

MINUTES
McLEAN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2007, 4:00 P.M.
GOVERNMENT CENTER, ROOM 404
115 EAST WASHINGTON STREET, BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS

Members Present:

Don Fernandes, Chair; Christine Brauer, Vice-Chair; Bernard Anderson, George Benjamin, Joseph Butcher, Mark Klingler, Jeff Kowalczyk, Jay Reece, Shane Rutherford, Carl Teichman

Members Absent:

Mary Jefferson

Others Present:

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

Call To Order:

Mr. Fernandes called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Officer Elections for Calendar Year 2008:

Mr. Fernandes announced that Ms. Brauer had declined the nomination for Chairman. Ms. Casselman tallied the ballots cast, and announced Mr. Anderson had been elected Chairman and Mr. Teichman had been elected Vice-Chairman.

Consent Agenda:

Mr. Fernandes asked if any Commission members wished to remove items from the consent agenda; no requests for removal were made. Mr. Butcher moved that the Consent Agenda be approved as presented. Mr. Teichman seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Regular Agenda:

Consistency Reviews

Unit 5 Middle School and Shirk Rezoning - Mr. Potts presented the consistency review for the two projects, which consisted of a land swap. Unit 5 School District traded a 25-acre tract that was too small for a middle school for a 40-acre tract, with additional land being available for a high school site. Mr. Potts indicated there had been some concern expressed about the school site by farmers in the area, but the project was consistent with the comprehensive plan.

Mr. Reece indicated he would recuse himself from a vote on the issue, but announced the Unit 5 Board would be hosting an informational meeting on the project the same night at the Bloomington City Hall. Mr. Anderson asked about the project's proximity to Towanda-Barnes Road, and a short discussion of roads in the area ensued. Mr. Butcher moved the consistency reviews be accepted. Ms. Brauer seconded the motion; motion passed, with Mr. Reece abstaining from voting.

Proposed Update of Employee Handbook

Mr. Russell indicated the Commission's employee handbook was patterned from the county's, and was periodically updated. He indicated the changes in the handbook were relatively minor and consisted of a previously adopted change to the mission statement, removal of a reference to a specific mileage reimbursement rate, addition of a section regarding notice of leaving employment, and a deletion of a salary schedule in the text to be replaced in the appendix.

Mr. Reece inquired if legal advice had been obtained regarding the employee handbook and its changes. Mr. Russell responded that the handbook was very similar to the county's and was originally reviewed by the executive committee and county legal counsel. Mr. Reece indicated the disclosure of salaries was unusual and could be considered a contractual requirement. Mr. Klinger asked if the salary schedule changed regularly. Mr. Russell indicated it changed with cost of living adjustments, usually annually.

Mr. Fernandes explained the pay schedules were adopted from the county because they provide the services for the Commission's payroll, as well as provide structure to the merit increase process. Mr. Russell added that the schedules are public information and available to individuals. Mr. Russell asked Mr. Reece if he thought the inclusion of salary schedules presented a problem. Mr. Reece indicated he thought the information should be omitted if it wasn't needed in the employee handbook and requested input from other staff. Ms. Sicks advised employees' salaries can be derived from the Unified Work Program, which is a public document and available to both employees and the public. Mr. Kowalczyk indicated he thought the information should be included as it provided a means for the employees to compare job classifications. Mr. Fernandes clarified that the Commission's positions are unique and can't be directly compared to those of the county. Mr. Fernandes asked if the Commission members wanted to proceed by adopting all or some of the amendments, or tabling the decision until the next meeting. It was the consensus to table the decision until the next meeting.

Items of Information or Discussion:

GIS Staff Report

Mr. Hasan provided an update on the recent GIS Day. He indicated it was successful, with good attendance, including two County Board members, students, and local businesses, and received good press coverage as well. Mr. Russell noted Illinois State University had GIS Day activities at the same time, and a joint program with the university will be coordinated next year.

Mr. Hasan also reported the Executive Committee had recently approved a backup storage solution to archive, maintain, and protect the GIS data. He indicated a 36-month lease had been approved. Mr. Anderson asked if the storage would be on-site. Mr. Hasan responded that the storage would be located in the county server room, but tape backups would be housed off-site.

Urban Land article entitled *Some Good, Healthy Growth*

Mr. Russell provided an overview of the article *Some Good, Healthy Growth*, which had been written by a previous Information Forum speaker, Mr. Hudnut, about the growth in the Las Vegas region, which was the home of the upcoming Information Forum speaker, Mr. Montandon. He indicated of particular interest were the public policies identified to help sustain high-quality growth including establishing design guidelines, ending people's fears of higher density, putting infrastructure in place before development starts, anticipating climate change by developing water conservation measures, ensuring an adequate supply of affordable housing, developing rail connections between satellite cities and the urban core, and working to achieve regional cooperation.

Ms. Brauer indicated it was interesting to hear proactive ways to plan in front of development. She noted the higher cost of developments farther out, and indicated impact fees can provide relief for taxpayers. Mr. Anderson noted developers seem to prefer sprawl, while farmers and others often prefer more compact growth. Ms. Brauer said she would like more dialogue and education about impact fees. Mr. Russell indicated the topic could be the focus of a newsletter or information forum. Mr. Fernandes noted that growth is good, but someone has to pay the taxing bodies, and developers need to share in the costs to ease the burden on the community. Mr. Reece indicated the problem has been one the community has faced for a long time, and Normal had begun responding to the problem. He added Normal's impact fees were small but a start in the right direction, and needed to be more substantial to pay for schools. Mr. Russell reported that at the time the subdivision ordinances were being coordinated, the Naperville ordinance had been used as a model. Mr. Reece also noted developers want elementary schools in residential subdivisions, but middle and high schools are less desirable.

January, 2008 Commission Meeting

Mr. Fernandes advised the January meeting has historically been a slow time, and no agenda items had been identified by Mr. Russell. Mr. Anderson moved the January meeting be canceled; Mr. Teichman seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Adjournment:

The Commission was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Teresa Casselman
Office Manager