

OTTAWA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

APPROVED MINUTES

DATE: January 28, 2008

PLACE: Ottawa County Fillmore Complex, Board Room

PRESENT: Matt Hehl, Jim Holtvluwer, Doug Kamphuis, Jim Miedema, Bill Miller, Roman Wilson, Jeff Wincel

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Mark Knudsen, Tabitha Rowley

GUESTS: Rep. Dave Agema, Michigan State House of Representatives; Jim Bachmeier, Grand Valley State University; Roger Bergman, Grand Haven City; Peter Daining, Grand Haven Tribune; Chris Hoard, U.S. Geological Survey; Adam Kantrovich, MSU Extension; Gary Karr, Wright Township; Adam London, Ottawa County Health Department; Tom Manderscheid, Grand Haven Township; Steve Rheaume, U.S. Geological Survey

Call to Order:

Vice-Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. A quorum was present to do business. Invocation was given by Jim Miedema.

Approval of the Agenda:

08-01 Motion: To approve the updated January 28, 2008 Agenda, which moved Item 14 (B) to Item 8 (B).

Moved by: Holtvluwer Supported by: Hehl **UNANIMOUS**

Approval of the Minutes:

08-02 Motion: To approve the minutes of the November 26, 2007 meeting.

Moved by: Hehl Supported by: Holtvluwer **UNANIMOUS**

Introductions and Welcome New Members:

Doug Kamphuis and Roman Wilson were introduced as the two new members of the Planning Commission. All of the guests present introduced themselves, as well.

Election of Officers:

** Please note: The election of Chair via secret ballot was not allowable, and therefore this election was not valid. This fact had not been discovered until after the meeting had occurred.

08-03 Motion: To vote for the office of Chair via secret ballot.

Moved by: Miller Supported by: Miedema

The motion passed as shown by the following votes: Yeas: Hehl, Holtvluwer, Kamphuis, Miedema, Miller, Wilson (6) Nays: Wincel (1)

08-04 Motion: To nominate Jim Miedema as Chair.

Moved by: Miller Supported by: Wincel

08-05 Motion: To nominate Jim Holtvluwer as Chair.

Moved by: Hehl Supported by: Wincel

Results of the secret ballot were as follows:

Miedema – 5

Holtvluwer – 2

08-06 Motion: To destroy the voting ballots.

Moved by: Hehl Supported by: Holtvluwer **UNANIMOUS**

08-07 Motion: To nominate Bill Miller as Vice-Chair.

Moved by: Wincel Supported by: Hehl **UNANIMOUS**

08-08 Motion: To nominate Tabitha Rowley as Secretary.

Moved by: Wincel Supported by: Miller **UNANIMOUS**

Presentations:

A. Ottawa County Comprehensive Groundwater Assessment – Chris Hoard, USGS

Mark Knudsen stated that the Board of Commissioners had established a goal to conduct a comprehensive, countywide groundwater assessment, due to the fact that some County residents have experienced problems with well water, both in terms of quality and capacity. A draft RFP was created that focused on capacity, depth, flow, recharge rates, and quality of ground and surface water. Thus far, the County has been working exclusively with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). If the County decides to seek bids from private companies, then USGS will no longer continue to be involved.

Mark stated that USGS had provided a proposal to complete the Study at a cost of \$1.5 million. At the last meeting, questions had been raised as to whether the entire Study could be completed based on the amount of data that was available. In response to those questions, USGS returned a second, smaller proposal that mainly involves data collection, but does not specifically answer the questions that were raised by the Planning Commission. USGS was asked to come in to discuss their new proposal.

Chris Hoard from USGS introduced his agency, stating that USGS is a non-regulatory agency that mainly conducts research. The USGS has offices throughout the United States, three of which are in

Michigan. Because it is a national organization, expertise can be drawn from all over the United States.

Chris reiterated the issues that would be examined. He stated that USGS would be able to rely on existing data but would also need to collect data to determine whether the comprehensive study would be feasible.

According to Chris, the benefits of data collection would include a greater understanding of the current water issues, defining areas with problems, and projecting if other problem areas could arise. In addition, all of the data that is collected would be available online to anyone on the USGS' Water Resource Database.

This smaller-scale data collection effort would cost \$354,000 for the three-year study. Chris stated that USGS is able to provide up to 50% matching funds.

Jeff Wincel asked why this smaller study would take three years. Chris stated that it was important to have data over a period of time to show the stresses that occur to the aquifers over a longer period of time. Jeff also asked how often samples would be taken. Chris stated that there were three types of samples that would be taken, at varying time intervals. Water quality samples would be taken once, at the beginning of the study. Intense monitoring wells would record data every 15-30 minutes. Surface flow wells would be sampled monthly.

In addition, Jeff asked if this Study would correlate with the Build-Out Analyses that Mark's office have been working to complete. Mark stated that his office would work together with USGS on projections for future water demand and whether enough water would be available to support it.

Roman Wilson asked if the monitoring would cover a cross-section of different uses of land (i.e. farmland, industrial, residential). Chris stated that the monitoring would be done over the different geologic formations, with a certain number of monitoring sites occurring in each geological formation.

Jeff asked if specific capacities would be given at the end of this Study. Chris stated that USGS could give an idea as to capacity, but not a specific number. In order to do that, a specific Study would need to be done on the area in question. Jeff also asked what exactly we would receive at the end of the Study. Steve Rheaume, a colleague of Chris Hoard's, stated that this Study would map out areas of concern, to show where more detailed areas of study would need to occur. There would be more information available at the end of the study than is currently available.

Mark asked if this smaller study would replace the \$1.5 million proposal, or if it was merely a precursor to that study. Chris replied that the smaller study would give the same background information that we would receive from the larger study, but it would also provide additional information to make a more informed decision about whether a flow model is needed.

B. Ottawa County Public Transportation Study – Roger Bergman, City of Grand Haven Mayor

Mayor Bergman stated that he had attended a meeting six months ago with business leaders of Grand Haven and had asked for input on problems the businesses were facing. At that time, several business leaders expressed concern for the lack of public transportation for their employees from Muskegon or Holland to come to Grand Haven for employment. Mayor Bergman said that he had met with several other mayors, a representative from Pete Hoekstra's office, representatives from the Grand Valley Metro Council, and Mark. They had discussed the possibility of providing public

transportation links between the major metropolitan areas of the region (Grand Haven, Muskegon, Holland, and Grand Rapids).

Mayor Bergman also stated that Abed Itani from the Grand Valley Metro Council had mentioned the possibility of centralizing the routes in Allendale at Grand Valley State University, and having several routes there each day from Holland, Grand Haven, Muskegon, and Grand Rapids. Mayor Bergman also said that Abed had thought that these links could be provided for roughly \$500,000 per year.

Mark said that a previous study had been conducted several years ago by Ottawa County, indicating that it would be cost-prohibitive to provide transit services to rural areas. To that point, it may be more realistic to change the scope of the Transit Study to look at these proposed linkages, instead of providing routes within the entire County.

Jeff Wincel indicated that he thought the original RFP was not written to cover rural areas. Mark said that the original RFP was very broad, and if a consultant were to cover the entire scope of work, rural areas would be studied. Mark said that the scope would need to be re-written to emphasize the focus on linkages between urban areas.

Mark asked if the Planning Commission members thought a new public hearing should be held or if further input from stakeholders should be obtained before changing the scope of work. Jeff Wincel and Matt Hehl both thought that it was unnecessary to ask for additional input at this time.

Jeff Wincel asked if the timeline of the study would be decreased, since it will be less broad. Mark stated that it would likely take the same amount of time as originally proposed.

Jim Miedema stated that if anyone had further questions, they should email Mark.

Action Items:

None

Announcements:

A. Reports of Meetings Attended

Jeff Wincel stated that he is on the subcommittee of the Park Township Planning Commission to update the Master Plan. He asked if there were any considerations the County would like them to make in their update. Mark indicated that it would be helpful if they would consider adopting the standardized colors.

Bill Miller had nothing to report.

Jim Miedema and Jim Holtvluwer both attended the presentation by Rick Harrison as part of the County's Excellence Through Training series. Jim Holtvluwer said that he enjoyed hearing a different perspective on development.

Matt Hehl, Roman Wilson, and Doug Kamphuis had nothing to report.

B. Environment/Energy Meeting

Mark distributed an updated agenda for the Environment/Energy meeting.

C. Spring/Summer Excellence Through Training Schedule

Petitions and Communications:

- A. FYI Folder
- B. Letter of correspondence to all Ottawa County local unit of government planning commission chairs, dated 12/19/2007, regarding Home Foreclosure and Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance data.
- C. Memo of correspondence to Dave Bee, dated 12/14/2007, regarding the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners resolution in support of the 2007-2009 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Report
- D. Letter of correspondence from Blendon Township, dated 11/29/2007, regarding a P.A. 116 application for Boersen Farms, Inc.
- E. Letter of correspondence to Blendon Township, dated 12/6/2007, regarding a P.A. 116 application for Boersen Farms, Inc.
- F. Email of correspondence to all Ottawa County on-staff planners and zoning administrators regarding migrant housing ordinance
- G. Letter of correspondence from Michigan State University Extension, received 1/8/2008, regarding educational opportunities in February and March 2008
- H. Letter of correspondence from Ken Rizzio, dated 1/9/2008, regarding OCEDO's Activity/Performance Report for the second half of 2007 (July 2 – December 28, 2007)
- I. Letter of correspondence from Wright Township, dated 12/7/2007, regarding the preparation of an amendment to its Master Plan
- J. Letter of correspondence to Wright Township, dated 1/21/2008, acknowledging receipt of Wright Township's intent to plan
- K. Email of correspondence to all Ottawa County on-staff planners and zoning administrators regarding LED/blingking and oscillating signage ordinances

08-09 Motion: To receive for information Items A-K.

Moved by: Wincel

Supported by: Holtvluwer

UNANIMOUS

Public Comments:

Representative Dave Agema provided an update from Lansing regarding transportation, taxes, and the Governor's State of the State address.

Discussion Items

A. County Board Program Rankings

At the January meeting of the County Board of Commissioners, the Board had ranked each of the discretionary programs within each department. Mark distributed a list showing how each of the Planning Department's discretionary programs had ranked. Most of the department's items were above the average point on the list. In addition, Mark reported that staff is tracking their time daily for each project as a part of performance-based budgeting.

B. M-231 Bypass Non-Motorized Pathway Bridge

Mark noted that a representative from MDOT is scheduled to attend the February meeting to answer questions that the Planning Commission had raised in a previous meeting regarding the M-231 Bypass Non-Motorized Pathway Bridge. Mark reported that MDOT had asked for the questions before the meeting, and he reviewed all of the questions with the Planning Commission.

C. PDR Program

Mark reported that the County Administrator is hoping to implement a PDR program by late spring or early summer. He reviewed the program's proposed scoring system, noting two changes that had been made to the scoring sheet, based on discussion at the last meeting. At this time, Mark thought that the scoring system was ready to present at a public hearing.

Additionally, Mark discussed the draft of the County Board of Commissioners' PDR Ordinance. Mark asked if the Planning Commission would like to hold a public hearing on the ordinance, or if they would like to present the ordinance to the Board as it currently stands. The Planning Commission members decided to hold a special hearing in March that would cover the proposed scoring system and draft ordinance.

At the last meeting, questions had been raised as to who would hold the development rights. Mark had spoken with the County Administrator, who said that the County would hold the development rights. In addition, the County would act as the fiduciary, although the County would not contribute any funds to the program. It was still unknown as to who would administer the program.

D. Wright Township Ethanol Production Facilities Ordinance

Mark reported that Wright Township was addressing a small ethanol distillery that was set up by a farmer and was not permitted under the current Township Ordinance. The township is in the process of amending the ordinance to permit an ethanol facility as a special use. Additionally, the Michigan Department of Agriculture has sent a letter to the Attorney General's office asking if this use is covered under the Right To Farm Act.

The Township held a public hearing in December. Mark, Matt Hehl, and representatives from MSU-E and the Farm Bureau attended Wright Township Planning Commission's January meeting.

Gary Karr, Chair of the Wright Township Planning Commission, stated that the Township had spent months looking for scientific information on ethanol. He indicated that the Planning Commission

asked for assistance from MSU-E. Adam Kantrovich from MSU-E stated that he has spent many hours searching for scientific views on regulating ethanol. He said that many views are obscured with personal opinion and philosophies, making it difficult to find purely scientific information.

Mark also stated that there have been a number of concerns, primarily how large the setback should be, and the fact that ethanol burns invisibly. The risk of explosion is also a concern for neighbors. MSU-E has spent many hours researching ethanol facilities, and have found many regulations for large ethanol producers that would not apply to smaller facilities. They have not found any examples of local ordinances at this time.

Adam stated that in terms of fire/explosion danger, ethanol is similar to gasoline. However, in pure form, ethanol is water soluble and environmentally friendly. If it is transported, ethanol must be approved by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) and is mixed with gasoline so that it will not be fit for human consumption. Additionally, Adam reported that fire suppression can be of concern, as foam cannot be used as an effective fire suppressant. Fire departments must use suppressants that are specifically rated for ethanol fires.

Jeff Wincel suggested considering a County ordinance. Mark thought it might be more beneficial to create a model ordinance. Matt Hehl stated that Polkton Township would benefit from a model ordinance, as well as other townships that may be considering this issue in the future.

08-10 Motion: To authorize the Ottawa County Planning Department to create a model ordinance within 90 days for townships wishing to regulate smaller-scale ethanol producers.

Moved by: Hehl

Supported by: Wincel

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Input and Strategy Session

A. Water Quality Study

Mark asked the Planning Commission to determine if they would like to move forward with the USGS proposal, or ask for private bids. Adam London from the Ottawa County Health Department stated that USGS seemed to be proposing a research project that may not be a useful management tool to predict the geographic locations that would have difficulty supporting development.

Roman Wilson stated that there would be value in the information from USGS, but he would like to see bids from private firms. He thought that a company would be able to analyze the groundwater and couple that data with computer modeling to provide a product with more value. He also asked if any other grants were available.

Mark stated that he had spoken with the County Administrator, who thought that foundations would potentially provide grants to the project, since it was unique.

08-11 Motion: To request bids from the private sector for the Countywide Water Resources Study.

Moved by: Wincel

Supported by: Holtvluwer

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The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.