

DEKALB COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
January 22, 2009

The DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) met on January 22, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the DeKalb County Administration Building, Conference Room East, in Sycamore, Illinois. In attendance were Commission members Frank Altmaier, Mike Becker, Bill Nicklas, Derek Hiland (DeKalb), Cookie Aldis, Jerry Thompson, Suzanne Sedlacek, Bill Beverley, Rich Gentile, Martha May (Lee), and Ken Andersen (DeKalb County). Staff included Paul Miller and Rebecca Von Drasek. Also in attendance was Kelley Chrisse, Sue Guio, Donna Prain, and Anita Zurbrugg.

1. **Roll Call** -- *Commission members Dan Godhardt, Becky Morphey, Ralph Tompkins and Don Pardridge were noted absent.*
2. **Approval of Agenda** -- *Mr. Nicklas moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Ms. Aldis, and the motion carried unanimously.*
3. **Approval of Minutes** -- *Ms. Aldis moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Sedlacek, and the motion carried unanimously.*
4. **Review of RPC Mandate**

Mr. Miller summarized the Regional Planning Commission's accomplishments in the past six years. He reminded the Commissioners that the RPC was created in 2002 as a cooperative effort between the County and each of the municipalities partially or entirely within its borders. Its creation was in response to the fact that there are many issues and events that have importance and impacts that cross jurisdictional boundaries, yet there is little in State law or common governance practice to encourage various jurisdictions to work together. The Commission's purpose, therefore, was to provide a forum for communication, cooperation and coordination on issues of regional importance, including planning, growth and development, transportation, and surface and subsurface water. Mr. Miller pointed out that the Charter for the Regional Planning Commission had been included in the Commissioner's packets for their review. He concluded that in the current economic climate communities would face similar regional challenges.

Mr. Gentile noted that he also wanted to bring the Charter in front of the Commissioners because he was concerned that interested third parties would ask the RPC to allow them to present and give credence to their particular interests, which could be beyond the scope and intent of the Commission.

Ms. Sedlacek asked if there was a specific example of a group attempting to use the Commission in this manner. Mr. Gentile responded that there was no specific group, but that there had been some inquiries from special interest groups. Mr. Miller added that the Commissioners should always consider whether the agendas of groups and individuals who wish to speak to or work with the RPC are germane to the Commission's purposes.

Mr. Nicklas agreed that a group may attempt to use the RPC to create greater interest in their agenda, he suggested in the future that the Commissioners consider if the content is consistent with the original goals of the Commission. He went on to ask if the annual due structure was sufficient for the County, to which Mr. Miller responded that it was sufficient. Mr. Nicklas also noted that the Charter required a “monthly” meeting, but noted that it was sometimes difficult to create a meaningful agenda for the Commission. Mr. Miller noted that the Commission was meeting generally every other month.

Mr. Nicklas moved to amend the Charter to reflect that the Commission intended to meet every other month, seconded by Ms. Sedlacek, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Miller agreed to draft prospective language for the amendment.

5. Initiation of County Unified Comprehensive Plan Update

Mr. Miller began the discussion by highlighting that DeKalb County adopted the Unified Comprehensive Plan at the end of 2003. He explained that the Plan 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. Since its adoption, there have been changes in land uses through annexation and development. There have also been changes in elected officials, who are authorized to represent the desires of their constituents with respect to how their communities should look and grow. Mr. Miller noted that several municipalities have adopted amendments to their comprehensive plans since 2003. He argued that 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. This holds for the Unified Comprehensive Plan as well. The Planning and Zoning Committee of the DeKalb County Board has endorsed the idea of updating the DeKalb County Unified Comprehensive Plan in 2009, with an eye toward adoption by the County Board by January of 2010. Lastly, he suggested that the current economic downturn affords an opportunity for consideration of future growth without the pressure of actual development proposals pending before the decision-makers. Mr. Miller then outlined the process by which the County intended to update the Comprehensive Plan:

1. Gather all of the current municipal future land use plans and integrate them into the County GIS system to create a new unified future land use plan. The GIS system already has the current municipal boundaries (NOTE: This task has already been completed);
2. Update demographic data from available sources;
3. Make any desirable changes to goals, objectives and future land use categories;
4. Conduct three open houses, one each in the north, central and south portions of the County, to solicit public input on the goals, objectives, land use policies and future land use plan, and use the input to finalize these elements of the updated plan;
5. Conduct one public hearing on the updated Unified Comprehensive Plan;

6. Send the updated Plan to the County Board for adoption in January of 2010.

He concluded by asking if Genoa might host the open house in the north, Sycamore or DeKalb in the central, and Sandwich or Somonauk in the south. He also asked for feedback from Commission members on the proposed update outline.

Mr. Gentile noted that the City of Genoa would be sending out a newsletter in April and could include information about the County's northern open house if the date and time are known. He asked if the Future Land Use Map could be overlaid on an aerial. Mr. Miller thought that this might be a possibility, and said he could explore the issue with the County's Information Management Department.

Mr. Nicklas noted that the "County Seat" would be available and suggested that the open houses be held in the evening starting in late May, early June.

Mr. Altmaier asked when the County would need the information if the open houses were to be held in late May, early June. Mr. Miller agreed that sooner the information was provided to the County the better.

Mr. Nicklas also reminded the Commissioners that if they had inter-governmental agreements that will be effected by changes they may make to their plans that they should attempt to contact interested parties such as the Farm Bureau. He then explained that the inter-governmental agreement between the City of Genoa and the City of Sycamore was altered when the City of Sycamore recently revised its Comprehensive Plan, reducing the area planned for non-agricultural development.

Mr. Gentile asked if the County's public hearing for the Unified Comprehensive plan could work in conjunction as the required public hearing for municipal updates. Mr. Miller stated that the municipalities would have to hold individual hearings for their specific modifications. He also demonstrated that the County plan only shows the current municipal boundaries in gray, so any details within the corporate limits would need to be depicted on each municipality's plan.

Mr. Becker also reminded the Commission that the elections were to be held in April, and therefore Communities may have new officials. He suggested that it may be difficult to turn around an update by late May, early June.

Mr. Miller concluded by encouraging Commission Members to discuss updating their plans to reflect the new goals and objectives of the community and to explain the benefits of coordinating such an update with the County process.

6. Discussion of Next Informational Seminar Topic

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 with a possible information seminar topic on sustainable development and alternative stormwater management techniques. He provided the Commission with a handout outlining previously held stormwater workshops that SWAT had organized.

Mr. Gentile agreed that the smart growth measures (i.e. conservation design and green practices) SWAT was suggesting required plan commissioners willing to ask for these types of improvements. He added that with education many of the plan commissioners understand the standards and are more apt to ask for less traditional design requirements.

Ms. Aldis also noted that an informational seminar would give municipal plan commissioners a reason to meet in the current economic downturn.

Ms. Sedlacek noted that the Village of Waterman's Planning Commission was already meeting to consider some revisions to their ordinance to incorporate smart growth measures.

Ms. Aldis asked if the SWAT group presentation would only be open to public officials (elected and appointed). Mr. Miller noted that this was SWAT's preference to meet with decision-makers to discuss these types of design standards without the influence from outside interests.

Mr. Gentile asked that the SWAT group individualize their presentation, to include local improvements that meet these smart growth standards.

Ms. Sedlacek agreed and noted that one example might be one of the recent developments in Maple Park.

Mr. Gentile asked the Commissioners to look for existing examples in the County and provide the examples to him. He would then photograph and collate the information to provide to SWAT. He asked the Committee to collect these prior to the April RPC Meeting.

Mr. Miller suggested that at the April RPC meeting the Committee nail down a date and topic for the seminar.

Mr. Gentile suggested that the SWAT group briefly present at the next RPC meeting, so that the Commission can discuss the seminar's topic.

7. DeKalb County Continuum of Care Information

Kelly Chrise, an intern with the City of DeKalb, made a presentation to the Commission on the “Continuum of Care” ten-year program to address homelessness. Ms. Chrise explained that DeKalb County Continuum of Car (DeKalb CoC) originally formed as a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) mandate, and seeks to break the cycle of homelessness in the County by assisting homeless individuals and families move into permanent housing and become self-sufficient. Ms. Chrise then passed out a memo regarding the “Point-In-Time Count of Unsheltered Homeless Persons”, which was scheduled for January 30, 2009. She explained that the purpose of the count was to identify people in need within the County, and she asked that Commissioners share this information with individuals within their jurisdictions to assist the DeKalb CoC in identifying and counting those in need.

Mr. Miller asked if the DeKalb CoC was in contact with the Mary Ramp, DeKalb County Health Department. Ms. Chrise stated that the agencies work together.

Mr. Nicklas suggested that the Commissioners may want to speak with their respective police departments, as this is one department within each community who may have contact with homeless individuals.

Ms. Sedlacek noted that the January timing for the Point-In-Time Count was awkward considering the weather. Ms. Aldis noted that the program was nationwide.

Mr. Andersen also asked if the DeKalb CoC was working with the Health and Human Services Committee of the DeKalb County Board, and Ms. Chrise stated that the were working with that Committee as well.

Ms. Chrise thanked the Commission for the opportunity to speak on behalf of DeKalb Continuum of Care and encouraged Commissioners to contact her with the names and contact information of any individuals or organizations that are involved in working with the homeless in their communities.

8. Member Re-appointments

Mr. Miller noted that the following municipalities would need to forward in writing to County Board Chairman Ruth Anne Tobias the names of a representative to the Regional Planning Commission and an alternate. The names of the member representative and an alternate need to be received no later than March 2, 2009, so that the County Board Chairman can make appoints at the March 18, 2009 meeting of the County Board.

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Appointed</u>
Town of Cortland	Cheryl “Cookie” Aldis
Village of Hinckley	Dan Godhardt
Village of Lee	Jerry Olson

City of Sandwich	Bill Beverly
Village of Shabbona	Don Partridge
City of Sycamore	Bill Nicklas

Ms. May noted that the Village of Lee may not meet prior to the March 2, 2009 deadline. Mr. Miller asked that the Village President send a brief letter extending Mr. Olson's and Ms. May's terms, until a formal nomination can be completed.

Mr. Beverly stated that he would be reappointed, although he noted he was on the ballot in April. Mr. Miller pointed out that Mr. Beverly could continue to serve as the representative from Sandwich even if not reelected.

9. Municipal Development Projects / Issues

Mr. Nicklas noted there were rumors regarding the possibility of federal funds, with guidelines yet to be established for "shovel ready plans". Mr. Nicklas suggested members of the Commission contact their State Representatives of their prospective projects. He noted that there was specific interest for these projects in low income areas. Ms. May asked if this funding could be used for EPA mandated projects. Mr. Nicklas responded that the plans most likely to receive funding are those for which there are construction documents already in place.

Mr. Miller informed the Commissioners that the County had received a Special Use Application from FPL Energy Illinois Wind LLC and would be holding the public hearing on February 19, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the multi-purpose room of the DeKalb County Health Department at 2574 N. Annie Glidden Road. The project is proposed to consist of 151 turbines, 18 of which would be in Lee County, and another 14 of which are in the jurisdiction of the Villages of Lee and Shabbona. Shabbona has already approved the turbines proposed in its jurisdiction. Ms. May added that the Village of Lee had postponed their decision on the wind towers until the County has completed its process.

Ms. Sedlacek informed the Commission that storm sewer improvements were on-going in the Village of Waterman.

Mr. Beverley emphasized that the City of Sandwich had also had its storm sewer televised and would soon begin repairs in damaged areas of the line.

10. Next Meeting Date -- There was discussion as to when the next meeting of the RPC should occur. Mr. Gentile noted that he would not be available on the regular meeting date of March 26. It was agreed that **the next RPC meeting would be April 2, 2009 at 7:00 pm in the Conference Room East.**

7. Adjournment -- *Ms. Aldis motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Altmaier, and the motion carried unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

Rich Gentile
Chairman, DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission

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