

**McHenry County Regional Planning Commission**  
**AGRICULTURAL SUBCOMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**June 25, 2007**

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL:** The joint meeting began at 6:40 p.m. at McCann's Berry Farm. Members present: Chairman Ron Baumann (Agricultural Subcommittee), Chairman Frank Harrison (Economic Development Subcommittee), Bill Swenson, RB Thompson, Craig Hubert, Jim McNutt. Staff present: SuzAnne Ehardt, Matt Hansel, and Jean Hervert Niemann.

**MINUTES:** None approved.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** Peter Biancini and associate (Royal Oak Farm), Don Burda (Homestead Orchard), Bob and Genevieve Hughes, Cody Purdom and Valerie Reimer, Walter Davidson, David Baer (Providence Farm), Rich Brook (Brook Farm), Rob Olsen (Lone Oak Farm), Mel Von Bergen (Von Bergen's Country Market), Bob and Mary McCann (McCann's Berry Farm), Don Schellhaass (University of Illinois Extension and vintner), Marlene Frisbie (Hoffie Nursery), Alice and Bill Howenstine (Pioneer Tree Farm), and George and Wendy Richardson (Richardson Farm), Dan Volkers (McHenry County Farm Bureau).

**DISCUSSION ITEMS:** The meeting began with a thank you to Mary and Bob McCann for hosting the meeting at their berry farm. A general explanation was given of the 2030 land use planning process. The purpose of this meeting is to collect information from specialty growers in the county.

Each grower took a couple of minutes to explain their operation and factors that related to continuing or expanding their operation. The discussion that followed included the unique problems related to a business with a short season (in some cases 8 to 10 weeks) and the large volume of customers within that short period. All of the growers agreed that the weather conditions could make or break their business.

McHenry County is well suited to serve people from Chicago and the suburbs. In addition to buying produce, people are interested in rural/farm setting and associated recreation including walks, hay wagon rides or corn mazes. In addition to a farm destination, customers also frequent restaurants, buy gasoline and some stay over night.

Both small and large specialty growers were represented. Many specialty crops lend themselves to small acreages. Many comments were common to both. Growers were concerned about getting complaints about noise and dust that are part of operating a farm. Many growers employ Hispanic workers and have questions about employee status and documentation. Growers cited the sign ordinance and Health Department as posing limitations. Several growers supported putting land in conservation easements and other growers questioned the future of these easements.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

*Approved 9-26-07*