

**DEKALB COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**August 28, 2008**

The DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) met on August 28, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the DeKalb County Administration Building, Conference Room East, in Sycamore, Illinois. In attendance were Commission members Cookie Aldis, Russ Farnum, Dan Godhardt, Suzanne Sedlacek, Roger Steimel, Bill Beverley, Jerry Thompson, Rich Gentile, Becky Morphey, and Ralph Tompkins. Staff included Paul Miller and Rebecca Von Drasek. Also in attendance was Brian Dickson from DeKalb-Sycamore Area Transit.

1. **Roll Call** -- *Commission members Frank Altmaier, Mike Becker, Bill Nicklas, Jerry Olson, and Don Pardridge were noted absent.*
2. **Approval of Agenda** -- *Mr. Tompkins moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Farnum, and the motion carried unanimously.*
3. **Approval of Minutes** -- *Mr. Tompkins moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Morphey, and the motion carried unanimously.*
4. **Presentation by the DeKalb - Sycamore Area Transit (DSATS)**

The DeKalb-Sycamore Area Transportation Study (DSATS) is a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) that includes the cities of DeKalb and Sycamore, as well as Cortland and portions of unincorporated DeKalb County. DSATS focus on roads and the various means of transportation (bus, rail, hike and bike trails, etc.), and has adopted a transportation plan for the region that, among other things, classifies each road by capacity, evaluates the transportation infrastructure, and identifies needed improvements and desirable projects. This plan is required in order for the region to qualify for Federal transportation funds.

Brian Dickson from DSATS made a Power Point presentation outlining the MPO mission and responsibilities. He explained that DSATS was created following the 2000 census which determined the DeKalb, Sycamore, Cortland area met the Federal standard as “urbanized” since the combined populations exceeded 50,000. The MPO is charged with distributing the federal funds to necessary transportation projects. Mr. Dickson emphasized that the Federal government felt that this was a more efficient means of distributing transportation funds to a particular area rather than funding a particular project. He outlined the organizational structure of DSATS and explained which local agencies made up the organization’s committees. He highlighted DSATS major functions including their long-range planning, transportation studies, and preparing a transportation improvement program. Mr. Dickson noted that DSATS was in the process of preparing multiple transportation maps, and had already funded improvements to the Voluntary Action Center’s (VAC) fleet and scheduling system. He then explained future projects and transit expansion. Mr. Dickson concluded by noting that the regional area has a large impact on the transportation within the “urbanized” area which is why DSATS wanted to reach out to the Commission and inform them of DSATS’ mission.

Mr. Gentile asked how the MPOs were funded. Mr. Dickson explained that their funding was included within the current Federal Transportation Bill which is valid through 2010. Mr. Gentile also inquired if a community could borrow against the funds it receives. Mr. Dickson stated generally the Federal government reimburses a community after the project has been completed. Mr. Tompkins noted that once the funds are allocated within the transportation budget, the community can bid and grant the contract because the funds are available.

Mr. Tompkins noted that the transportation bills were only approved every five years, but that delays often occur and that will delay funding in future years. He added that with these delays no new allocations occur and therefore staff would be hesitant to suggest new work that requires Federal funding.

Mr. Thompson asked with what specific projects had DSATS been involved. Mr. Farnum noted that the projects at Bethany Road (from Peace to 1<sup>st</sup> Street) and the work on Annie Glidden were example projects. Mr. Farnum also noted that the County received a higher allotment of funds due to the creation of DSATS.

Mr. Dickson added that prior to the creation of DSATS projects had to compete statewide for a portion of the funding.

Mr. Farnum stated that the projects were generally an 80/20 match.

Mr. Thompson questioned how Annie Glidden Road was a federal road project. Mr. Tompkins answered that Federal routes had to terminate at other Federal Routes which is why connector roads such as Annie Glidden are designated as Federal Routes.

Mr. Dickson noted that to qualify for an MPO county-wide the population within the County would need to show an increase by 100,000 in the next census. He also noted that Maple Park might be close enough to some day be included within the DSATS area.

Mr. Gentile asserted that City of Genoa was now eligible to compete for the State's allocated Federal funds now that its population exceed 5,000.

Mr. Miller noted that the MPO was a partner to the County and the municipalities in addressing regional transportation issues. He mentioned the Prairie Parkway project as an example project in which the County would turn to DSATS to study the effects of such a project.

Mr. Steimel asked how the agency's administrative costs are funded. Mr. Dickson noted that the Federal government pays 80% of the operating costs and the City of DeKalb pays the remaining 20%. Mr. Miller noted that the County also provides meeting space and staff to assist the organization.

The Commission then thanked Mr. Dickson for his presentation.

**5. Comprehensive Plan Updates** -- Mr. Miller briefly recapped that DeKalb County adopted the Unified Comprehensive Plan at the end of 2003. The Future Land Use Plan for the County incorporated the future land use plans of the municipalities within DeKalb County (with the exception of Maple Park), creating a planning document that represented a collective vision for the future of the region. However, in the five years since the Unified Comprehensive Plan was adopted, most of the municipalities have grown through annexation and development approvals. He briefly noted that the priorities to preserve agriculture were reflected in the previous plan and he expected that they would continue in the unincorporated areas. Several have adopted amendments to their comprehensive plans. In order to remain effective as a guide for land use and development, comprehensive plans must occasionally be updated as conditions on the ground change and as new decision-makers lend their energy to the process of growth. He noted that a few communities, including Cortland and Maple Park, had already provided their updated information. Mr. Miller then explained the proposed review process for the update would include the county-wide plan being presented at three open house (one north, one central, and one south) then one public hearing and that then, hopefully, adoption by the County Board prior to the end of 2009. He noted that the funding for the project would utilize an existing budget item from 2008 FY to 2009 FY, and would primarily be for printing costs.

Mr. Gentile suggested that a checklist be created of where and what information the municipalities are providing.

Mr. Miller asserted that no municipality had any obligation to update, but if they had revised their plans or intended to the County was looking to them for their updated information. He also noted that if any community decided to update its own comprehensive plan at the same time, there could be cost savings by “piggy-backing” on the County process. For instance, the County Information Management Office might be able to do the mapping for cities, perhaps for a fee that would be less than the cost of an outside consultant.

Ms. Morphey noted that there had been no change to the Waterman plan since 2005.

Mr. Gentile noted that the Genoa plan had not changed since its original date from November 14, 2003.

Mr. Godhardt indicated that the Village of Hinckley had made no changes to their plan.

Mr. Beverly asked if the Prairie Parkway was a possibility within the County. Mr. Miller noted that one possible path for the northern extension would go through DeKalb County.

Ms. Aldis stated that she would appreciate if the County were reprinting the comprehensive map if the information which overlays the County could be created on transparencies for the ability to easily present the information. Mr. Beverly agreed that with transparent overlay would be a useful visual aid. Mr. Miller noted that all of the maps were electronic if any member wished to print them off. Mr. Tompkins noted that

the information in electronic formats could be printed on Mylar to create the overlays which Ms. Aldis wanted.

Mr. Beverly informed Mr. Miller that he would need to find out when the last comprehensive plan was updated in the City of Sandwich.

Mr. Miller also shared the e-mail sent by Ruth Anne Tobias informing the RPC Members that the State had withdrawn funding of the CMAP water study, noting that some of the funding may be replaced by the University of Illinois. He also asserted his hope that the study would include information regarding DeKalb County's watersheds, which may be helpful information regarding the County and RPC concerns about ground and stormwater problems.

## **6. Municipal Development Projects:**

The Commissioners briefly updated the Current Development Projects report and highlighted ongoing projects within their municipalities.

Mr. Gentile stated that a NAPA Autoparts had moved into the old Ace Hardware location. He also noted that the building's appearance

Mr. Farnum informed the Commission of the City of DeKalb's recent approval of a mixed use development on E. Lincoln Hwy, which will include two hotels, 200,000 sq. ft. of retail and 640 luxury apartments, to be developed by Shodeen. Mr. Farnum further noted that the hotel anchor tenant hoped to be in the building by the fall 2009. He added that there was also a mixed use project proposed by the same developer between the Walgreens and the NIU campus in downtown DeKalb.

Mr. Steimel informed the Commission that the water studies (both ground and stormwater) were tabled until the economy picks up. Stating that both the Executive Committee and the Stormwater Management Planning Committee suggested the issue be tabled. Mr. Steimel also informed the Commission about the proposal by Inland Real Estate group for a development north of Sycamore. Mr. Steimel highlighted that it was the opinion of the Planning and Zoning Committee that development should take place within municipal boundaries. Mr. Miller noted that the Inland plan is very preliminary and Mr. Steimel noted that Inland could now return to the City of Sycamore as the one year limitation had expired.

Mr. Beverly noted that there was a double-edge sword of the Comprehensive Plan because individuals sometimes interpret the plan as the future set in stone rather than the preference for future developments.

The Commission then briefly discussed the requirements on developers to provide infrastructure and road improvements.

Mr. Beverly then reported the Rte 34 widening project had begun and an extension will be requested to the state to extend the funding of the project.

Ms. Sedlacek reported that Kennedy homes is facing now foreclosure and three of the partially-constructed homes are scheduled for demolition or burning. The Commission encouraged the reuse of the materials. She also noted that a medical center was being discussed in town, and that other subdivisions in town were up for sale. Ms. Sedlacek added that a \$50.00 quarterly rate increase had been passed for water bills to cover the capital costs in Waterman.

Mr. Tompkins warned other Commission members to check the letters of credit that they have guaranteeing development projects because the cost of asphalt had increased so substantially many letters of credit are insufficient to complete the projects. Mr. Tompkins also referenced Illinois State Statues 65 ILCS 5/11-39-3, which requires that the developers provide 110 % letter of credit. Mr. Miller suggested Commissioners check their subdivision regulations to reiterate the municipalities right to review the surety. Ms. Aldis suggested that Commissioners also require a developer bond, not just a public improvement bond. Mr. Tompkins also noted that during a bankruptcy some surety agencies may try to take the letter of credit as an asset, Ms. Aldis agreed and stated Cortland was able to have theirs letter of credit removed from the proceedings.

Mr. Steimel asked about the Chestnut Grove school site, and added that a stoplight might be necessary at the school's entrance. Ms. Aldis stated that the property transfer and finalizing of paperwork was underway. Mr. Steimel noted that he had heard that the groundbreaking was planned.

**The next RPC meeting is scheduled for October 23, 2008 at 7:00 pm in the Conference Room East.**

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

Respectfully submitted,

Rich Gentile  
Chairman, DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission

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