

DEKALB COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
January 24, 2008

The DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) met on January 24, 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, Mike Becker, Rich Gentile, Becky Morphey, Bill Nicklas, Martha May, Don Pardridge, Paul Rasmussen, Suzanne Sedlacek, Roger Steimel, Ralph Tompkins, and Jerry Thompson, as well as Bill Beverly representing the City of Sandwich. Also in attendance were presenters Kristin Rehg and Larry Thomas of Baxter Woodman, Chris Greer of the NIU Geology Department, and Jack Wittman of Wittman Hydro Planning. Audience members in attendance were Ruth Anne Tobias, Julia Fullerton, Pat Vary, Anita Turner, Eileen Dubin, Colin Booth, Mark Biernacki, Jerry Augsburger, Doug Dashner, Donna Prain, and Kate Schotti. Staff included Ray Bockman, Paul Miller, and Rebecca Von Drasek.

1. **Roll Call** -- *Mr. Rasmussen noted that Dan Godhardt was absent and he welcomed Bill Beverley (Sandwich) and Martha May (Lee - Alternate) to the meeting.*
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** –

A correction was noted by Ms. Aldis on page six of the September 27, 2007 minutes indicating that the Census Bureau was responsible for removing duplicate entries from the Special Census, not the Town. Additionally, Mr. Altmaier asked if Mr. Steimel had referenced drought in the State of Washington or Washington D.C. as the minutes stated. Mr. Steimel affirmed that he had referenced D.C. as well as the western part of the nation as both areas were discussed at the Kane County Conference.

Mr. Steimel then moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Thompson, and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Resolution of Appreciation for Jim Knox -

Mr. Miller presented a resolution honoring Jim Knox, a member of the RPC, for his dedication and service to the City of Sandwich and the Regional Planning Commission. Mr. Rasmussen explained that the resolution would be forwarded to the City of Sandwich by staff.

Mr. Steimel moved to approve the Resolution, seconded by Ms. Aldis, and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Regional Water Planning - Mr. Miller briefed the Commission that representatives of Baxter Woodman, Wittman Hydro Planning and NIU would make a presentation on groundwater. This is the result of the initial groundwater scope study which was recommended at the September 27, 2007 RPC meeting. He mentioned that included in the member packets was a copy of the agreement for the work scope study and that the presentation was intended to be informational in nature and that no action was required by the Commission.

Kristin Rehg (Baxter Woodman) began the Power Point presentation by reviewing the purpose of the project and the fundamental questions that the contractors would attempt to answer through a physical study of DeKalb County's groundwater; (1) What are the current and future water demands, (2) How much water is available and how much can we safely use, (3) How can we extend water supplies as growth occurs, (4) What is the appropriate time frame and level of accuracy for answering these questions. Ms. Rehg asserted that the future water demands are dependent on the type of conservation methods applied, whether they are passive or active. Ms. Rehg explained the type of conservation methods employed affect the cost of the conservation. To answer the second question, whether the quantity meets the demand, Ms. Rehg reported the researchers have to model the distribution, which can be simulated through computer modeling. Ms. Rehg then noted that in the Kane County's study, which cost approximately three million dollars, a third of the cost was spent on modeling. For the third and fourth questions, she stated the researchers would need information that was available such as the growth projections from the Comprehensive Plan, however, the last question's level of accuracy was dependent on how much additional information is gathered. Ms. Rehg closed by outlining the remainder of the presentation.

Chris Greer (NIU Geology) highlighted the known and unknown aspects of the local geology and hydrogeology. He explained the layers that are thought to make up DeKalb County's geology, and briefly touched on the historical factors (i.e. glaciers and other deposits) that provided the various layers. He then explained how the geological factors create the hydrological features that are studied in groundwater research. He defined two of the known hydrogeological features as the St. Charles and Troy Bedrock Valleys. He noted the actual size and locations of these aquifers is still unknown. Lastly, Mr. Greer provided a regional slide that depicted the Troy Valley aquifer being primarily recharged in DeKalb, Ogle, and Winnebago Counties, and then indicated the flow of groundwater to areas east and southeast of DeKalb County.

Larry Thomas (Baxter Woodman) presented a summary of the laws governing groundwater use and regulation, asserting that there are no federal laws that apply. He then highlighted the Illinois State case law which generally established that if a property owner can get to the water from their own property and does not waste it in their use, they are within their legal rights to do so even if it causes a neighboring property to go dry. He noted that the Water Use Act of 1983 defined "reasonable use" and the notification requirements when tapping into an aquifer. Mr. Thomas briefly explained the Water Authorities Act and how authority is gained over a watershed by referendum, these agencies can then limit quantity removed. He then covered

other laws which grant permission to access the aquifers but that also do not control the quantity removed. Mr. Thomas then touched on agencies that have oversight of groundwater, explaining that the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), was suggesting various conservation methods but were not suggesting policy or agencies be created to govern water rights. In concluding, Mr. Thomas discussed what other surrounding Counties' studies have entailed.

Lastly, Jack Wittman (Wittman Hydro Planning) presented the proposed study and outlined the tasks necessary to answer the study questions posed by Ms. Rehg. Mr. Wittman spoke at length, highlighting the various options from using existing information to computer-based groundwater flow modeling, test borings, and test pumping. He stressed that the level of accuracy was based on the amount of information the study collects.

Mr. Bockman expressed disappointment that other communities already pumping groundwater have the right to pump DeKalb County dry, even if the groundwater is stored under DeKalb County. Mr. Wittman highlighted this as an issue that can be addressed in the groundwater study of internal ("What about us" - drought concerns) and external ("What about them" - growth concerns) options.

Mr. Thomas then reemphasized that since the water flow basically initiates in DeKalb County, property owners in the County have the right to the water first. He suggested DeKalb County could, hypothetically, tap the resource and then sell the water.

Ms. Fullerton asked for a definition of "waste", to which Mr. Thomas explained that water is considered wasted on artificial wants, such as wants other than human and livestock consumption.

Mr. Rasmussen acknowledged the cyclical nature of the problem where as growth and climate may limit quantity, flooding and stormwater management practice could hinder quality.

Mr. Wittman stated that communities should plan for drought, and therefore encourage (internal) growth and then be prepared to respond to external growth. He reiterated that hydrologically DeKalb County as the recharge area of the Troy Valley aquifer was in an interesting position.

Mr. Thompson observed that the majority of people in the region lived to the east of DeKalb County and that if necessary (i.e. drought) laws are likely to be changed to benefit that majority.

Mr. Wittman stated that he was attending a Conference in May with the Paul Simon Policy Institute discussing what water statues will be in the future. He expressed the desire for the issue to be apolitical, but recognized that the science can often be too focused to offer real world solutions.

The presenters were asked what was Kane County's rationale to spend three million dollars, to which Mr. Thomas indicated the projected growth rate in Kane County justified the expense to them. Additionally, they will be able to curb growth by limiting water access if they are given that authority.

Ms. May asked of the Commission how can they guarantee the growth in DeKalb County, since 30-50 years ago no one could have predicted the amount of growth DeKalb County is seeing today.

Mr. Pardridge emphasized that the Countywide Comprehensive Plan was the mechanism by which the growth is projected.

Mr. Rasmussen also noted that the County was 95% agricultural at the time of the Comprehensive Plan and once built out the Plan still projected 91% of DeKalb County to be agricultural.

Mr. Wittman then offered that by using existing information that a groundwater study would take approximately one year. If the study were to include drilling, then it would take approximately two years.

Mr. Brockman asked what level of information would the existing data provide. The presenters suggested that it would provide the current rate of usage and possibly the recharge rate, they did not think it would accurately predict the quantity or the flow rate of the water supply.

Mr. Wittman stated that the one-year study would cost approximately \$500,000. If the study were to include drilling the additional cost would be approximately \$15-20,000 per hole, depending on depth.

Mr. Rasmussen asked what level of certainty would the current information provide as to the location of the aquifers. Mr. Thomas stated that without drilling the level of certainty will be low.

Ms. Vary asked how accurate was the Kane County study, Mr. Thomas said that Kane had drilled approximately every 600ft.

Mr. Thomas also indicated that the information was less known in some areas of DeKalb County and better known in others.

Mr. Nicklas suggested that the Commission convene on the topic due to the hour and allow Commission members to bring back reaction from their respective boards/council at a special meeting of the RPC in February.

Ms. Aldis asked if the County was on board to ask the voters for a referendum, and if that referendum would have a sunset clause. Mr. Bockman stated that the County Board would review any proposal prepared by the Regional Planning Commission.

6. Chair and Vice-Chair Elections -

Mr. Miller pointed out that the Regional Planning Commission elected its current Chairman, Paul Rasmussen, at its March 23, 2006 meeting. Roger Steimel has served as the Vice-Chairman since that date. Per the Commission's Charter, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman are to serve two-year terms. Commission members should, therefore, give consideration to nominations for the Chair and Vice-Chair positions, and be prepared to vote for the same at the March 27, 2008 meeting.

7. Member Re-appointments -

Mr. Miller reminded the representatives from the City of Genoa, Village of Kirkland, and DeKalb County about the expiration of their terms and the need to review with their respective council or board who will be the representative and alternate for the new terms.

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

Mr. Rasmussen noted that due to the late hour instead of previewing every community he asked if any of the representatives had anything new to announce.

Mr. Beverley (Sandwich) announced that the Timber Creek Inn had held its grand opening.

The next RPC meeting is scheduled for February 28, 2008 at 7:00 pm Conference Room East.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Rasmussen
Chairman, DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission

RGV:rgv

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