

McHenry County Regional Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
February 19, 2009

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

Commissioners Absent: Bill Swenson and RB Thompson

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

Also Present: Jim Heisler, Kathy Bergan Schmidt and Randy Donley; County Board Members, Pat Kennedy, Emily Berendt, Conor Brown, Tom Harding, Tamara Valentine Garza, Anna Moeller and John Darger

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Public Participation

Pat Kennedy requested the minutes of January 8, 2009 be changed to reflect that agriculture is the largest source of income, not gravel.

Tom Harding spoke about property owners rights which he felt were being ignored. He feels that a plan that does not include property owner's input is a big mistake. He is an advocate of private property owner's rights. He feels it is important in a political and legal sense. It is right to be fair to municipalities, but they need to be fair to the property owner and he would like more consideration given to their rights. He said that models are great from a planning standpoint, but may or may not be fair to the property owners. He said the County loses most of their lawsuits is because they are not realistic or fair and are not good business.

Conor Brown, McHenry County Association of Realtor said that he did not want a Sims City version of the plan. Greater densities have other impacts that have to be weighed such as the impact to school districts. Ultimately, it is going to be people that decide what house, what school and what lifestyle they will choose.

Tamara Valentine Garza, Richmond Township Supervisor said her township recently formed their own planning commission. They are still working on a comprehensive plan. They have taken into consideration the County's work and also CMAP information. The Township is having a meeting called a community conversation next Wednesday, February 25, 2009 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Township Hall. Mr. Sandquist will represent the County and speak about the Regional Planning Commission. She invited everyone to attend. She also mentioned that they are doing a survey and preliminary results will be discussed at that meeting. So far she is surprised as to the results of the responses on the questionnaires that are coming in. The questionnaire can be found at: www.richmondtownship.net.

Mr. Eldredge reminded the Commission of the Green Practice Energy Audit seminar in Chicago next Wednesday, February 25, 2009.

Director's Remarks

Mr. Sandquist suggested that the RFP mapping presentation be moved up on the agenda to accommodate the guests.

RFP Mapping presented a hyper spectral analysis using remote sensing technology that allows RFP to compare imagery from an aircraft and in turn produce a map. The example shown to the Commission depicted ash trees. Mr. Pendergrast, the owner of RFP, informed the Commission that MCCC has contracted with RFP to identify every oak tree in the County as well as, buckthorn. They also showed the tree canopy analysis for the City of Woodstock. Chairman Eldredge mentioned that this technology was originally developed as a military tool and was just released for civilian use. Chairman Eldredge felt that it will be incredibly important, but might be too late for this plan. Information of this type will be essential for the next plan. Mr. Dreher and Ms. Schietzelt mentioned that this type of mapping would work with calculating the triggers for the Conservation Design Ordinance. Mr. Dreher felt that it could give good planning advice up front for an applicant looking to subdivide property under the Conservation Design Ordinance.

OLD BUSINESS

Population Projections - Mr. Sandquist handed out a memorandum along with maps. He explained that population is important, but not as important as if a sewer plan or something of that nature was being considered. With a land use policy plan, exact forecasts are not as critical. If the population is reached sooner than projected the worst case scenario would be that the plan would be obsolete earlier than expected. However, projections are still important and the Director is bringing this issue to the Commission for consensus.

Mr. Eldredge is comfortable with the LEAM projections or projections by Mr. Davenport. He felt that after 2020 the projections would not be very accurate.

Mr. Davenport said projections to the subcommittee were based on 2.8%. He explained that he was going off a rate that has been consistent, but he backed off that historic rate because of the current economy. Mr. Davenport suggested two maps for two different population projections.

Chairman Eldredge gave a brief review economic history and felt that he did not know how long the recession would last but that usually when these situations end the market/growth takes off rapidly.

Mr. Davenport reviewed the SMSA growth patterns. The subcommittee felt that results should flatten due to the economy which would produce a population of nearly 558,000 in 2030 which was a 2.4% growth rate. Mr. Shaw asked for the population figures to be translated into new homes. Mr. Davenport suggested dividing the figure by 2.8 or 3 to make it easier.

Ms. Schietzelt suggested that the Commission not promote rapid growth by creating a plan that would not allow the growth. Ms. Schietzelt made a motion, seconded by Mr. Dreher to choose the mid range population projection.

Discussion- Mr. Dreher stated he is leaning more toward a figure between NIPC's figures and the LEAM projections. He spoke about a PowerPoint presentation by Tracy Cross that showed the last 50 years in McHenry County having rapid, unprecedented growth and at 2007 it stopped. He took the new 8,000 residents per year and multiplied to the year 2030 and came up with 500,000. If people are looking at

jobs, transportation, and property taxes; how attractive will McHenry County be for growth? Mr. Dreher felt that McHenry County will not have any of those items. Mr. Dreher felt that he would go with no higher than 500,000 for the population figures. The larger the number that is considered for population, the more land that will be converted from agriculture to residential.

Ms. Moeller provided the Commission with comments from MCCG. MCCG requested the municipalities to go back and look at the capacity analysis. It was found that the capacity analysis was not far off from their own comprehensive plans. Ms. Moeller felt that if the plan is based on the market and not use land use, what was the point in planning? She mentioned much growth occurred prior to the adoption of impact fees and before planning staff was hired in many of the communities. McHenry County is not seen as affordable. Mr. Harrison asked for clarification on planning being based on the market. He feels the market drives everything. She felt the larger issue was where the growth would occur. She felt there are too many variables, and to plan where you want the growth to occur. Mr. Harrison would like the motion amended to a population of 510,000. Mr. Hubert asked if we need to relate our choice back to hard facts. Ms. Schietzelt amended her motion to 510,000 population projection for 2030, seconded by Mr. Dreher. Aye: Bauman, Shaw, Schietzelt, Rein, Hubert and Dreher; Nay: McNutt, Eldredge, and Davenport

LEAM Model

LEAM was asked if it was possible for a combination of scenarios with urban growth boundaries, transit oriented development, municipal ETJ and infill development. Dr. Deal has confirmed that the changes are feasible and just needs additional information.

The groundwater protection model will be refined to allow a fixed percent of development, not to restrict development, but to limit impervious area.

Mr. Shaw had questions about detention areas. Mr. Sandquist said that the policy of the plan states to use best practices. It was also mentioned that on the density side that two level parking reduces impervious areas of a business park. Mr. Sandquist was not prepared to recommend any numbers and felt that the policies should ask for best management practices, but there should be a balance between commercial and residential. He noted that whatever amount the Commission decides on can be put into the models. Mr. Dreher made the motion seconded by Ms. Schietzelt to suggested 10% for residential and 20% for nonresidential for the models. Aye: Eldredge, Bauman, Schietzelt, Hubert, Rein and Dreher. Nay: Mr. Shaw and Mr. Davenport.

The Commission reviewed the map showing the 80+ soils and NRCS prime ag areas. Using markers, members concurred that certain prime areas were not capable of being protected due to municipal development. Mr. Harrison suggested the map discourage development in prime ag areas for as long as practical. Mr. Harrison felt that they should concentrate on those municipalities that are affected by growth. Mr. Sandquist thought that someday if wording could be added that would state the land is not to be developed between now and 2030 designated as "ag reserve" until a time when the County could re-evaluate those prime farmland areas. Mr. Davenport stated that commercial/industrial development in the 90 corridor is desirable if it is on our terms. This information tonight is for modeling purposes only as a test to see where it puts development. Hopefully, the information will be back by the next meeting and the overlapping scenarios will be visible as well as the water protection areas. Then the Commission will be able to develop the principles they might want to include in the plan.

Mr. Sandquist sent out an email that suggested moving forward on the public and municipal review. He would like to schedule a meeting within the next week with the intergovernmental and communications subcommittees.

MCCG

No comments.

Member's Comments

Mr. Hubert asked that with the sale of the EJ&E Railroad if staff had an opinion of the railroad sale and how it will affect the plan. Mr. Eldredge noted that it will have increase train traffic.

Mr. Harrison asked about the maps that were provided and he noted an area that should be changed. He also said when Dr. Deal was here he asked him if there was any way to take the impact of the market into consideration as far as what people are paying for property. He asked anyone that doubted the power of the market to look at real estate. Mr. Harrison felt that for the Commission to adopt a plan that does not take the market into consideration is short-sided and the Commission must be very careful when making decisions.

Mr. Shaw said that the people that paid the high price per acre were probably considering annexing into a municipality and he agrees with what Mr. Harrison said previously.

Mr. Dreher said he observed a compromise tonight and hopes the Commission can use this example and keep the spirit up.

Mr. Sandquist felt the Commission made great progress tonight along with the decisions that were made. There is a meeting scheduled for next Thursday. Hopefully, results from LEAM will be ready by next week; if they are not ready then the meeting will be postponed. The drafts are with HLA and are scheduled to be back on March 12th then they will be forwarded to the Planning & Development Committee on March 19th with Planning Commission review and comment.

Nancy felt that certain items were not clarified and she is concerned about forwarding information without resolution of those items.

Mr. Sandquist said that they will resolve policy inconsistencies after the LEAM review. Then after P & D review they will proceed to the public meetings. In April he will meet with the subcommittee and discuss how those meetings will be run. In March they will schedule meetings with County Board members by district to discuss LEAM and to identify land use principles that will be used to develop the map.

Additional Public Comment

No public comments

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Dreher, seconded by Mr. Harrison. All members present voting aye. The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.