

# NORTHWEST HERALD

Local News and Video for McHenry County, Illinois

## Team starts on solid ground

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With a chairman chosen and committees assigned, McHenry County Regional Planning Commission members said they are on target to get the 2030 county land-use plan finished by next year.

The commission likely will meet more frequently as work gathers momentum, said McHenry County Board liaison John Jung, R-Woodstock. Its 13 members have met monthly since November, shortly after the county board appointed them.

“They’ve been moving right along. We’ve got our seven or eight subcommittees – some of them have met already, and some of them are coming up,” Jung said. “They’re doing well, and everybody still is fired up and wanting to keep moving.”

The commission was born from the ashes of the 2020 Unified Plan, the land-use plan that was scuttled last year after seven years of work. To avoid the fate of the last plan, the commission’s plan must strike a balance between development and conservation.

County officials still base their land use and zoning decisions off the 2010 plan approved 14 years ago, and override it much more often than not.

The commission last month appointed member Charles Eldredge as chairman and began assigning members to sub-committees. Members at first appointed Jung, but discovered that county by-laws forbade Jung from holding the chairmanship.

All 13 voting members are working hard to meet the goal of 18 to 24 months set by the county board, said member Craig Hubert, a rural Marengo resident and former executive director of the McHenry County Conservation District.

“Everyone has their other activities and lives they have to live, but we’re doing all right,” Hubert said.

The commission is made up of two representatives from each of the county board’s six districts, and a member at large. Jung reports on the commission’s progress to the county board Planning and Development Committee.

The 2020 plan’s original draft in September 2004 kept the western half of the county largely agricultural and kept future development near municipal boundaries, but developers argued that the plan trampled property rights. Board members and staff developed a second plan more developer-friendly, but conservationists argued that it gave developers free reign to blacktop the county.

After a contentious five-hour meeting last March, the county board did not approve either plan, agreeing to go back and start anew with a 2030 plan.

The committee is developing a Web site so residents can follow its progress, Jung said.