

**PLANNING AND ZONING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
February 28, 2007**

The Planning and Zoning Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on February 28, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. in the Gathertorium Room located in the DeKalb County Legislative Building. In attendance were Committee Members Roger Steimel, Marlene Allen, Eileen Dubin, Vince Faivre, Michael Haines and Anita Turner, and staff members Paul Miller and Derek Hiland. Audience members included County Board Members Larry Anderson, Jerry Augsburg, Julia Fauci, Robert Rosemier, and Ruth Anne Tobias, as well as Greg Millburg, Aracely Hernandez, J. Dale Carry, John Kunzie, Michael Stuckert, Sharon Skala, Brian Adams, Jane Collins, Terry Reynolds, Dan Larson, Jamie Posek, Joe Wiegand, Doug Dashner, John Began, Anita Zurburg and others.

Mr. Steimel, Planning and Zoning Committee Chairman, called the meeting to order, and noted that all members from the Committee were present except for Pat Vary.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

There being but one item on the agenda, the Committee took no vote on approving the agenda.

KISHWAUKEE VALLEY WATER AUTHORITY -- Discussion of proposed Kishwaukee Valley Water Authority

Mr. Steimel stated that the Planning and Zoning Committee had convened to discuss the petition that has been filed with the Circuit Clerk to include on the April ballot a proposal to establish the Kishwaukee Valley Water Authority (KVWA). The issue was first raised at the Committee's January 24, 2007 meeting and was tabled pending the outcome of on-going hearings in the Circuit Court regarding the petition. Mr. Miller stated that on February 14, 2007, the Court rendered a final determination on the boundaries of the KVWA: as initially proposed, the KVWA boundaries would have included all of DeKalb County, except the current municipal limits of the Cities of DeKalb and Sycamore. The Court amended these boundaries to exclude the municipalities of Genoa and Maple Park, as well as Sandwich and Somonauk Townships, and to include the Cities of DeKalb and Sycamore and the Town of Cortland. Mr. Steimel stated that the Committee is seeking information about ground water in DeKalb County and about water authorities in general. To this end, the Committee invited four guest speakers.

Dr. Colin Booth, a geologist with Northern Illinois University, gave a presentation on the current geology of the aquifers beneath DeKalb County and the science of ground water. He explained some of the history, as well as the variety of well depths, where and how the residents and municipalities of the County extract groundwater, how those aquifers recharge, and the connections and effects from the region surrounding DeKalb County.

Dr. Jack Whitman, a hydrologist, explained to the Committee the four types of drought that could occur, meteorological, agricultural, hydrological and socioeconomic. He stated that his remarks would highlight the hydrologic drought and the issues associated with trying to manage hydrological droughts. These begin with risk management. Dr. Whitman explained that preparation is the key to managing risks and ultimately sustainability is the

common goal. In his professional opinion, Dr. Whitman stated that counties are the ideal governing body for dealing with groundwater planning and management.

The third speaker to address the Committee was Robert Proboner a representative for the Alliance for Land, Agriculture and Water (A-LAW). Mr. Proboner briefly described the KVWA history and purpose. He stated that the water authority's main objective is to provide sustainable water for future generations. Mr. Proboner agreed that it is not easy to define the boundaries of KVWA because the reality is a question of, "how local should be local and how regional should be regional?" At the conclusion of his remarks, Mr. Proboner stated that the KVWA was the only option available for this region to ensure that sustainable water would be regulated and remained available for future generations.

The last speaker to address the Committee was Michael Coghlan, an attorney for the DeKalb Builders and Developer association, who spoke on the negative aspects of water authorities. Mr. Coghlan asserted that the governing water authorities are not working well in Southern Illinois and that a regional governing water authority would not serve DeKalb County's best interests in the future. He concluded by stating that if in fact a water authority is needed then a DeKalb County Water Authority would seem more appropriate for this area. He highlighted the fact that the proposed KVWA is not the only regional effort regarding groundwater sustainability for northeastern Illinois, because there is an 11-county study underway as a consequence of an order by the Governor.

Some discussion was had regarding the reference to the Governor's initiative on groundwater. Mr. Steimel called upon the Chairperson of the DeKalb County Board, Ruth Anne Tobias, to explain the Governor's initiative on State and Regional Water-Supply Planning in Illinois. Mrs. Tobias stated that State of Illinois through Illinois Department of Natural Resources has selected northeastern Illinois as one of the two pilot areas to examine groundwater, surface water and climate variability and change on a regional level. Mrs. Tobias explained that the eleven member group met for the first time in January 2007 and that they are going to continue to meet to discuss those issues on a larger regional level. The study will likely span several years.

After the guest speakers had a chance to present their information to the Committee, Mr. Miller stated that given the potential impact the proposed water authority would have on growth and development plans and jurisdiction by the County and the municipalities within it, it is appropriate that the County Board consider taking a formal position on the proposal.

Mr. Steimel opened the meeting up for questions or comments by the Committee regarding the motion to the full County Board.

Dr. Whitman and Dr. Booth were asked what studies have been done regarding the hydrology of DeKalb County and the specific recharge rates of each aquifer. Both agreed that there are not many if any studies specifically looking at DeKalb County's water situation however they encouraged the County to contact the State's Geological Survey to aid in the research. Dr. Whitman stated that essentially DeKalb County needs to figure out

three things: 1) How much water do we have? 2) How much water do we need? and 3) Where are we going to get it?

Mr. Steimel stated that State Senator Brad Burzynski has filed a shell-bill to accommodate potential changes to the water authority enabling legislation.

Following further discussion, Mr. Steimel suggested that, while the information and discussion has highlighted a lot of issues and made it clear that the County needs to address the future use of ground water, in his opinion more information is needed before the County takes a position with respect to water authorities. He did not feel the Committee should forward a recommendation to the County Board on the petition to establish the KVWA.

Mr. Faivre stated that he agreed with Mr. Steimel that more information and time was needed.

Mrs. Allen questioned why there was a need to rush into a decision.

Mr. Haines stated that he had learned a lot, but that he now had more questions than answers.

Mrs. Dubin concurred with the statements of the other Committee members.

Mrs. Turner stated that she already has an opinion on water authorities, and that leaving decisions about new high-capacity wells up to three people bothers her.

After no further discussion, Mrs. Allen motioned that the Committee forward a recommendation that the County Board take no position at this time regarding the proposed KVWA. The motion was amended by Mr. Haines to highlight that the Board acknowledges the importance of ground water planning, conservation and future use, and identifies the same as a priority issue for continued consideration and actions by the Board. The amended motion was seconded by Mrs. Dubin and the motion carried with five "yes" (Allen, Dubin, Faivre, Haines, Steimel) and one "no" vote (Turner).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. Turner moved to approve the minutes of the January 24, 2007 meeting of the Planning and Zoning Committee, seconded by Mrs. Dubin, and the motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT - *Mrs. Turner moved to adjourn, seconded by Mrs. Dubin, and the motion carried unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

Roger Steimel
Planning and Zoning Committee Chairman

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