

McHenry County Regional Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
January 29, 2009

Members Present: Chairman Charlie Eldredge, Dennis Dreher, Nancy Schietzelt, Craig Hubert, Jim McNutt, Jerry Davenport, Bill Swenson, Frank Harrison, Mike Rein, Jim Heisler and Ron Bauman

Members Absent: RB Thompson and Jeremy Shaw

Staff Present: Dennis Sandquist, Maryanne Wanaski, Sean Foley and Cindy Sassaman

Also Present: Kathleen Bergan Schmidt and Ersel Schuster; County Board members, Pat Kennedy, Kim Willis, Mary Lou Siedel, Colin Brown, Tom Harding, Tammy Valentine-Garza, John Darger and Emily Berendt Schmidt

Chairman Eldredge called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m.

Public Participation

Tom Harding stated his opinion regarding the urban growth boundaries that were discussed at the last meeting. Essentially, in his opinion, this is a no growth policy. The urban growth boundary concept has been around for a long time and does not work.

Kathy Bergan Schmidt, County Board member, said she read the Community Character Chapter and was disappointed. She felt that it lacks a demographic snapshot of what McHenry County is and what McHenry County will be in 2030. She would like some type of description of where we are and who we are going to be. Other issues such as schools, and quality of schools and what schools should be in 2030 were not mentioned in the section. She felt the chapter was the opinion of one or two people without any back up information.

Mary Lou Siedel, CAHMCO, was hoping to see a little more conservation in the Community Character draft.

Kim Willis agrees with Ms. Bergan Schmidt. She would like the claims in the document to be substantiated. She requested the Commission speak louder so they could be heard.

Pat Kennedy agreed with Mr. Harding's comments.

Director's Remarks

Mr. Sandquist requested a change in the order of the agenda. He asked that the timeline be discussed first and then the Houseal Lavigne Associates (HLA) memorandum be addressed second.

Ms. Wanaski informed the Commission that Mr. Thompson will be having surgery and will be out for the next 4-6 weeks.

Mr. Sandquist told the Commission the County Board is looking for a timeline for completion of the plan. The deadline is July 26th. This timeline will be provided to the County Board at their next meeting which is next week. Ms. Sandquist also reminded the Commission about the importance of working with

LEAM and determining how they will continue. He felt that after the draft chapters and the LEAM analysis there would be municipal and township review. He also mentioned that if the Commission is meeting with communities they would also be able to take the materials used for those meetings to also hold the public meetings within the same time frame. As the process progresses, staff will need to work closely and efficiently with the LEAM scenarios to complete the future land use maps. When the land use map is completed there will be a 3rd township and municipal meeting. Again, the map will be released to the public at the same time. Comments would be brought back to the Planning Commission for any revisions and then submitted to the Planning & Development Committee. They would submit the plan, with or without changes to the County Board. There would then be a public hearing, comments collected and any final revisions would then be drafted. The final version will be presented to the Planning & Development Committee and then the County Board.

Chairman Eldredge felt that having the municipal meetings and public meetings within the same week is a good idea and makes sense. Mr. Davenport agreed.

Chairman Eldredge said that for the land use map, he is aware of existing zoning that already exists that is more dense than agricultural and needs to know where those are located. He also said that the Commission needs to decide about the mile and half radius and information on existing developments in the County. Mr. Bauman suggested that the 5 and 10 acre parcels that are already zoned are on an existing map and that map could also be provided.

Mr. McNutt asked how the Commission would notify the public about the meetings. Mr. Sandquist felt that there is a lot of free publicity by using a press release.

Mr. Sandquist moved to the end of the timeline and said that he felt at the end of the process the County Board would direct the formal public hearing. Mr. Dreher made comments pertaining to the LEAM analysis and said the Commission will need to revise some of the assumptions in the scenarios. The Planning Commission should be reviewing most of the LEAM analysis independently online, however, he felt the Commission should also have another session with staff to pull together key maps or preferred scenarios. Mr. Sandquist agreed with Mr. Dreher that everyone should review LEAM online at home and then the Commission would work together as a group to discuss.

Chairman Eldredge felt that the Commission needs to allocate time between mapping and text.

Mr. Harrison said that in his opinion, the Commission is spending too much time reviewing. He said that he only has so much time to review items. He felt that the Commission was not being productive with their time. In his opinion, the writers changed too much when they re-wrote the chapters.

Mr. Hubert left the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

Mr. Sandquist reported that he met with Chairman Koehler and Mr. Austin to discuss the time the review process is taking the Commission and the amount of money that has been spent so far with HLA. If the chapters from the last meeting are reviewed tonight they could be sent on to HLA. Houseal Lavigne Associates have written a memo and proposed the Commission take a break from text and allow the writers to continue with writing the plan with direction on policy. He would hope for a final draft by the end of February or beginning of March. The Commission would then be able to review the text in a

broader brush, line by line review will not occur. It was Mr. Sandquist's opinion that this was the only way that the Commission would meet the July deadline.

Mr. Davenport asked if the subcommittees could review the HLA revisions. Mr. Sandquist felt that the Commission should put the burden on the Planning and Development staff instead of the Commission to coordinate comments. This will eliminated HLA getting multiple emails to sort through.

Ms. Schietzelt agreed with Mr. Davenport's idea, but felt that no one could give up the responsibility to approve everything in every chapter. She spent time reviewing the LEAM information and found that using the analysis section and water demand analysis was very worthwhile. She suggested that the Commission review the maps as a group.

Mr. Dreher said in the water resource chapter he agreed with many of the text changes, but his main problem was the reorganization of the policies. He suggested the subcommittees work directly with HLA to help understand some of the logic and spend time with them instead of time in a Planning Commission meeting. The work completed would come back to the Commission; there was no intention of bypassing the Commission. Mr. Sandquist said that if they would be reviewing with HLA the time would have to be divided up for each subcommittee with the budget in mind.

Mr. Sandquist asked if the new drafts that were emailed out from HLA were changed as much as the first draft. Ms. Schietzelt stated that she went through the Open Space and Natural Resource chapter and found in her section, page 3; policy #23 is the only policy that was changed. Mr. McNutt said that when they explained why something was changed it was much easier to understand. Mr. Bauman said that when the agricultural polices were submitted to HLA there were only 13 policies and in the new version there were 22 policies.

It was decided that HLA will provide the write ups to staff who will then forward those documents to the subcommittees for comments. There will be a deadline on the comments. The staff will then consolidate the subcommittee comments for HLA so they are provided one review. At the end of February the document would come back after review of the each subcommittee.

Mr. Harrison asked if edits could be shown when HLA completes the text. Mr. Davenport reported that when this was done previously it did not work very well. He felt that it was a waste of time. Mr. Sandquist felt that the standard strike through and underline tracking would be the best for tracking changes. It was decided that no tracking should be done.

It was noted that another meeting will be required after the presentation of the land use map for comments that were received. Mr. Dreher requested that this is added to the timeline.

The Commission asked if the population figures were taken to the Planning and Development Committee for comments. Ms. Wanaski reported that there was no comment by the Committee. Mr. Dreher suggested the Commission come to a consensus as to which set of population figures the Commission will be using. The Commission asked if population figures could be brought back to the Planning and Development Committee as an agenda item. The Commission will ask for formal comments from the Planning & Development Committee, MCCG and CMAP regarding population.

Mr. Dreher felt that the population review needed to occur fairly close to the review of LEAM. This would mean that population needs to be addressed rather soon.

Mr. Sandquist reviewed additions to the timeline. The water chapter will be added to the timeline; they will tweak the LEAM figures and staff will produce a short introduction chapter.

Ms. Schietzelt requested a deadline be set for reviewing LEAM. Mr. Sandquist stated that would be February 5th as long as the Commission gets through the chapters tonight. Ms. Wanaski explained that LEAM has technically fulfilled its contract. She requested the Commission look at the 16 scenarios presented by LEAM and decide which 4 scenarios need tweaking or additional information.

Mr. Sandquist will be refining the timeline based on comments and will provide Mr. Heisler information to present to the County Board.

Motion by Mr. Dreher seconded by Mr. McNutt to adopt the timeline as discussed. All Commissioners present voting aye. Motion carried.

As discussed earlier in the meeting, it was requested that a motion be made regarding the review of chapters after they are written by HLA. Motion by Mr. Swenson, seconded by Mr. Davenport to make more narrow changes of goals/policies, but it will be part of the subcommittee review on each chapter. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

Old Business

The Commission reviewed the Infrastructure Subcommittee Draft and highlighted areas for discussion based on comments by Commissioners. The Commission discussed each highlighted area and made changes based on Commissioner's suggestions.

The Commission took a break from 8:20 to 8:35 p.m.

The Commission continued review on the Infrastructure Subcommittee Draft.

Dennis Dreher suggested that the policies be reviewed by Mr. Swenson prior to submittal to HLA. When HLA returns the document it will proceed to the subcommittee prior to release to the Commission.

Motion by Mr. Davenport seconded by Mr. Swenson to send the draft to the Planning and Development Committee. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

Mr. Davenport said he was impressed with the LEAM models. He felt that there is a problem where he noticed that 6000 acres in Algonquin Township are being converted to residential use. This equates to about 36,000 people in the township. He wanted the Commission to think about this problem. Mr. Dreher asked Mr. Davenport to work with staff and point out the problems to LEAM.

The Commission meetings for February are the 1st, 3rd & 4th Thursdays.

Ms. Wanaski thanked Mr. Davenport for all the work he did for Community Character. She suggested that HLA take the information for Community Character and have them work it into a chapter/section.

Ms. Schietzelt wanted to make sure that Historic Preservation information, rural character and affordable housing information are added to the section. The Commission agreed.

Public Comment

Kim Willis asked that if the Community Character is sent to HLA are they going to develop policies. Ms. Wanaski explained that they will make suggestions. Ms. Willis also suggested the Commission concentrate on the best use of time, the meeting started 25 minutes late.

Conor Brown, McHenry County Association of Realtors, agrees with the major negatives of nuclear power. He mentioned had read about new woodshed size nuclear power plant. There will be upcoming technology. He asked that it is mentioned or clarified that future technologies might not have residential applications but possibly commercial applications. As far as the road priority list, he would like I-90 extending to 6 lanes added to the list of projects. Specifically expanding to Sandwald Road and coming from west side to Irene Road. He felt this is important because the plan reaches out to the year 2030.

Kathy Bergan Schmitt likes the idea of sending this chapter on but she asked that the Commissioners pay close attention to policies when it is returned.

Pat Kennedy strongly disagrees with the addition of the interchange at Route 23 and feels it would significantly cause growth. She likes the bikeways that Oregon has been doing for quite some time and is successful. She requested a definition of light rail. She reported that 96% of homes in northern Illinois rely on natural gas. Regarding ethanol she asked that the Commission consider cost of energy produced.

At the next meeting the Commission will spend reviewing the LEAM analysis and reviewing the remainder of the Open Space chapter.

Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Dreher, second by Mr. McNutt to adjourn the meeting. All members voting aye. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.