

McHenry County Regional Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
April 9, 2009

Members Present: Charlie Eldredge, Chairman; Jerry Davenport, Nancy Schietzelt, Jim McNutt, RB Thompson, Mike Rein, Ron Bauman, Jeremy Shaw, Dennis Dreher, Craig Hubert and Frank Harrison

Commissioners Absent: Bill Swenson

Staff Present: Dennis Sandquist, Matt Hansel, Maryanne Wanaski, Cindy Sassaman, Sean Foley and Darrell Moore

Also Present: Ken Kohler, Ersel Schuster, Kathy Bergan Schmidt, Jim Heisler; County Board Members, Pat Kennedy, Tim Dilsaver, Tammy Valentine Garza, Anna Moeller, Tom Harding, Jeff Thirtyacre and John Darger

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

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Harrison made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bauman to approve the minutes of March 12 and March 26 with the amendment noting Craig Hubert's attendance on both sets of minutes and Tom Harding's comment regarding urban growth boundaries on March 26, 2009 minutes. All aye. Motion carried.

Public Participation

None

Director's Comments

Mr. Sandquist will make comments at the end of the meeting.

Old Business

HLA Community Character Re-write –The chapter re-write from HLA was not completed. The Commission opted to review the policies. It was the consensus of the Commission to review Mr. Davenport's comments. Mr. Davenport said that one of his biggest concerns is how much land is being consumed and that he encourages people to consume less land. There was some discussion on density. Chairman Eldredge noted his concern with roads that are too wide using too much land and creating more impervious areas than needed, thus encouraging higher speeds than necessary. Smaller roads with parking create maintenance issues in some cases, but can be worked around. This is basically the urban design that was pre-WWII design. The Commission liked the general message in the policies and the tone. Mr. Dreher felt that since he identified four options and that there may be other options available, and suggested using the wording ... "we generally encourage an increase in density of 25-30% as illustrated by the following examples". There was discussion on requiring open space, but at what acreage would this be required. Mr. Harrison suggested a cash donation that could be used for land purchased by MCCD. Mr. Davenport noted that the number he used in policy #1 referred to a conventional development. Mr. Harrison mentioned since there are many subdivisions platted, but not yet built, perhaps could developers be offered a re-platting option under a higher density. Mr. Dreher

liked the idea except for areas that are farther out and away from municipal services. Mr. Shaw mentioned that placing higher density next to some of the 2-acre existing subdivisions has some political ramifications. Mr. Shaw agrees with Mr. Bauman's statement where he said each parcel should be on a case by case basis such as wooded parcels where homes can be built without disturbing farmland or trees. Mr. Davenport commented that lower density is not always the answer, but to have the most efficient use of land and be aware of the effects on prime ag areas, environment and natural resources. Mr. Dreher suggested adding the wording to policy #2..."except where constrained by environmental conservation considerations the County will take the lead in densities".

Policy #3 should reference the Conservation Design Ordinance. Mr. Dreher felt the language on first part of policy #3 was commentary and should be in another part of the plan and the paragraph should start with ... "The County shall continue to recognizing that cluster..." Ms. Wanaski suggested using a more broad term instead of Conservation Design, because over time another term could be used and she suggests using words that say to consider the land first.

Policy #4 – Mr. Shaw said that if a development is consistent with the municipality's plan then it should be consistent with the County's Plan. If the development meets the municipal plan it is a tough argument and that the County's development interferes with the municipality. Mr. Shaw suggested a change in wording, "...unless the municipal plan is consistent with the proposed plan." After some discussion the Commission stated that if the development is within a half mile of water and sewer, the proposal shall be consistent with the municipalities plan.

Policy #5 – Mr. Harrison said the only area he disagreed with was the 1,000 new dwelling units being too many. Mr. Harrison said that in the area of the existing Metra stations that would require taking down structures. Mr. Dreher suggested stating densities of 24 units per 1/6 acre.

Mr. McNutt asked if HLA would be attacking the affordable housing section. Mr. Sandquist requested the Commission wait to see what HLA produces and if is not included in the Community Character section then Mr. McNutt could provide some verbiage.

On Policy #9 the Commission suggested including encouraging multi-family rental housing.

The Commission requested that Policy #12 is forwarded to the Department of Transportation for comments.

Policy # 13 should be moved to the economic development section.

The Commission felt that Policy #14 is already mentioned in Policy #1. Policy 14 will be eliminated.

It was noted that new multifamily has not been built in the County for 15 years. The Commission encouraged alternatives for condominium conversion.

The Commission took a short break from 8:20 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Motion by Mr. McNutt seconded by Mr. Bauman to transmit the policy information and comments discussed this evening to Houseal LaVigne and Associates (HLA). All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

New Business

MEGA Scenario- Mr. Hansel reviewed the MEGA-Scenario from the LEAM website. LEAM ran the Algonquin Township scenario on its own to see the changes. When land is taken out of Algonquin Township it opens up the Route 47 corridor and Route 176 almost solid. Professor Deal is concerned about the changes made to the Algonquin Scenario as it eliminates the possibility of redevelopment in Algonquin Township. He believes it has broader land use ramifications elsewhere in the County in that it may open other areas that are undesirable for development. Mr. Hansel explained that much of the growth gets pushed to Routes 176 and 47. Professor Deal has offered to rerun the MEGA scenario with the original Algonquin Township numbers (acres) because he believes that would account for redevelopment potential.

Mr. Hansel suggested removing areas that are conservation areas, cemeteries and parks then that would allow for redevelopment on all other land.

The Mega scenario was run several different ways. The first comparison was with the MEGA scenario and the urban growth boundary vs. the original reference scenario. This scenario creates a heavy growth area around the Route 47 corridor. The second comparison was the MEGA scenario and the urban growth boundary vs. the original urban growth boundary. The MEGA scenario combines the transit oriented development (TOD), redevelopment in incorporated areas and removes all the ag areas defined by the Commission and limited growth to within the urban growth boundaries of municipalities and limits development in water recharge areas 80% less commercial and 10% reduction in residential. The Regional Planning Commission will ask LEAM to run one more scenario without the Algonquin information. Mr. Sandquist asked that the Commission to choose one of scenarios; urban growth boundary or the mile and a half. The Commission felt the urban growth boundary was more realistic but requested that both maps be printed side by side so the Commission can compare the two. Mr. Hansel will provide those maps at the next meeting.

Land principles- Mr. Sandquist asked the Commission if anything stood out in the land principles so that they could begin the mapping portion. The Commission will look at the land principles at the next meeting.

MCCG

None

Member's comments

Mr. Baumann said that the charts from ag would be included. Could the charts be given to HLA. They were given to Matt to pass along.

Directors Comments

The public meetings have been moved from the end of April to mid May 11-22 pending approval of the Planning & Development Committee. The Planning & Development Committee is reviewing the draft as

quickly as possible. They agreed with the majority of the comments from the Commission. They are now reviewing each chapter. A new draft will come out in advance of public review meeting.

The next meeting will be next week the 16th the meeting will start at 6:00 p.m. with Community Character and land use principles as agenda items.

Chairman Comments

None

Public Comment

Tom Harding commented on the land use map. He is interested in the map being site specific. He felt that if the map is not, it will not mean much. It is especially important for residential zoning cases. He asked the Commission to come up with a realistic map. The Zoning Board of Appeals needs the map to be site specific and show existing, proposed and future uses.

Jim Haisler from the Association of Realtors felt the plan was very nice, great job on plan. He echoed Mr. Harding's feelings. He mentioned that he uses the land use map it is invaluable. The map on page 104 is one of the most important factors and tells how things will move through the County.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Dreher seconded by Mr. Bauman. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.