

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
McHenry County Government Center – Administration Building
667 Ware Road – Conference Room A
Woodstock, IL 60098

Minutes of Friday, November 13, 2009

Tina Hill, Chairwoman

Randy Donley

Mary L. Donner

Sue Draffkorn

Marc Munaretto

Lyn Orphal

Ersel Schuster

Chairwoman Hill called the Planning and Development Committee meeting to order at 8:06am. The following members were present: Tina Hill; Mary Donner; Sue Draffkorn; Marc Munaretto; Lyn Orphal; and Ersel Schuster. Members absent: Randy Donley and Lyn Orphal. Also in attendance: Planning and Development Department staff members; Charles Eldridge and Dennis Dreher of the Regional Planning Commission, and Jim Heisler, Dan Ryan, Mary McCann, and Kathleen Bergan Schmidt, County Board members and members of the public.

MINUTE APPROVAL: None

Chairman Hill began the meeting by saying that after giving it much thought and consideration, she would like to revisit the population estimate that the Committee had agreed upon at their previous meeting. She asked if anyone would be willing to do so. Ms. Draffkorn said she would be willing to reconsider it and wanted the number to be higher than the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC, now Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning CMAP) and she believed that the Committee should use a new figure of about 490,000. Ms. Draffkorn motioned to reconsider yesterday's vote on the population projection. Ms. Donner seconded the motion. Chairwoman Hill began the discussion saying that she had spoken to the representatives from District 6 and that all of them were in favor of reducing the population forecast. Chairman Koehler is fine with it, as well. Ms. Donner suggested that the Committee might want to consider the LEAM number, or chose a number closer to it. Mr. Munaretto said that NIPC/CMAP numbers have historically been low for McHenry County. He said that the RPC was charged with developing a number, which they did. He also said that this plan is nodal in concept and that the growth is mostly contiguous and that most of the population was not going to go into District 6. Ms. Schuster responded by saying a little respect ought to be given to District 6 since it is the district that the 2030 Plan is mostly planning for. On a roll call vote: Aye: Draffkorn, Donner, Schuster and Hill. Nay: Munaretto. Not Present: Donley, Orphal. Motion passed.

Ms. Draffkorn then motioned to change the population projection of the 2030 Plan to 495,000. The motion was seconded by Ms. Schuster. Aye: Draffkorn, Donner, Schuster and Hill. Nay: Munaretto. Not Present: Donley, Orphal. Motion passed.

Chairman Hill then opened the meeting to public comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Patricia Kennedy, 20712 Streit Rd, Harvard, said that the municipalities and MCCG had encouraged the RPC and the Committee to set the bar high and to do the best planning than could be done. Joe Daleiden, 2202 Steig Road, Woodstock raised concerns about the amount of farmland that is being consumed by the draft 2030 Plan, citing recent statistics that indicate that the amount of farmland needed feed the world is approximately the size of the country of Brazil and that in this country, approximately 30 million acres of farmland had already been taken out of production by development. Nancy Schietzelt, 4419 Walkup Rd., Crystal Lake (RPC member), thanked the Committee for their action regarding the lowering of the population forecast. She also commented that the RPC was made up of a variety of people with a variety of points-of-view and that this plan represented lots of compromises by all parties. She further requested that any future meetings regarding the Plan be held in the evening so as to better accommodate the public who is interested in the process. Kim Willis, representing the Environmental Defenders of McHenry County, 124 Cass St, Woodstock, emphasized Ms. Schietzelt's comments regarding evening meetings, and also asked that the Committee look at both sets of public comments while reviewing any potential changes to the draft Plan. Emily Berendt, 10214 Fairway Lane, Woodstock, thanked the Committee for changing the population forecast. Connor Brown, McHenry County Association of Realtors, expressed his disappointment over the Committee changing the population forecast and

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asked that the Plan now reflect the year 2025, not 2030. Bill Swenson, Regional Planning Commissioner, expressed his disappointment over the Committee reducing the population forecast saying that the RPC had worked very carefully to arrive at this number.

PRESENTATIONS: None

SUBDIVISIONS: None

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: *2Review of RPC recommended 2030 Comprehensive Plan:*

Chairwoman Hill began the discussion by thanking the members of the public for their comments and observations. She said she wanted to work with the members of District 6 and make sure that they had a say in the process and she wanted to be sure that their voice was heard. Ms. Donner suggested that using the LEAM population forecast might have been a better option. She observed that most of the people are going into the municipalities, not into the unincorporated areas, particularly District 6. Ms. Donner said she preferred a number closer to the LEAM projection of approximately 520,000. She then posed questions to the committee: Will the population change result in a need to change the maps? How are the maps going to change? How does it alter District 6?

Mr. Eldridge explained that the municipalities within their existing borders could accommodate approximately 72,000 people. He also explained that looking at historical trends (with regard to population distribution between the municipalities and the County), you would find that most population goes into the municipalities (approximately 90% incorporated 10% unincorporated). He added that altering the assumed lot size would result in less land consumption. Mr. Dreher agreed with Mr. Eldridge and added that the RPC did not know how well the map and the population forecast would line up when the RPC began the mapping process, but on the first attempt, it lined up fairly well. He went on to explain how the RPC chose the areas they did for development. The factors included, but were not limited to: prime farm soils, water recharge areas, and municipal and township plans.

Ms. Donner suggested removing the year "2030" from the title of the document and after a brief discussion the Committee opted to leave it in the title.

Chairwoman Hill questioned how all of this discussion would impact the map, particularly the now lower population projection. Mr. Sandquist said that a reduction of approximately 45,000 people translates into about 15,000 households, or about 30,000 acres of Estate and 5,000 acres of Residential. Eliminating a large portion of the Estate and Residential designation in the Coral/Riley area would only remove about half the land that would need to be removed. Mr. Eldridge said that the RPC treated density as a constant throughout the County, and used a slightly higher density, with the exception of Barrington Hills and Bully Valley, where they used a lower density. Mr. Dreher commented that the RPC had the LEAM model, which also assisted in distributing both the population and the development. Mr. Munaretto commented that it might be worth going back to LEAM and have them re-run the model the parameters. Ms. Schuster said that when the Committee got to the point of looking at the map, that the Agricultural Protection Areas and the Sensitive Aquifer Recharge map would guide the Committee's decisions and give the Committee direction.

Ms. McCann began a discussion about farmland with the Committee. She provided the Committee with some numbers on the acreage of land in farming in McHenry County (215,000 acres being farmed). She said that the County had the equivalent of 9 ½ townships of farmland. She questioned the objectives on page 29 of the Draft 2030 Plan that discussed the most productive farmland where appropriate.

Mr. Eldridge responded saying that there are certain areas in the County with very productive farmland and that the RPC did the best job it could in protecting those areas. He pointed out that there are some areas near municipalities, such as east of Richmond that the RPC did not identify for protection because it is very likely that those areas will be incorporated and developed. Protecting large, contiguous areas was the goal of the RPC.

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The committee then began a discussion of other areas of the County where it might not be practical to preserve farmland (specifically the area near Rt. 23 and I-90). As the committee began to discuss the objectives, Chairwoman Hill asked the committee to discuss the policies, NOT the text of the plan.

Ms. McCann questioned some of the statistical information contained on page 31.

Mr. Munaretto asked about the first policy statement on page 38 regarding right to farm legislation. Mr. Eldridge explained that "right to farm" basically provides that if the farm is there first, development that comes later cannot object to the farm being there. Mr. Munaretto inquired if this was part of agricultural preservation, to which Mr. Eldridge replied yes, but that more state legislation was needed to enhance the protection of the agricultural use, so the RPC could only "encourage" legislation. Mr. Dreher offered that right to farm should apply anywhere there is farming. Chairwoman Hill pointed out that there is conflict between agricultural uses and residential uses. Mr. Munaretto pointed out that "preserving farmland" sometimes costs money, and, as policy statement number 5 provides, the County might have to raise taxes to accomplish that goal, and nobody wants to have their taxes increased. Mrs. Schuster offered that "right to farm" does not always succeed. She told the story of a subdivision that was approved near a feeder lot and that the farmer was so harassed by the subdivision that he ceased operations and the County did nothing to assist the farmer. Ms. Donner pointed out that in the "Imagine McHenry County" survey, the "rural character" of McHenry County was highly valued by the participants that were polled. Ms. Schuster opined that the Ag Map might be misleading because there is a lot of productive farmland not identified. Ms. Bergen Schmidt said that people might be open to raising taxes for the right reasons. She said to leave policy statements 1 and 5 in the plan and ask the County's lobbyist for assistance in obtaining funding to pursue those policies. Mr. Eldridge said that in areas where agriculture was under heavy development pressure these strategies would be especially useful.

Ms. McCann believes that the conflicts between residential and agricultural uses could be addressed through a nuisance ordinance. She said that she agreed with Mr. Munaretto that nobody wanted to raise taxes and offered that farmland is less of a burden on taxing bodies than all other types of development. Mr. Dreher offered that the policy was based on other progressive plans that he has read.

Ms. Schuster asked about page 38, policy statement number 2, "...an LE score of 80 or greater and contiguous with other such parcels..." and wondered if the "contiguous" was necessary. Mr. Eldridge said this was necessary because of the dichotomy between the eastern and western portions of the County. Ms. Schuster asked if it might be appropriate to take "contiguous" out. Mr. Dreher referred her to the map on page 34 which was the guiding light for the RPC when creating this particular policy. He further elaborated that this policy did not mean to NOT protect the other areas of the county. Mr. Eldridge said they wanted to stress contiguous because it was economically viable and easier to protect. Mr. Dreher also pointed out that policy statement number 8 reinforces number 2. Ms. Schuster asked to revisit this particular issue at a future date.

Mr. Munaretto asked as to what policy statement number 19 on page 38 refers to. Mr. Dreher said that they are incentive programs from the state and the federal government. Mr. Sandquist said that more information about these programs is available on page 36.

Ms. Schuster asked if the County was going to go into the wind turbine business based on policy statement number 18. Mr. Dreher offered that these incentives were for private land owners, not the County. Ms. Schuster asked that this be rewritten or rephrased to make the intent clear.

Ms. Schuster then asked if policy statement number 14 was too much micromanaging. She said that we cannot afford this. It needs to be rewritten or taken out.

Chairwoman Hill asked the committee if they would like to conduct an "overview" of the plan or make specific changes to specific sections. The committee agreed to continue with an "overview".

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Mr. Dreher began a discussion of the Greenways, Open Space and Natural Resources chapter of the 2030 Plan. He said that the County has unique features that need to be protected with various controls and regulations, and, possibly in the future, an open space plan/green plan. He said that 5% of McHenry County land is protected. Mr. Eldridge said the goal of the 2030 Plan is 15% per capita, not 10% per as it is in other counties and that the RPC wanted to stress interconnection between areas. He also noted that the RPC did not provide a special designation for woodlands, because the RPC wanted to protect them as well.

Chairwoman Hill question page 47 and asked about protecting McNAI sites, particularly one near Richmond. Mr. Dreher responded, saying that the particular site Chairwoman Hill was referencing is incorporated, and while the RPC still wants it protected, the County does not have the ability to do so because of jurisdictional considerations. Mr. Eldridge told the Committee that the site in question was already zoned for development. Mr. Dreher offered that it might work as some type of a preserve. Mr. Eldridge said that most of the money is from the Federal government and it is the biggest project the Department of the Interior has done in 30 years and that the annexation agreement for the property says that 60% of the property must remain in open space.

Mr. Munaretto question why Richmond would end at FPA 420. Mr. Dreher said that the RPC had discussed this at length. Mr. Eldridge said that Richmond wanted to leave that area as agricultural, because the Village has 500 fully developed, but not yet built, residential lots. Mr. Munaretto wonder if by leaving it agricultural was the County sending the message that it didn't want that land developed. Mr. Eldridge said that if HACMATAK goes forward then YES. If it does not, then NO.

Mr. Munaretto expressed strong feelings about "require" in some policy statements, which he believed were to severe. He said that "promote or encourage" would be better than "demand or require". Mr. Dreher explained that the County already engages in many of these activities, and that the goal here is to get ALL units of government, particularly the municipalities, to follow these practices, not just the County. Mr. Munaretto said that the 2030 Plan is not the place to do that, but rather do it through ordinances. Ms. Schuster said that the Committee should soften the language in some of these. Ms. Donner pointed out that the statements simply put other people on notice that "we (the County) do this already and will continue to do this". Mr. Munaretto asked that the language be revisited. Ms. Bergen-Schmidt said that there was no problem with the language because it shows that the County is serious.

Mr. Munaretto asked about policy statement number 13's comment about dedication and acquisition. Mr. Eldridge explained that the County would be the facilitator; other agencies would do the purchasing. Ms. Schietzelt agreed with Mr. Eldridge. Mr. Munaretto wonder if "encourage" would be better.

Ms. Schuster questioned policy statement number 14's reference to "locate and plan" and wondered if that was too much micromanaging. Mr. Munaretto said he disagreed with that statement and that the County needed to identify these areas and protect them and added that the Committee gave the RPC instructions to do this. Mr. Dreher added that he agreed with Mr. Munaretto and that through the Land First amendment to the Subdivision Ordinance, this would apply to many developments. Ms. Schuster asked that the Committee revisit this issue.

Mr. Munaretto commented on the items on page 58 observing that the County might not be the best agency for these recommendations. Mr. Dreher said that the County could be the facilitator like in Boone and Winnebago and pointed out that the County itself would not have to do policy statement number 26. Mr. Munaretto said that he still believed that the County was not the appropriate entity to for this type of work. Mr. Dreher said the County could act akin to a regional facilitator, much like CMAP operates in northern Illinois. Mr. Munaretto asked if specific parcels would be indentified. Mr. Dreher said no, the plans are not parcel specific. Mr. Munaretto then asked if these would be requirements, and Mr. Dreher responded saying no, these are not regulatory documents and have no regulatory basis. Mr. Eldridge offered that these were hopes and dreams and ideal world situations. Ms. Schuster asked that the Committee come back to numbers 26, 23, and 33.

The Committee decided to come back to the Water Resources when Ms. McCann and Ms. McKinney returned from the Natural and Environmental Resources Committee meeting.

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Chairwoman Hill moved the discussion to Economic Development beginning on page 87. Mr. Eldridge said McHenry County has a large commuter population (one of the highest in the Country) and that there is a mismatch between the types of jobs available in the County and the skill set of the people that live here. Land is needed for not just the new population but for the existing population to help find jobs closer to home. This would also help to reduce wear and tear on the existing infrastructure, primarily the roads. He also said that there should be a focus on office, research and industrial, NOT retail. Retail ought to occur in the municipalities. The County might see some corporate campuses, but most of the development will occur in the incorporated areas. Mr. Dreher explained that the RPC tried to minimize intensive land uses in sensitive water recharge areas. Following best management practices and limiting the footprint of certain types of development to only 50% coverage are some of the ways to achieve this. Mr. Eldridge added that there were certain uses that would be more desirable, like a corporate campus.

Mr. Eldridge said that there was little land in the municipalities for industrial/office uses and that there was very little bigger than 5 acres available for that use. Mr. Eldridge pointed out that uses like these are in the township and municipal plans. Mr. Munaretto offered that 3,000 acres near Rt. 23 and I-90 is already owned by developers. Mr. Dreher said that part of the RPC's goal was job creation. He indicated that you can create approximately 30 jobs per acre and that RPC's plan has approximately 7,000 acres available. Mr. Eldridge pointed out that some of the land set aside for economic development purposes was optimistic in nature and that much development will happen in the municipalities and that much of it will occur closer to the year 2030. Only a modest amount will occur in the next 5-10 years.

Ms. Schuster inquired about redevelopment and the committee began a brief discussion on the topic. Mr. Munaretto said that an inventory of existing industrial buildings throughout McHenry County is non-existent.

Mr. Munaretto then began a discussion about page 87 in the Economic Development chapter. He suggested changing "quality jobs" to "primary jobs". He also suggested revisiting this section as information about sustainable housing for the workforce is in need of being addressed, as it the "equalized assessed value" for property taxes.

Ms. Schuster questioned the inclusion of "regional facilities" on page 97. Mr. Eldridge said these facilities might act like those in Lake County and other areas in the metro region. They are basically regional water and sewer facilities. Mr. Dreher offered that the County might not necessarily be the agency responsible for such facilities, but that it might be more efficient if it was the County. Ms. Schuster asked to revisit this issue.

Ms. Schuster questioned the word "reserve" in policy statement number one on page 98. Mr. Eldridge said the intent was to keep residential development out of agricultural areas until/unless it is needed for commercial/industrial uses. Ms. Schuster wondered how this could be accomplished. Mr. Dreher said that the purpose of the plan was to provide such guidance.

Ms. Schuster questioned the meaning behind policy statement number three on page 98 and recommended that the Committee revisit this and that it be rephrased. Mr. Munaretto said that transportation is a limiting factor for business development in McHenry County. He asked if these particular policy statements had been vetted by the McHenry County Division of Transportation. Mr. Dreher responded affirmatively. The Committee asked that a representative from MCDOT be present to further this discussion.

The Committee then discussed their upcoming meeting schedule. After a discussion it was left that Chairwoman Hill would be contacting Committee members about their availability and that she would like to have at least one evening meeting to accommodate members of the public.

REPORTS TO COMMITTEE, AS APPLICABLE:

Regional Planning Commission: As discussed above.

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning: None

Community Development Block Grant Commission: None.

MISCELLANEOUS: None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Schuster made a motion, seconded by Ms. Donner, to adjourn at 10:34 a.m. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

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RECOMMENDED FOR BOARD ACTION: