

MINUTES
McLEAN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2006, 4:00 P.M.
GOVERNMENT CENTER, ROOM 404
115 EAST WASHINGTON STREET, BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS

Members Present:

Don Fernandes, Chair; Scott Lay, Vice Chair; Bernard Anderson, Chris Brauer, Erin Elder, John Hanson, Mark Klinger, Shane Rutherford, Carl Teichman.

Members Absent:

Jeff Kowalczyk, Joe Underwood

Others Present:

McLean County Regional Planning Commission: Paul Russell, Executive Director; Jennifer Sicks, Transportation Planner; Rick Nolan, Community Planner; Teresa Casselman, Office Manager; City of Bloomington: Ken Emmons, City Planner. WJBC: Kevin Hankis. McLean County Farm Bureau: Linda Olson.

Call To Order:

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chairman Fernandes.

Consent Agenda:

Mr. Lay asked for a comment regarding the consistency review of the Empire Business Park Subdivision. Mr. Russell responded that the project consisted of approximately 123 acres of primarily commercial development which was consistent with the proposed land use of the Bloomington Comprehensive Plan. The project met all minimal features and provided a few optional features, which resulted in a C rating. Mr. Klinger moved to approve the consent agenda. Ms. Brauer seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Regular Agenda:

None

Items of Information or Discussion:

Draft Town of Normal Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Russell presented a brief summary of the preliminary Town of Normal Comprehensive Plan, which is currently under consideration by the Town of Normal. He indicated that the purpose of the plan is to guide decisions about the future development of the Town. In addition, the plan is used as a basis for review of development projects. Mr. Russell indicated that the plan includes development goals, objectives and policies, and a long-range plan for land use, transportation, community facilities, and implementation. The report summarizes physical features, historical development, population, and economic growth trends, and provides a population projection increase from 50,438 in 2005 to 62,300 in the year 2025. The plan estimates this growth will require over 4,900 new housing units and over 4,000 additional acres. Mr. Russell indicated that most growth is expected to occur around the edges of the Town, with a small amount of infill and redevelopment. Mr. Hanson asked how the population

projections are arrived at. Mr. Russell responded that past population trends are used, along with assumptions about the future regarding employment and migration levels.

The long range development plan recommends efficient use of land and infrastructure by providing for compact and contiguous development, identifies target planning areas within the interior of the Town for more detailed planning, designates future greenways which use flood plains and drainage ways to provide green space linkages, provides for mixed use neighborhoods, which are pedestrian and bicycle friendly, and designates mixed density areas to serve as buffers between neighborhood centers and lower density residential uses.

Mr. Russell described proposed land uses and identified their locations on the Land Use Plan, including mixed density and low density residential, regional commercial, highway commercial, industrial, corporate office, and public and semi-public uses. He described the transportation plan, which provides for extension of major streets, identifies an East Side Highway development corridor, and incorporates the recommendations of the Transit System's 2003 Needs Assessment for expansion and service enhancements.

Mr. Russell indicated that schools are discussed in the Community Facilities Plan because of their impact on residential development and the need for services. The plan for parks and trails was coordinated with the Town's Parks and Recreation Plan, and included two community parks and a series of neighborhood parks to serve developing neighborhoods. A new fire station is proposed to serve growth to the east. Enhancements to the downtown library are proposed as well as branch libraries in planned neighborhood centers. The plan for the water system includes the extension of service to growth areas and cooperation with area governments for the development of a regional water system. The plan supports extension of sewer service to areas of planned growth, and an increased use of natural methods of stormwater management. The comprehensive plan outlines implementation strategies and follow-up actions needed to help carry out the plan.

Mr. Fernandes asked if the plan addressed the Main Street Corridor. Mr. Russell responded that it was one of the six target areas identified for additional study.

Mr. Lay stated his opinion that the population projection was conservative. He also asked that the neighborhood center concept be explained. Mr. Russell responded that the neighborhood centers were intended to promote more pedestrian and bicycle friendly commercial development, with parking in the rear, bicycle racks, and an attractive streetscape which was inviting to pedestrians. The centers would consist of mixed use developments with first floor retail and offices, and residential uses above. The surrounding neighborhoods would be of higher density to encourage walking to the centers. Mr. Lay indicated that the concept was good, but asked how developers would be encouraged to build the neighborhood centers, as they are a departure from conventional development. Mr. Russell pointed out the recent TND ordinances make this type of development possible. He also added that education is an important component and there must be the political will behind it, since developer interest is slow in happening. Mr. Hanson stated that when the right demographic mix is present, this type of development can be popular.

Article from January 2006 issue of Successes in Stewardship

Mr. Russell reported the article had been provided by Ms. Brauer and discussed Context Sensitive Solutions, which is an alternative to traditional engineering design that considers the total context of the transportation project. The approach also involves all stakeholders early in the process. The article identified available information resources. Ms. Brauer added that she has been interested in the approach to designing transportation projects, which gives the public more input into the process.

Article from December 2005 issue of New Urban News

Mr. Fernandes stated that the article, which discussed the redevelopment design of communities after recent hurricanes, was interesting since Commissioners had mentioned previously the opportunities the hurricane destruction creates. Ms. Brauer added she was interested in the discussion of whether or not to rebuild in the present location, and the dilemma of rebuilding in the present location and putting the development at risk of destruction in the future. Mr. Russell added that the speaker scheduled for the upcoming forum, William Hudnut, was among the designers in the redevelopment process.

Information Forum

Mr. Nolan indicated that the travel arrangements for Mr. Hudnut had been confirmed, an invitation was being printed and would be mailed to approximately 1,000 addresses. Mr. Nolan also indicated that Mr. Hudnut was looking forward to this opportunity. Mr. Russell also added that, although time was limited, he planned to invite Mr. Hudnut to a meeting with community leaders and give him a tour of the community.

Adjournment:

Mr. Teichman moved the meeting be adjourned. Ms. Brauer seconded the motion, and the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Teresa Casselman
Office Manager