

DEKALB COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
September 27, 2007

The DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) met on September 27, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. in the DeKalb County Administration Building, Conference Room East, in Sycamore, Illinois. In attendance were Commission members Cheryl Aldis, Frank Altmaier, Mike Becker, Rich Gentile, Dan Godhardt, Becky Morphey, Bill Nicklas, Jerry Olson, Don Pardridge, Paul Rasmussen, Roger Steimel, and Jerry Thompson. Audience members in attendance were Herb Rubin (NIU Sociology), Greg Millburg with the DeKalb County Farm Bureau, and Laurie Curley. Staff included Paul Miller and Rebecca Von Drasek.

- 1. Roll Call** -- *Mr. Rasmussen noted that Suzanne Sedlacek and Ralph Tompkins were absent.*

Mr. Steimel brought to staff's attention that Mr. Jim Knox, the representative from Sandwich, recently passed away. Mr. Miller expressed his and staff's deepest condolences and affirmed that he would draft a proclamation for consideration by the Regional Planning Commission to express its appreciation of Mr. Knox's dedication and service.

- 2. Approval of Agenda** – *Mr. Nicklas moved to approve the agenda, which was seconded by Ms. Aldis, and the motion carried unanimously.*

- 3. Approval of Minutes** – *Mr. Pardridge moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Gentile, and the motion carried unanimously.*

Ms. Aldis questioned the validity of Larry Thomas' assertion on page 3 of the July 26, 2007 minutes that groundwater could not be altered by Illinois regulation. Ms. Aldis stated that Cortland was altering groundwater conditions and was permitted to do so by IEPA.

- 4. Regional Water Planning** - Mr. Miller briefed the Commission on the proposed water study project. Mr. Larry Thomas of Baxter Woodman and Mr. Jack Wittman of Wittman Hydro Planning forwarded a contract to commence work on a Countywide Water Resources Management Plan. The proposal specified the first steps needed before the County and municipalities could undertake more detailed and specific projects related to water planning. As was discussed at the July 26, 2007 Commission meeting, the consultants intend to gather available hydrological data (this should also identify where needed data does not exist), review applicable water law, review water planning in the surrounding region, develop a scope of work for next steps (this will include a workshop with the Commission), and make recommendations reviewing the various alternatives and costs.

Ms. Aldis asked who would maintain the data and what type of access municipalities would have to the data. Mr. Miller responded that the County would be willing to house the data and that historically the County has provided access to information free of charge to municipalities.

Mr. Nicklas stated that the intent of the study was to generate the information for the benefit of all the Commission members and their communities.

Mr. Steimel reported to the Commission that he and County Board member, Ms. Pat Vary, attended a conference on sustainable groundwater in Kane County. He reminded the Commission that the eastern townships (one-third of the County) were mapped during Kane County's study which would be very beneficial for DeKalb County. The group included members of the Illinois State Water Survey. Mr. Steimel also noted the mention at the conference that there is a draw on DeKalb's groundwater.

Mr. Miller then emphasized that the study is intended to outline possible steps for meaningful future action. Kane County, he noted, found it necessary to generate new ground water data, which in large part accounted for the two million dollar cost of its study. McHenry County, on the other hand, found that collecting available data was sufficient for its needs.

Mr. Rasmussen confirmed that the researchers would reappear before the Commission to present their findings.

Mr. Thompson optimistically extended the possibility that the researchers may find an ample water supply and then asked Mr. Steimel why Kane County had decided to expend two million dollars. Mr. Steimel replied that the population growth appeared to be the largest concern. Residential growth in Kane County is projected to double in the next 20 years.

Mr. Thompson thought the researchers had great credentials and an extensive amount of local work experience.

Mr. Nicklas reiterated that it was very advantageous for the County that Mr. Thomas and Mr. Whittman had decided to collaborate on the project.

Mr. Pardridge asked how much will future steps cost. Mr. Miller and Mr. Nicklas stated that before assessing future costs they were going to allow the researches to provide them with the initial findings.

Mr. Thompson thought this study would tell the County where it stands with water supply and confirm that those supplies are not harmed by others.

Mr. Rasmussen briefly discussed a recent conference he attended in Dubuque about Sustainable Development and the theory that housing would trend smaller as the expense of utilities and maintenance on larger homes would be costly.

Questions regarding the involvement of the 11 county group from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) were raised, however their involvement is separate from the Kane County study. It was also pointed out that Counties able to draw from Lake Michigan are not in the same predicament and have different concerns.

Mr. Steimel related additional climate examples presented at the Kane County conference that Washington D.C. was draining their reservoirs due to drought and the western part of the nation is beginning to store snow melt in reservoirs.

Ms. Aldis extended an invitation to the researchers to gather any information they can as Cortland drills its new well in October.

Mr. Becker also stated that information obtained when Kirkland dug their well, two-years ago, was available.

Mr. Thompson moved to request the County Board Chair to execute the contract on behalf of the Regional Planning Commission (RPC), seconded by Mr. Nicklas, and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Amendments to RPC Charter - Mr. Miller introduced the possible revisions to the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) Charter. He noted that the RPC was established as a cooperative organization between governmental entities that have planning and zoning authority from State law. From its inception, the RPC membership has consisted of the County and the municipalities that are entirely or partially within its boundaries. Staff was approached by the DeKalb County Farm Bureau with the idea of creating an “associate membership”. The idea is that there are other, non-governmental bodies that have a keen interest in some of the regional topics and issues that are discussed by the RPC. A request was made to amend the RPC Charter to allow associate members. Additionally some of the language of the original charter need to be updated to include the addition of the Village of Maple Park, along with a description of the Dues procedure.

Mr. Nicklas stated that the City of Sycamore supports the idea of associate memberships and felt that the Farm Bureau has a special place in the County. He added that the super majority requirement would guarantee that most members would agree on those assigned associate memberships.

Mr. Thompson felt that the RPC should identify other organizations as candidates for associate status (i.e. DeKalb County Builders and Developers) and extend membership to them as well.

Mr. Pardridge asked if there was a proposed limit on the number of associate memberships and if the membership required a special regional relationship.

Mr. Gentile suggested that prospective regional organizations could be detrimental to the discussions of the RPC and asked about the renewal of these memberships or if any type of expiration or denial process was planned.

Mr. Thompson thought specific groups would want to participate in specific conversations and espoused that the Commission should be open to hear from all sides of an issue.

Ms. Aldis felt that the voting members might lose control if they allowed other politically based special interest organizations to participate. Additionally, she felt that anyone could already present any issue to RPC by invitation, and so questioned the need for associate membership.

Mr. Rasmussen agreed with the concern about including special interests and said at least the associates would not have a vote. He expressed concern with groups with very limited interests having a significant impact on the countywide comprehensive plan.

Ms. Morphey concurred that as an open meeting various groups could already contribute without creating a political arena.

Mr. Rasmussen suggested that boarder based governmental units should be the anchor of the Regional Planning Commission and felt that by allowing in one special interest you would be allowing them all.

Mr. Nicklas pointed out that many regular public meetings have stringent time frames on public comment, and that the RPC had the opportunity to allow some additional voices into the conversation.

Mr. Thompson thought it would be beneficial to hear from various concerned organizations, to hear viewpoints and fact. He envisioned associate members only attending meetings that included their issues of interests.

Mr. Miller agreed that the RPC was intended to be a forum for communication, and opined that no one is harmed by hearing from more interested groups.

Mr. Nicklas proposed that associate membership could be subject to annual renewal, just as associate membership in the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation does at its annual meeting. Any associate member that has become disruptive can be released if necessary.

Mr. Rasmussen theorized that although the groups who have an interest in associate membership may bring in a broad number of interests they might also detract from the overall purpose of the RPC. The prospective member may hinder the process of building consensus.

Mr. Altmaier stated that the RPC group may be benefited from hearing the options of these specialized groups, i.e. the Housing Supply Report. Suggesting more ownership among members when they feel linked to various topics. Providing the agenda to the relevant organizations might be a sufficient way to include them in the RPC discussion.

Mr. Steimel suggested that a the super majority provision, three-fourths of the votes, would prevent disruptive groups from becoming associate members.

Ms. Aldis pointed out that the original requirements for members was that they were municipalities and accepting other members would detract from the original intentions. She then echoed the concern that by granting associate memberships the RPC committee might be giving credence to the associates' ideas.

Mr. Rasmussen agreed that the super majority was necessary, if associate memberships were to be allowed, and he approved of the idea that they should be reviewed annually. Mr. Rasmussen compared the prospective organizations to the recent approach by the Kishwaukee Water Authority group, and hypothesized that shell organizations may attempt to become associate members. Criteria should be created which would require prospective members to be broadly based and county-wide organization.

Mr. Altmaier stated sometime even the narrow focused organization can add value to some issues.

Mr. Nicklas made a motion to approve the charter revisions as presented, seconded by Mr. Thompson. A role call vote was requested, with four "yes", seven "no", and one abstention. The motion failed.

Ms. Aldis motioned to approve the amended text of the RPC Charter to add the Village of Maple Park and the text requiring Dues, seconded by Mr. Gentile. Role call vote was requested and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Altmaier suggested rewording the amendment on associate membership for future consideration.

Mr. Thompson praised the Commission on the thorough discussion of the issue.

Mr. Nicklas requested this item to be placed on the agenda for future discussion.

6. Change to Annexation Agreement Law - Mr. Miller summarized the newly amended municipal law regarding extra-territorial development authority via annexation agreement. The Regional Planning Commission has discussed possible legislation regarding municipal annexation law since 2005. The issue has focused on a provision that allows that a municipality may enter into an annexation agreement with the owner of a property that is not contiguous with the boundaries of the municipality, and thus cannot be annexed, and subsequently allow development to occur on that property as though it were within the municipal boundaries. There is no limit to how far from a city limits a

property can be and still have development under that city's jurisdiction. Concern was expressed that this authority has the potential to thwart regional planning efforts, and to pit municipalities against one another. State Representative Robert Pritchard worked for two years on this issue, and after a few different proposals, submitted a Bill that allows municipalities to retain the ability to allow development via an annexation agreement on properties that are not contiguous, provided those properties are within 1½ miles of the corporate limits. However, DeKalb County and others abutting the collar counties would be able, by a 2/3 majority vote of the County Board, to retain its development authority over any properties outside the 1½-mile planning jurisdictions. It should be noted that the bill would not prohibit a municipality from entering into an annexation agreement with a property outside its planning jurisdiction; it would merely prohibit that municipality from allowing development of that property until the property is within 1½ miles of the corporate limits. Further, if a municipality did want to allow development on a property that is more than 1½ miles away, it could petition the County to allow the municipality to have jurisdiction over that project, which could be granted for that project by a majority vote of the County Board.

House Bill 3597 was signed into law by Governor Blagojevich on August 14, 2007. It becomes effective on January 1, 2008.

Mr. Thompson thought it was admirable that this issue was addressed by this Commission and that it may have played some part in this legislation's success.

7. Housing Supply Report - Mr. Herbert Rubin, provided members of the Commission with draft copies of the DeKalb County Housing Action Coalition's report on Workforce Housing in DeKalb County. He also indicated that he would provide copies of the final report following the a final editing and color printing scheduled for this winter. He told the Commissioner to feel free to contact him with any suggestions and or concerns.

8. Municipal Development Projects - Included within each Commissioner packets were the current development projects.

Ms. Aldis (Cortland) – Ms. Aldis reported that she would have an assistant contact the county to update the entire development list. The sewer treatment plant went online August 23, 2007. A well will be dug to service the Montalbano homes. Year-end building permits numbers might be lower than years past but there are still many going out. Special census put the population at 2100 people, which would exceed expectations, however, the village still needs to backout any duplicates. Additionally, Ms. Aldis attended the LUCA meeting for the 2010 Census and encouraged other members to investigate this resource if they have not already.

Mr. Pardridge (Shabbona) -- The new subdivision still has not begun substantial construction and the developer has asked for an extension.

Mr. Thompson (Malta) – At its first meeting in October, the Village Board will be putting the bonds for the Sewer Treatment Plant and Water out for sale.

Mr. Altmaier (Kingston) -- Nothing new to report.

Mr. Olson (Lee) – Nothing new to report.

Mr. Godhardt (Hinckley) – The 85-lot development is not proceeding as the developer put the sewer in and has not come back. Two additional developments totaling 2,700 homes, which are expected to build out in eight to ten years, are still under review. Additionally, a property owner recently purchased property on Jericho Road with the intentions of developing an industrial park.

Mr. Becker (Kirkland) – Not much happening right now in Kirkland.

Mr. Gentile (Genoa) -- A new Ace Hardware (16,000 sq.ft.) and a multi-tenant commercial project are in the works in Genoa.

Mr. Steimel (DeKalb County) -- There are no new developments to discuss in the unincorporated area. The new Stormwater Management Committee has been assigned with six members from the County and six from the municipalities. Evergreen Village, the mobile-home park near Sycamore, will be receiving assistance from FEMA now that the area has received the Federal disaster declaration.

Mr. Rasmussen (DeKalb) -- Improvements in landscaping and parking in the downtown have begun. DeKalb is being approached by prospective hotels to locate near the Convocation Center. A Schnook's grocery store, 60,000 sq.ft. in area, is now hiring, as is a 20,000 sq.ft. Ace Hardware.

Ms. Morpheu (Somonauk) -- The new water tower is going up.

The next RPC meeting is scheduled for January 24, 2008 at 7:00 pm Conference Room East.

9. Adjournment -- *Mr. Pardridge motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Godhardt, and the motion carried unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Rasmussen
Chairman, DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission

RGV:rgv

\\NAS1\Depts\Planning Dept\Zoning\Regional\Minutes\2007\RPCSept07.wpd