

**MINUTES**  
**McLEAN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**REGULAR MEETING, WEDNESDAY, MAY 5, 2010, 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, Mary Jefferson, Jhun Medina, Linda Olson, Jay Reece, Tari Renner

**Members Absent:**

Bill Doud, Neale McCormick

**Others Present:**

McLean County Regional Planning Commission: Paul Russell, Executive Director; Teresa Casselman, Office Manager. City of Bloomington: Steve Stockton, Mayor; Mark Woolard, City Planner. McLean County: Mike Behary, County Planner. The Pantagraph: M. K. Guetersloh.

**Call To Order:**

Mr. Teichman called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. He welcomed Linda Olson as a new Commission member representing the County and reported the resignation of Shane Rutherford.

**Presentation by Mayor Steve Stockton:**

Mr. Teichman introduced Mayor Stockton, who updated the Commission on three items of planning interest.

West Side Rail Yards

Mayor Stockton reported that the 40-acre tract on the west side has been unused for decades. The property has changed hands several times, and the current owner has indicated difficulty in marketing the brownfield property. Mayor Stockton indicated the City has been given access to environmental and engineering studies that had been conducted for the owners. He indicated the land can be used for some types of development, but some restrictions exist because of environmental concerns.

Mayor Stockton reported the high-speed rail industry needs a location to build rolling stock in this country. He indicated he didn't know if the tract was adequate for a manufacturing facility, but it is located on a high-speed rail line and it has an interesting historical connection with George Pullman.

Mayor Stockton said he thought development of this tract had much potential for revitalizing the west side, with potential for job creation, community facilities, and housing.

Tri-County Discussion

Mayor Stockton reported that he and Mr. Russell had met in Peoria with several central-Illinois mayors and the director of Tri-County Regional Planning Commission. The subject of discussion was rail service for Peoria. Mayor Stockton indicated that Bloomington-Normal was fortunate for its location on a

railroad offering high-speed service between Chicago and St. Louis. He indicated high-speed rail service is not financially feasible between Chicago and all downstate communities, but communities off the main high-speed route could be serviced with rail or possibly bus service. Illinois and eight other states have a federal agreement for a high-speed Chicago to St. Louis route. Mayor Stockton indicated Peoria officials would like to investigate ways to improve transportation between Peoria and Bloomington-Normal. Discussion ensued about transportation between Bloomington-Normal and other Illinois communities.

### High Speed Rail in Illinois

Mayor Stockton advised that high-speed rail funding had been approved for California, Florida, and Illinois from Chicago to St. Louis. The grant includes funding for single track replacement, a new signal system, new locomotives, and some grade crossing improvements. By 2012, two of five trains will be high speed.

### **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. Mr. Butcher seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

### **Regular Agenda:**

#### Proposed Fiscal Year 2011 Unified Work Program and Budget

Mr. Russell advised the Commission members that the Unified Work Program was one of the tasks required by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) each year. He indicated the work program included a listing of the projects and activities planned for the coming year, as well as the staff and funding required, a line item budget, and a breakdown of the costs for use in preparing the contract with IDOT.

Mr. Russell noted that the work program identified three new projects in addition to ongoing work: a digital update of the countywide natural resources inventory, an update of the Long Range Transportation Plan for the urban area, and a transit ridership survey which is completed every three years for the Bloomington-Normal Public Transit System.

Mr. Russell reported the proposed budget for FY11 was comparable to the current budget, with salaries lower due to the salary freeze. The largest remaining expense items after salaries were primarily GIS related for equipment, software, support and training.

Mr. Russell reported that IDOT was expected to continue to be the primary funder and overall funding was about the same as the current fiscal year. The regional service requests from Bloomington, Normal, and the County were limited to the local match required to receive the IDOT funds, and Commission reserves would be used for approximately \$27,000.

Mr. Russell advised that the Unified Work Program had been recommended for approval by the Commission's Executive Committee on April 22, and would be considered by the Transportation Technical and Policy Committees in the coming weeks. Mr. Russell recommended approval, contingent upon approval by the Transportation Policy committee and acceptance by IDOT and the Federal Highway Administration.

Ms. Jefferson moved to approve the FY2011 Unified Work Program and budget. The motion was seconded by Mr. Renner and passed unanimously.

## **Items of Information or Discussion:**

### Feedback on Information Forum

Mr. Russell reported he had received positive feedback regarding the speaker and venue. He reported 135 people had registered. There were a few no-shows and some walk-ins, so an exact attendance figure was not available, but he reported the attendance was among the highest of any information forum. He reported the Executive Committee had provided some ideas for next year and Mr. Nolan had begun researching some possible speakers as well.

Mr. Reece stated he thought this year's presenter was entertaining and interesting, and suggested a similar style speaker for next year. Mr. Teichman noted Carmel was using a form-based code, although they are calling it Smart Code.

### Spring 2010 issue of *Planning Commissioners Journal*

Mr. Russell said the feature topic of the issue was housing and expected changes in housing in the future. The authors noted that due to changing demographics and consumer preferences, future demand is moving towards smaller, more affordable and more energy-efficient homes with shorter commutes and greater access to public transportation. One author stated that planners should take the time to rethink the housing plans for their communities and emphasize infill, reuse, and redevelopment, as well as higher densities and public transit. The same idea was supported in other articles citing marketing and demographic studies. Mr. Russell indicated the author of one of the articles was Ed McMahon, who was a guest speaker at a local greenways conference and a speaker the Commission might want to consider for a future information forum.

Mr. Teichman commented there are areas in the community that would benefit from redevelopment and infill. Mr. Renner asked Mr. Russell about the concept of differential property tax rates based on types and conditions of properties. Mr. Russell said he was familiar with tax schemes such as tax base sharing, but wasn't familiar with differential property tax rates. He indicated in the state of Wyoming the sales taxes were redistributed on the basis of population, regardless of the business location.

### **Adjournment:**

Mr. Butcher moved for adjournment. Mr. Renner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

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Teresa Casselman  
Office Manager