have to cooperate with them. She asked that they find good communications and cooperate with municipalities. She expressed her concern that the deep aquifers are tapped out and that the County does not have access to Lake Michigan water. When the water is used up there is nowhere to go.

John Darger stated that he was gone most of the summer and questioned why MCCG does not attend the meetings. He noticed that MCCG is not present at the meetings and asked why. It was his understanding that when he ran for County Board 2 years ago and he surveyed his fellow candidates and found they would not vote for the land use plan because municipalities were not consulted in the process. He asked if it could be explained why MCCG was not in attendance.

Ms. Valentine-Garza was told that subcommittees were dissolved except for Communications. She asked if they are they in fact meeting. Mr. Davenport stated that Intergovernmental has not been dissolved. The Communications subcommittee will need to reconvene in order to have another meeting. They will be meeting in the future and will comply with the Open Meetings Act.

Mr. Jung responded to Mr. Darger's questions regarding MCCG. He reported that the Planning & Development Committee voted not to amend the Regional Planning Commission's Bylaws to allow MCCG to sit at the table as an ex-officio. Mr. Austin commented that the Committee felt there was much thought that went into the structure of the Commission when it was formed and they felt it should not be altered. He also mentioned that he has been in contact with MCCG about attending the meetings. He said that until Ms. Moeller gets direction from her executive board they will not be attending the meetings. Chairman Eldredge would like to hear their comments and hoped they will attend. Mr. Jung said he asked MCCG to attend, but they do not feel comfortable after the turn of events.

Mr. Bauman asked who would be hosting the open house at the end of the plan process. He thought the Commission should be the one hosting the open house and Chairman Eldredge agreed. He also felt that having the consultant/writers present to hear comments so that they could provide suggestions on how to handle certain comments would be good.

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.