

MINUTES
McLEAN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2011, 4:00 P.M.
GOVERNMENT CENTER, ROOM 404
115 EAST WASHINGTON STREET, BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS

Members Present:

Carl Teichman, Chairman; George Benjamin, Vice-chair; Joe Butcher, Bill Doud, Mary Jefferson, Jhun Medina, Linda Olson, Jay Reece, Tari Renner, Tim Strader

Members Absent:

None

Others Present:

McLean County Regional Planning Commission: Paul Russell, Executive Director; Rick Nolan, Community Planner; Jennifer Sicks, Transportation Planner; Teresa Casselman, Office Manager.
McLean County: Mike Behary, County Planner. Town of Normal: Mercy Davison, Town Planner. City of Bloomington: Mark Woolard, City Planner.

Call To Order:

Mr. Teichman called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum.

Consent Agenda:

No requests for removal of items from the consent agenda were made. Mr. Renner moved that the Consent Agenda be approved as presented. Ms. Jefferson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Regular Agenda:

Consistency Review - Lauher Annexation

Mr. Woolard described the project, which was a request for annexation and rezoning for a 15-acre tract located on Six Points Road. He reported the applicants requested subdividing the tract into four lots and requested R1A zoning. He indicated the request was consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and there was little public comment at the public hearing.

Mr. Renner asked about the purpose of the annexation. Mr. Woolard replied the applicants want City water services. Mr. Renner asked if at some point the City would be obligated to provide sewer services. Mr. Woolard indicated if the sewer connection was close, the City sometimes requires the owner to connect to sewer, but that was not the case with this property.

Mr. Benjamin asked if there was a regulation on lot size. Mr. Woolard indicated that the R1A zoning required a minimum lot size of 22,500 square feet and 125 feet of lot width.

Mr. Renner moved the project be approved. Mr. Medina seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Consistency Review - Calvary Baptist Church Daycare

Ms. Davison described the project, which is located at the northwest corner of the School Street and Summit Street intersection. The Calvary Baptist Church was proposing a day care facility and proposing a new access off Summit Street. They would maintain their other access points and expand their parking lot.

Ms. Davison said the project was approved in a lengthy public hearing. She indicated the council approved the project, conditioned upon the Town staff reevaluating the traffic situation on Summit and School Streets and reporting back to the zoning board in May, 2012. Mr. Renner asked for more details about the condition. Ms. Davison indicated that if problems are found at that time, the Town could close certain access points at certain times of the day.

Ms. Jefferson moved the project be approved. Ms. Olson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Items of Information or Discussion:

Collateralization of Commission Assets

Ms. Casselman reported she had met with bank representatives to discuss the collateralization of our bank balance over the FDIC insurance limit. She indicated they provided information about a collateralization process, where funds over the FDIC insurance limit would be used to purchase U.S. Treasuries on a daily basis. She indicated there was a charge that currently exceeded interest earned on the account, and suggested an alternate solution of depositing \$250,000 into two downtown banks, thereby insuring the funds through FDIC.

Mr. Benjamin asked if the money would be put into money markets. Ms. Casselman indicated it could be put into short-term investments. Mr. Teichman asked how the decision would be made. Mr. Russell indicated staff wanted the Commission members to be aware of the options, and asked if there were other ideas to consider. Mr. Reece asked if there would be any benefit to combining Commission funds with other municipal funds to leverage a better interest rate. Mr. Russell indicated that had not been considered.

Mr. Benjamin indicated he thought depositing into other banks was appropriate. Mr. Teichman said he would like the Commission to reevaluate the situation in three to six months.

Update on April 13 Information Forum

Mr. Nolan indicated over 500 invitations have been sent, and responses are currently being received. He reminded the Commission members that the Central Illinois Regional Airport is partnering to bring the speaker to the forum this year, and will be publicizing the event on the radio and their website.

Article from Planning Magazine "Sarasota's Smart Growth Dividend"

Mr. Russell commented the article reported on a method of comparing property tax revenues on a per acre basis, and the findings demonstrate how more dense, mixed-use development produces greater property tax revenues per acre than other types of development.

He said the article also pointed out that denser development usually requires lower public investment, and that denser development is needed to sustain lower intensity uses like single family homes, which require about 15 percent more in public costs than the revenue they produce.

The article also reported that in Sarasota, the Walmart store produced only slightly more property tax revenue per acre than the average single family home in that city and that one of the existing mixed-use developments produced 142 times the property tax revenue of the Walmart on a per-acre basis.

Mr. Russell reported that one of the conclusions reached was that tools such as this will become an increasingly important part of the decision-making process for communities as the need for greater economic sustainability becomes more critical.

Mr. Renner asked if there has been a serious consideration in McLean County to an urban services boundary. Mr. Russell indicated the Comprehensive Plan has identified an urban services boundary as an alternative strategy, but it has never been actively pursued. He said the annexation agreements serve as a component of an urban services boundary by requiring developments to be annexed into the community as a condition for receiving urban services.

Ms. Olson said the research that accompanies the articles is very interesting, and asked if that information was shared with the local governmental bodies. Mr. Russell responded that these issues are addressed in the local comprehensive plans, and the county administrator and city managers receive a copy of the Commission packet. He added the purpose of the information forum was to educate about planning issues.

Ms. Olson asked for more details about the urban services boundary mentioned by Mr. Renner. Mr. Renner indicated the boundary would direct future development inside the boundary and encourage infill and redevelopment of blighted areas within the boundary. Ms. Olson asked if there was a time when the boundary would not be reevaluated and redrawn to include additional land. Mr. Russell indicated the boundary included an estimate of the amount of land requiring services in a period of time. Mr. Renner opined that an urban services boundary would prevent large expenditures to provide urban services to projects such as the Grove at taxpayers' expense. Mr. Doud disagreed and said there are factors that influence where development is located and there were reasons for locating the Grove in its location. Mr. Doud added the fact that 170 homes have been built in the last three years in a difficult economic climate speaks to the need for the subdivision.

Winter 2011 issue of Planning Commissioners Journal

Mr. Russell reported the issue included a couple of articles on community asset mapping, which was a topic introduced in the previous issue. He indicated there was also an article by Ed McMahan on the case for controlling billboards, an article that described principles for creating great community places, one on some of the issues related to urban growth boundaries, and articles on good practices for planning commissioners.

The issue also included an article on the changing American dream and how it will affect planning, in which the author contends the recent housing crisis will have a lasting impact on people's ability and desire to own their own homes and in particular larger sprawling ones. The author indicates this is due to changing demographics, along with higher prices and lower returns due to lower appreciation rates. According to the author, this will create greater demands for smaller homes and rental units. The author concludes that planners should encourage elements of smart growth and new urbanism, such as reducing lot-size minimums, permitting accessory dwelling units, and allowing subdivision of larger homes into duplexes or apartments. The author also states planners should more widely allow apartments and other dwellings that increase densities and intensify efforts to make homes more affordable through such mechanisms as inclusionary housing, where new development is required to include a certain portion of affordable units.

Mr. Teichman asked Mr. Doud if he was seeing any changes in terms of local demands for housing. Mr. Doud responded that people are starting to look at smaller, more affordable housing, and are interested

in sustainability of cost, including utility and property tax expenses. Mr. Teichman asked what housing prices were considered affordable. Mr. Doud estimated, considering the median incomes locally, that would be in the \$150,000 to \$170,000 range. He added most new construction would exceed that range, and new construction targeting first- and last-time home buyers would be smaller in size and cost approximately \$200,000 to \$250,000.

Mr. Doud said the opinion this is a lasting trend is unproven, and in the past, housing sizes and prices have rebounded following economic downturns. He reiterated the current market is for smaller, more compact housing.

Adjournment:

Mr. Butcher moved for adjournment. Mr. Renner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Teresa Casselman
Office Manager