

DEKALB COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
April 2, 2009

The DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) met on April 2, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the DeKalb County Legislative Center, Gathertorium, in Sycamore, Illinois. In attendance were Commission members Frank Altmaier, Derek Hiland, Cookie Aldis, Jerry Thompson, Norm Gaston (Waterman), Rich Gentile, Becky Morphey, Ralph Tompkins, Don Pardridge, Jerry Olson and Ruth Ann Tobias. Staff included Paul Miller and Rebecca Von Drasek. Also in attendance was Nancy Williamson (IDNR), Deanna Cada, Dan Templin, Lana Haines, Donna Prain, and Anita Zurbrugg.

1. **Roll Call** -- *Commission members Mike Becker, Bill Nicklas, Dan Godhardt, and Bill Beverley were noted 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 moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Pardridge, and the motion carried unanimously.*
4. **Presentation by S.W.A.T. on Possible Informational Seminar Topic**

Mr. Gentile asked the Commission to review their calendars indicating that his hope would be to set a time, date, and place if the Commission is inclined to suggest the SWAT seminar move forward.

Mr. Miller explained that the Regional Planning Commission has sponsored informational seminars several times in the past. He emphasized that these seminars were intended to provide elected and appointed officials with information needed to make better land use decisions. He noted that these informational seminars have generally been well-received and well-attended and that Participants have indicated that the information was timely and useful. Mr. Miller informed the Commission that the Sustainable Water Action Team (SWAT) had recently presented to staff and Chairman Gentile a possible information seminar topic on sustainable development and alternative stormwater management techniques. Mr. Miller then introduced Nancy Williamson with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR).

Ms. Williamson explained that the IDNR had partnered with SWAT in order to reach out to communities and offer their expertise regarding development and conservation design. She explained that SWAT had formed as a collaboration of numerous entities, all of whom were interested in assisting local communities in their growth planning. She provided a PowerPoint handout for the Commission to review. She explained that SWAT had offered similar seminars in many locations. Ms. Williamson emphasized that the Kishwaukee watershed was an important resource that was recently added to the SWAT coverage area. She emphasized that the decision-makers were essential to the conservation process and that was the reason SWAT was interested in facilitating the seminar. She noted that a sample agenda was included within the Commission Member's packets and that the outline could be revised as needed.

Mr. Gentile reiterated that the seminar would be funded by SWAT. Ms. Williamson responded that provided the location, list of attendees, and registration support be completed by the host organization, SWAT would manage the rest of the seminar. She also noted that in kind support was always appreciated, emphasizing that the group would often look for local support.

Mr. Miller pointed out to the Commission that during an economic downturn, communities had some breathing room to review their Development Ordinances and existing conditions and an opportunity to review the design standards that resulted in existing developments. He noted that Plan Commissioners, Council members, etc. would be invited to review if the best management practices are in place and reviewing different methods of development.

Ms. Aldis asked who would be invited, Mr. Miller responded that decision-makers such as elected and appointed officials involved in creating the Development Ordinances. Ms. Williamson added that the “choir” had been invited and attended many seminars regarding conservation design but that the decision-makers would be the ones to put the regulations in place. She also noted that at previous seminars gatecrashers had been welcomed as space provided.

Mr. Tompkins highlighted his hope that the seminar would attract a representative mix of the County, noting that a previous seminar had attracted 30 or so individuals, but that they only represented five government entities. Mr. Gentile indicated he hoped that the Commission would encourage individuals to attend and he envisioned 60 attendees.

The Commission briefly discussed date options in May and determined that none of the prospective dates would work. Instead the Commission suggested that the seminar should be scheduled in September, 2009. Ms. Williamson noted that SWAT would provide attendees with a breakfast and lunch and thought the seminar would end at about 3 pm, if it began at 9:00am. Mr. Miller agreed to nail down a specific date with Ms. Williamson and contact the Commission members.

Mr. Gentile thanked Ms. Williamson for the presentation.

5. Presentation by DeKalb Community Foundation Land Use Committee

Mr. Gentile introduced the DeKalb Community Foundation Land Use Committee (DCCF) to the Commission.

Mr. Templin did a brief overview of the DCCF mission and specifically highlighted the Land Use Committee’s commitment to smart growth.

Ms. Haines introduced herself and provided the Commission with a list of potential issues or concerns regarding land use. She explained that to prevent the DCCF from operating in a vacuum, DCCF Land Use Committee was reaching out to the RPC to find out what is important to stakeholders. She added that the intention was to assist the RPC in implementing the vision for DeKalb County. The list of potential issues or concerns consisted of:

- A. Direct Development toward existing communities
- B. Preserve open space / farmland
- C. Plan for mixed land uses
- D. Allow / Encourage compact buildings
- E. Create walkable neighborhoods
- F. Create distinctive and attractive communities
- G. Plan for stormwater usage
- H. Consider energy resources production and consumption in planning sustainable communities
- I. Plan for transportation needs
- J. Attract Business and Industry

Ms. Haines then asked the members to add to the list. Mr. Miller began the conversation by providing an example of about the Village of Hinckley needing access to zoning professionals. The Commission added the following to the list through the course of the conversation:

- K. Lack of access to professional to assist in implementation and administration
 - 1. Engineers
 - 2. Attorneys
 - 3. Land Planners
- L. Negotiation process with Developers
- M. Development of Checklist Criteria
- N. Working with other governmental entities police, school, etc.
- O. Understanding financial implications
- P. Consultant for grant writing
- Q. Wind Energy Assistance

Mr. Pardridge asked if DCCF's suggestions paralleled the RPC's goals. Mr. Miller responded that his understanding was that the group was meeting with the Commission as a potential partner.

Ms. Aldis questioned the purpose of the exercise noting that it felt duplicative of previous efforts not only by each municipalities planning committee but also of the Regional Planning Commission's efforts through the Comprehensive Plan. She provided the Commission members with correspondence which questioned the need for further planning with DCCF rather than implementation.

Mr. Miller stated that DCCF can work with the municipalities and the RPC to fulfill a resource role. Ms. Aldis responded that the RPC may not be the appropriate audience for the DCCF, rather than the municipalities themselves. Mr. Gentile emphasized that this was an opportunity for the RPC to extend some good will toward a new organization. Ms. Haines added that the DCCF did not have any predetermined conceptions of what the RPC or the municipalities will require. She stressed that the DCCF was looking for ways to help existing entities, but that DCCF needed clarification on which items were important.

Mr. Gentile pointed out that various components dictate a community's needs and requirements. He explained to Ms. Haines that what Hinckley required may not be what Genoa needs.

Ms. Zurbrugg responded that the financial assistance that DCCF has to offer the Communities will be determined by the Communities. She explained that the potential funds would be provided based on proposals and that DCCF was attempting to determine priorities of any potential recipients by visiting the Commission.

Mr. Miller asked the DCCF representatives to explain how the organization could respond to his example of the Village of Hinckley's need to retain professional services. Ms. Zurbrugg responded that the Village could submit a proposal of the project and the organization would determine if the funding for the proposal was possible.

Mr. Gentile provided a hypothetical situation that the City of Genoa needed a zoning attorney and asked if the City could then request funds to hire a professional to mitigate the problem. Ms. Zurbrugg responded if the proposal was written as a specific project the DCCF would review it as a possible grant, provided it worked toward the larger vision.

Ms. Aldis noted that these types of specific projects are the reason why she was suggesting that the exercise was repetitive, since individual communities have already completed a prioritization of goals.

Ms. Zurbrugg assured the Commission that the DCCF would be visiting with individual Communities to discuss their specific needs.

Mr. Gentile further explained that within the municipalities there is often a demand for a specific expertise and possibly DCCF could assist the Communities in locating these experts. Mr. Miller added that DCCF may provide a resource by vetting consultants.

Mr. Templin with DCCF expressed to the Commission the organization's intention to provide tools and resources to the Commission to assist them in their goals and make the best use of the limited resources available. The Commission then discussed the creation of a consultative fund, where the DCCF could facilitate professional contacts for the communities.

The DCCF members thanked the Commission for the time.

Mr. Thompson thanked the two groups for their presentations, noting that he felt that their special interests were welcome to present to the RPC. He welcomed the input from two concerned organizations and encouraged the groups to make themselves known to the public. He cautioned the organizations that in a County like DeKalb there may be opponents to these organizations and their goals. He noted that he would welcome any group with a conflicting opinion to also present to the Commission.

Mr. Pardridge asked for clarification on Mr. Thompson's point, Ms. Tobias responded that he intended for the Commission to be open to all.

Mr. Gentile noted that there was a limit to the assistance which any Community may accept any organization, and although the RPC was representative of the Communities with DeKalb County, the municipalities still operate independent and he stressed that the DCCF should reach out to the Communities.

6. Annual Dues

Mr. Gentile informed the Commission that the County had collected the annual dues from all of the members, except Maple Park.

7. Municipal Development Projects / Issues

Mr. Thompson asked the members for a show of hands as to whom had submitted for the stimulus funds, most indicated that their Communities had applied. He then suggested that Commission members lobby for money to small rural communities. Ms. Aldis then emphasized that for the application to the federal government Communities in DeKalb County were to indicate the County as "urban" rather than "rural".

Mr. Miller noted that the Wind Farm application brought by FPL Illinois Wind Energy was sent back to the public hearing for additional public comment on new information provided by the petitioner.

Mr. Hiland updated the Commission on the DeKalb High School development.

Mr. Gentile reiterated for the Commission that the prospective date for the seminar presented by the Sustainable Watershed Action Team was a Saturday in September, 2009 to be held in the Gathertorium.

8. Next Meeting Date -- After a brief discussion the Commission agreed that the next RPC meeting would be May 28, 2009 at 7:00 pm in the Conference Room East.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Rich Gentile
Chairman, DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission

RGV:rgv

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