

**McHenry County Regional Planning Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**January 8, 2009**

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

**Commissioners Absent:** Craig Hubert

**Staff Present:** Dennis Sandquist, Matthew Hansel and Cindy Sassaman

**Also Present:** Ken Koehler, County Board Chairman; Pete Austin, County Administrator; Jim Heisler, Vice-Chairman County Board, Tina Hill, Paula Yensen, Ersel Schuster, Kathy Bergan Schmidt, Mary McCann, County Board members; Pam Althoff, Senator; Pat Kennedy, Tom Harding, Randi Wille, Tammy Valentine Garza, Anna Moeller and Kim Willis

Chairman Eldredge called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. He introduced Tina Hill, Chairman of the Planning and Development Committee. Ms. Hill commented that she likes to work with diverse people and bring them together. She asked that the group stay on task and encouraged anyone with questions to contact her.

The Commissioners introduced themselves.

**Public Participation**

None.

**Director's Remarks**

None

**Old Business**

**Vision Statement** - Brandon Nolin of Houseal Lavigne Associates (HLA) began discussion of the vision statement. The Commission suggested several changes which will be made by Houseal Lavigne Associates. Ms. Schietzelt felt the Commission should possibly wait to finish the vision statement until an agreement is reached regarding the direction of the plan. Chairman Eldredge said that a decision on the vision statement would be made at this meeting. It will not be the final version and can be ultimately changed by the County Board. Mr. Dreher suggested thinking about the "big picture" and focusing on the issues. The Chairman asked Mr. Davenport to write 2-3 sentences for the final paragraph. Mr. Harrison felt that the vision statement does not address the 300,000 population jump in next 20 years.

**Agriculture** - The agriculture chapter was reviewed at the last meeting that Houseal Lavigne attended. The Commission's comments have been taken into consideration on the rewrite. Mr. Bauman noted some changes in the agriculture chapter and reviewed them with the Commission. In addition, he explained that soils with an LE score of 80 are soils that do not require irrigation. Mr. Harrison brought up that LESA is noted several times throughout the agriculture chapter. It was asked that it be clarified that the LE portion is the only component that will be utilized by the County. The goals and objectives were reviewed by the County Board. It was noted that there was not a vote by the Board on the last review. Mr. Nolin explained that they were trying to make the policies more action oriented as requested. Ms. Schietzelt was in support of their effort. Mr. Bauman mentioned that they could use the goals and objectives of the agriculture section and lead right into the agriculture section written by Mr. Bauman. After some discussion it was the consensus of the Commission to keep the policies word for word as written by the subcommittees.

Mr. Bauman asked the Commission to quantify the word "substantial". He mentioned he has spoken to Harry Alten, Chairman of Agriculture Preservation Farmland Protection Commission, that the Commission is looking at parcels as small as 5 acres, but Mr. Bauman noted that 1000 acres is too much. A "generally contiguous area" was wording that was suggested. Under Goals, Objectives and Policies the Commission agreed to remove Objective B5 because it is beyond the Commission's ability.

Chairman Eldredge asked if the Commission was comfortable in adopting the agriculture chapter. Mr. Davenport made a motion to accept the agriculture chapter, which will now be referred to as "final RPC draft". All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

**Open Space** - Changes were made as the Commission reviewed the section. It was noted after discussion that at a minimum the County should keep the current ratio of open space with increase in population. Mr. Sandquist suggested the language to be used to describe the percentage ratio. The Commission reviewed this section through page 5 and will continue review at a later meeting.

**Timeline** - Mr. Dreher presented the timeline that he drafted. By his estimation the Commission would be working ambitiously to finish the plan by June 2009.

Mr. Harrison would like the Planning & Development Committee, townships and municipalities to receive the same reviewed documents simultaneously. He also mentioned that during the meetings where the Commission receives feedback, to listen to comments and not explain the Commission's reasons/motives.

Chairman Eldredge requested the Commission begin meeting 3 times per month in January to meet the deadline of June 2009.

Mr. Harrison also suggested providing a draft with the changes highlighted so it is obvious as to what was changed without reading through the entire section again. He also suggested having a Saturday meeting to allow for more time.

Mr. Sandquist will make a point to review the timeline monthly with the Commission during the third meeting to make sure the Commission on schedule.

The Commission will meet the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays in February. The Commission will meet the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays in March.

Mr. Davenport asked for those that were helping out on the housing chapter to finish up the work so that it can be reviewed by the Commission.

Mr. Sandquist provided business cards for those that did not have his email so that he can be included on email and in stays informed.

Ms. Moeller thanked Ms. Wanaski, Mr. Hansel and Mr. Davenport for attending the meeting last month where they presented population and reviewed the LEAM website.

Comments on population projections will be put together into one document.

#### **Member's comments**

None.

#### **Additional Public Comment**

Pat Kennedy asked the Commission to keep strong language in the plan. She noted the agriculture industry is the single largest income for the County. Consider the current population growth and the current economic situation; it is her opinion that the population increase will probably be lower. She also requested dates and page numbers be added to all future draft documents.

Kim Willis is aware that the drafts were on the RPC website but was under the impression they would be linked on the agenda on the County Board's calendar. She asked that they are linked on the County Board calendar as stated. Ms. Willis also requested the community character draft be available if it is to be discussed at the next meeting.

Kathy Berndt Schmidt said that as a Commission they are allowed to and encouraged to say things. They are being too soft and should keep the strong language. She referred to Commissioners saying that the County Board will shoot down their ideas if warranted; and she feels the County Board needs something to shoot down.

**Adjournment**

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:06 p.m.