

DEKALB COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
February 28, 2008

The DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) met on February 28, 2008 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, Rich Gentile, Becky Morphey, Bill Nicklas, Don Pardridge, Suzanne Sedlacek, Roger Steimel, Ralph Tompkins, Martha May, and Bill Beverley. Also in attendance were presenters Kristin Rehg and Larry Thomas of Baxter Woodman, and Jack Wittman and Samanta Lax of Wittman Hydro Planning. Audience members in attendance included Ken Anderson and Donna Prain. Staff included Paul Miller and Rebecca Von Drasek.

1. **Roll Call** -- *Mr. Steimel noted that Mike Becker, Dan Godhardt, Jerry Thompson and Paul Rasmussen were absent.*
2. **Approval of Agenda** -- *Mr. Tompkins moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Pardridge, and the motion carried unanimously.*
3. **Approval of Minutes** -- Ms. Aldis questioned the verbiage on page four of the January 24, 2008 minutes, noting that the minutes echoed the correct intent of the discussion on financing the water project, but not the actual statements that Mr. Bockman made when asked if the County or the municipalities were to fund the project and whether the funding would have a sunset agreement. Mr. Brockman had replied "yes and yes." Ms. Aldis stated that she did not think the minutes needed to be amended but wanted to discuss the financing aspect of the ground water study. Mr. Steimel agreed that the financing issue would be addressed and that the minutes should not be amended.

Mr. Tompkins then moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Gentile, and the motion carried unanimously.

5. **Discussion on Ground Water Project** -- Mr. Miller briefed the Commission on the ground water project, noting that representatives of Baxter & Woodman and Wittman Hydro Planning made a presentation on ground water resource planning at the January 24, 2008 meeting of the RPC. Commission members were encouraged to review the presentation and be prepared to ask questions and provide feedback as to which of the alternative approaches should be considered for adoption by the County and municipalities. Also Commissioners were asked to review a draft Request for Proposals (RFP) and provide input on the final version. A final form of the RFP is the intended outline of the work to be done by a water consultant.

Larry Thomas (Baxter & Woodman) began the presentation by reviewing the fundamental questions that the consultant would be required to answer with a study of DeKalb County's groundwater; (1) How much water is needed for sustainable maintenance of public and private water supplies, agriculture, and natural areas, (2) How much water is available for those uses, (3) How can water resources be managed to keep the supplies and demands in balance, and (4) What information is necessary to successfully manage water resources. Mr. Thomas then highlighted

the RFP and suggested that by reviewing the document as a group, Ms. Rehg would make revisions as the conversation happened. Mr. Thomas also noted that as had been discussed at the January 24, 2008 meeting the extent of the field work and computer modeling the group requests will make the largest impact on the quotes that they will receive.

Mr. Beverley stated that the data collected through this study was intended to be used for decades and he asked the Commission if the expense could be covered by an impact fee. Mr. Steimel suggested that Mr. Beverley's comments related to the financing of the project, and that the group should first review the RFP for omissions or errors and then return to the finance discussion.

Mr. Thomas then asked if the first bullet point was correct that the Regional Planning Commission would be the correct group for the consultant to relay information regarding groundwater. Mr. Steimel agreed. Mr. Nicklas agreed noting that although the group is large it is also the most representative of the Communities within the County. Mr. Pardridge also agreed and emphasized that he did not think another layer, such as a sub-committee was necessary. Lastly, Mr. Beverley agreed adding that the issue should be addressed in the open.

Mr. Miller asked Mr. Thomas if the list of tasks in the RFP would each include a cost estimate. Mr. Nicklas agreed that a Part B section should be included to reflect the Commissioners' expectation of cost breakdown in the proposals.

Mr. Pardridge suggested the RFP include a problem statement to identify why the Commission is requesting this study and what are the concerns. Mr. Wittman suggested, "recent growth in the region has been accompanied by an increase in ground water use and well drilling. The consequences of the new use has been a decline in the deep aquifer system and a potential increase in long-term availability in the shallow aquifer." Mr. Nicklas and Ms. Aldis objected to the statement as fact and suggested that it instead be asserted as a hypothesis. Mr. Wittman suggested that this statement was a known fact. A brief discussion resulted in the general consensus to add the words "necessary to determine whether" to the problem statement.

Mr. Thomas continued to review the draft RFP. Ms. Aldis asked if the ten RPC meetings referred to in the RFP would be in addition to the six annual meetings of the RPC. Ms. May stated that was her understanding. Mr. Miller noted that the study will more than likely take more than a year to complete and that the Commission could schedule these meeting as necessary, sometimes meeting separate of the RPC and sometimes in conjunction.

Mr. Beverley noted that the fourth bullet point should be expanded to include "all available" sources. Mr. Miller concurred. Mr. Thomas stated that Baxter & Woodman also had additional access to unpublished studies which could be utilized in the study. Further, he highlighted the DeKalb County study would have access to the ongoing study by CMAP, and the Will and Kane Counties' studies. Mr. Thomas also stated that the consultant would access all the data from private wells drilled within the County. Ms. Aldis asked where this data comes from as the County has not been able to provide this information in the past. Mr. Thomas indicated that these well logs are generated by the well drillers. He also noted that the quality of information was based on the driller's capacity for filling in the information and Mr. Thomas pointed out that

the County Health Department may not store these records and that the consultants would requests these from the State of Illinois.

Mr. Steimel asked about development outside of the County boundaries and their water draw, such as the Rochelle ethanol plant.

Ms. May noted that at the January 24, 2008 meeting the presentation indicated that water fell to the east therefore why would the Rochelle ethanol plant be of concern. Mr. Thomas responded that the Rochelle project could draw enough water to shift the natural flow and create a divergence from the known flow. Mr. Thomas then explained briefly that costs of the study will be dependent on how accurate the County wanted the study. Ms. Aldis stated that City of Rochelle was doing its own groundwater research study.

Mr. Thomas then outlined the steps of the study, the first of which is to collect the information from all the possible sources. Next would be to determine where more information needs to be collected through field work. Demand by sector (public, private, agriculture, or natural areas) would then be forecast to create a fairly accurate ratio of the number of gallons used per person per day. After creating the ratio, the consultants will identify land uses in 2050 using the municipal and County comprehensive plans. Mr. Thomas noted that such a forecast will not be a picture of the actual future, however, using the best available evidence will allow creation of a reasonable estimate.

Ms. May asked why 2050. Mr. Thomas answered that CMAP is using 2050; therefore the study data could be compared with regional data. Additionally, he felt that the future consultant will utilized similar data and that the study will be a more refined local version of the state study.

Mr. Wittman echoed the benefit of having comparable data to investigate divergences not only in the estimated water supply but also in the land uses that CMAP and the County are projecting.

Mr. Thomas then noted that the base number that the study creates can then be modified through reviewing levels of conservation (passive through active). For example, McHenry County's study resulted in the knowledge that water demand is greater than the supply, therefore McHenry County now knows that something has to be done eventually. Using its water study, that County can make decisions by reviewing which levels of conservation will assist in balancing the demand, as well as deciding where other water resources are available.

Mr. Gentile argued that putting out numbers could result in restricting an area's development potential and the information the RPC was requesting could be harmful to a community's economics. Mr. Wittman emphasized that knowing where the water is located is necessary to achieving sustainable communities, without the knowledge communities could still fail however with the knowledge communities can plan. Mr. Wittman hypothesized that a development will find out about water issues eventually this was the tool for communities to guide the discussion.

Mr. Thomas noted that the Commission was definitely committing to an issue for the next generation. He stated that the common view (which chiefly exists in the Midwest) is that a property owner only has rights to water directly below them, he said in other regions it is

common to import the water to the population. Lastly, he stated projects to create the supply to meet a growing demand may take years to complete.

Mr. Beverley asked if communities use easements when water is piped in from a distance outside of town. Mr. Thomas confirmed that was the case.

Mr. Gentile reiterated his concern that the results would be used to prevent growth by residents. Mr. Thomas emphasized that trying to make balance between demand and supply, the decision-makers need the information. Mr. Wittman stated that the Commission would have a map that would assist decision-makers on the type of growth that is sustainable. Additionally, it could allow the RPC to budget for infrastructure that may be necessary in 30-40 years. Mr. Miller stated that it also becomes a planning issue, knowing what underground is dependent on the above ground areas.

Mr. Steimel inquired as to how the study would identify recharge areas. Mr. Wittman stated that by reviewing the types of soils, the consultants would have a better idea of where recharge would be most productive.

Mr. Altmaier asked how the estimated water-usage numbers are utilized. Mr. Wittman and Mr. Thomas stated that the consultants make an estimate of annual usage and this helps gauge demand and potential supply problems. Mr. Beverley suggested that the pumping capacity of a well could be determined using such an estimate.

Mr. Beverley then asked where utility companies that store gas underground receive their information about our geology. Mr. Thomas suggested that the State Geological Survey would have been used by the utilities.

Mr. Pardridge noted that the RFP is quite broad and wanted further detail on how Baxter & Woodman decided on necessary drilling. Mr. Thomas explained that would be determined after an assessment of the available information yielded an understanding on where the critical gaps in information exist. This would drive the number of holes and test wells needed, depending on the degree of accuracy desired.

Mr. Thomas informed the Commission that test holes, of which there could be as many as 15, would cost \$20,000 dollars each, and test wells (the study might require five of these) would cost up to \$100,000 each. Depending on the amount of accuracy the RPC would like, this portion of the study could cost \$800,000. An important element of the test drilling would be to identify where the gravel deposits in the Troy Valley are located.

Ms. Aldis asked for a more precise description of the test holes and wells. Mr. Thomas stated that the test holes would be four-inch diameter, and the wells would require a 16-inch diameter holes with 10-inch casements.

Mr. Beverley informed the Commission that the City of Sandwich is going to re-drill a well within the next 36 months and the consultants were welcome to the information gained through that drilling.

Mr. Thomas explained that Baxter & Woodman would want to create a sonar picture to determine the valley's profile using sonic waves. He explained that the St. Charles Valley which runs east to west in the southern part of the County is more shallow and wider, than Troy Valley, and less well known. Mr. Thomas also explained that well logs help to determine the location and size of the aquifers. Aquifer recharge areas are dictated by soil types. Wetlands are not a recharge area; these are where the aquifer is discharging.

Mr. Wittman then presented briefly on the modeling component of the RFP. He explained that the data is used to predict a sustainable yield, and the models would scale to township levels. Modeling is developed to ask and answer questions about the effect of new wells and/or increased pumping. It is also meant to take into account neighboring draws on the aquifers and display at what point demand is non-sustainable. Modeling is the result of the data collected by collating the existing groundwater information and adding the new information from the field studies. The model itself is created by reducing an area to little cubes of information about the water in a particular area. The cubes of information are more accurate with more holes and fieldwork. Mr. Wittman noted monitoring of locations is important and that it was important to target the correct locations to monitor.

Mr. Thomas mentioned that McHenry County created a water monitoring position.

Mr. Wittman stated that there were two goals of the water modeling: 1) the consultant would want this modeling tool to match up with the findings in Kane County; and 2) the consultant would want the inside of the County models to be consistent with regional models (i.e. CMAP).

Mr. Beverley asked if there was a disparity would that require another study, or is a certain percentage of error acceptable. Mr. Thomas and Mr. Wittman indicated that a certain amount of difference is expected.

Ms. May asked if this was an expensive component. Mr. Wittman noted that the modeling would be quoted at approximately \$200,000.

Mr. Nicklas suggested that due to the hour it may be wise that the Commission begin discussing the financing for the study and asked Mr. Thomas to outline the approximate costs. Mr. Thomas stated that on top of the \$200,000 for the modeling, that the field work, if all of the well and holes are drilled, would be approximately \$800,000, and the compilation of the data could be another \$100,000, totaling roughly \$1.1 million dollars. Mr. Nicklas then stated that one approach to funding would be for the 15 governmental entities at the table to come up with the roughly \$73,000 each. He suggested that the Commission needs to create a dedicated source for the funding, noting that as he was working on his budget draft that it did not yet include any funds for this project but that including this might be a possibility.

Mr. Miller then passed around the prospective verbiage for a referendum, which would be another way to fund the study. He stated, in relation to Mr. Beverley's earlier comment, that the County has no impact fees. He asked the Commission to review the text but to note that the wording did not include the words "ground", "water" or "study". State law on referenda to raise

funds through taxation actually prohibits the referendum language from saying for what the money is intended.

Mr. Nicklas then suggested that yet another option would be for communities to sell bonds to fund their contribution.

Ms. May challenged that the contribution to fund the study could not be divided equally among the municipalities, as that would place an unfair burden on small towns that do not have the same amount of funds at their disposal. She suggested that the contribution size be determined by population.

Mr. Miller continued that if a referendum was the preferred way, the effort would need an information campaign and support of a coalition of the willing to explain the referendum and encourage voters to pass it. This could not be done by the municipal or County governments, however, as State law prohibits elected bodies from advocating, or even talking about, ballot initiatives.

Ms. Aldis encouraged Commission members to discuss the funding issue with their communities, as she had with the previous estimate of approximately \$35,000. She had found a better than expected reception.

Mr. Nicklas stated that a per capita contribution would not be the best determinant for funding the study either, as this places an unfair burden on the larger municipalities.

Mr. Pardridge asked what would happen if every community is not onboard with the project.

Mr. Tompkins asked about raising water rates, noting that there are still many private wells. He suggested that possibly the best way to divide the load is by reviewing the demand by area.

The Commission agreed a pot of money should be created or a financing source determined prior to sending out the RFP.

Mr. Altmaier asked if the pot of money was created as a one-time event, how would the monitoring be funded.

Mr. Wittman stated that the initial cost of the water study was far greater than upkeep costs.

Ms. Aldis asked if this referendum could make it on to the ballot for the general election in November. Mr. Miller agreed that it was drafted for the November ballot. Ms. Aldis then asked if the County would manage the funding in whatever form was decided. Mr. Miller indicated that the County would be willing to manage the funds.

Mr. Pardridge asked what becomes of test holes and wells. Mr. Thomas stated that they were generally capped following data collection. Mr. Pardridge asked if the test wells could be kept as an operating well if one happened to coincide with where a new municipal well was planned. Mr. Thomas stated that might be a possibility.

Mr. Steimel encouraged all members to consider the financing suggestions for the March 27, 2008 meeting. He also asked the presenters to provide the Commission with the revised RFP.

The next RPC meeting is scheduled for March 27, 2008 at 7:00 pm in the Conference Room East.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Roger Steimel
Vice-Chairman, DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission

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