

OTTAWA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

APPROVED MINUTES

DATE: April 16, 2003

PLACE: Ottawa County Fillmore Complex, Board Room

PRESENT: Betty Gajewski, Robert Rinck, Cornelius VanderKam, Bill Miller, Jim Miedema,
John DeGrazia

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Mark Knudsen, Soonja Hixon, Paul Sachs

GUESTS: Keri Pell, MacTV; Greg Chandler, Grand Rapids Press; Matt Stevens, WOOD TV; Joanne Marcetti, Grand Haven Township; Paul Heidel, Ottawa County Health Department; James Szejda, Ottawa County Health Department

Call to Order:

Chair Gajewski called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. A quorum was present to do business. Invocation was given by Cornelius VanderKam.

Approval of the Agenda:

03-11 Motion: To approve the amended April 16, 2003 Agenda. Betty noted that a new Agenda was prepared. In addition, Item 10, New Business will be moved prior hearing Item 5.

Moved by: Rinck Supported by: VanderKam **UNANIMOUS**

Approval of the Minutes:

03-12 Motion: To approve the minutes of the March 5, 2003 meeting.

Moved by: VanderKam Supported by: Rinck **UNANIMOUS**

New Business:

A. Resolution - US 31 Bypass

Mark said that Governor Granholm and MDOT announced that there were several projects in the West Michigan area that were being taken off the five year plan due to budget constraints. He said that delaying the US 31 Bypass project may cause the environmental impact statement to become obsolete and out of date within 4-5 years. If there is no ongoing work or progress on the

project, there is a strong possibility that the Environmental Impact Statement will have to be rewritten or revised. This would mean the process would have to start over, wasting much valuable time and money. Mark said that the project could be in jeopardy because of Governor Granholm and MDOT's decision. The resolution is to lay out the reasons why the project should not be delayed and request that the \$30 million dollars in funding be restored immediately. After a brief discussion, the Planning Commission agreed to amend the resolution to add Joanne Marcetti's suggestion to forward and encourage the local units of government, as well as regional planning agencies, to submit a similar resolution of support.

03-13 Motion: To adopt the amended resolution reaffirming support for the US 31 Bypass.

Moved by: VanderKam Supported by: Rinck **MOTION PASSED**

Yeas: Gajewski, VanderKam, Rinck, DeGrazia, Miedema (5)

Nays: Miller (1)

B. Resolution - Baldwin Street Connector, Georgetown Township

Mark said that this project is needed due to the congestion and limited access to the I-96 corridor. During a course of one day, there are approximately 20-25 train operations. He said that there were some serious safety concerns and congestion issues. The project is currently in the stage of completing its Environmental Impact Statement. The \$10 million dollars in the five year plan was deferred until further notice. Because of the safety issues that is associated with the project, this project should move forward and the \$10 million in funds should be restored. Mark wanted to note that the land to construct this project has already been purchased and ready for construction. After a brief discussion, a vote was taken to unanimously support the resolution.

03-14 Motion: To adopt the resolution supporting the Baldwin Street Connector in Georgetown Township.

Moved by: Rinck Supported by: VanderKam **UNANIMOUS**

C. PA 116 Applications - Chester and Wright Townships

Mark said that a large amount of PA 116 Applications were received from Chester and Wright Townships and a standard letter was prepared supporting those applications. Mark proposed a motion to send a standard letter for PA 116 Applications that pertain to enrollment or renewals applications only. He said that the only applications he would bring before the Planning Commission are applications proposing to remove themselves from the program. Since the

removal applications are so controversial, Mark said it is important that the Planning Commission have some input on these applications.

03-15 Motion: To approve that a standardized letter be provided for PA 116 Applications pertaining to enrollment and renewals.

Moved by: Miller Supported by: Rinck **UNANIMOUS**

03-16 Motion: To approve the PA 116 Applications from Chester and Wright Townships.

Moved by: Miller Supported by: Miedema **UNANIMOUS**

D. High Priority Project Funding - Transportation Project Evaluation Criteria, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee On Highways and Transit

Mark said that the high priority project funding is a source of federal funding that is available every six years from the federal government. He said that each State is eligible for a certain amount of money to spend on specific projects that are regional in nature. Mark said that Congressman Hoekstra has been working very diligently to get the application considered before the Transportation Committee in Washington. He said one area that would fit the criteria is for bicycle and pedestrian pathways. A grant proposal for \$8 million was submitted to fund four trails. These trails are the Grand River Greenway, Macatawa Greenway, Muskatawa to Coopersville Trail, and the Leonard Street paved shoulder. Mark said that the Planning and Grants Department received letters of support from virtually every local unit of government. It may take anywhere from one to seven months to be notified whether the fund are approved.

E. Port Sheldon Township Master Plan

Mark provided a handout to the Planning Commission members on the Port Sheldon Township Master Plan. He said that under the new State statute, the Ottawa County Planning Commission must review and comment on all Master Plans to determine if they are consistent with the County Development Plan, as well as the surrounding local units of government. A brief summary of the Master Plan consistency was given. Port Sheldon was commended using cluster developments and open space. It was noted that this will increase the density and preserve the natural features and rural character of the township. It was suggested that the Master Plan consider using an overlay district along US 31. This would include landscape design standards, buffers protecting the trees, and natural features along the roadway.

03-17 Motion: To approve and support Port Sheldon Township's Master Plan
Moved by: Miller Supported by: Miedema **UNANIMOUS**

F. Excellence Through Training Program - Spring 2003 Seminar Schedule

Mark provided a brief summary of the two training programs scheduled on April 30, 2003, and May 29, 2003.

G. Michigan Land Use Leadership Council Meeting and Public Hearings

Mark said the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council is looking for input regarding changes in State statutes. The leadership council will be holding several public hearings throughout the State to receive comments. Mark said if the Planning Commission members wanted to provide their comments, he would need them by the end of April.

H. County Planning Act and County Development Plan

Mark said that due to prior commitments and projects, the County Development Plan will probably be put on hold until the end of the year.

I. Rescheduling Planning Commission Meeting from May 7, 2003 to May 14, 2003

Mark asked the Planning Commission members to reschedule the meeting on May 7, 2003 to May 14, 2003, due to a conference in Cleveland, Ohio. The members will notify the Planning & Grants Department by April 22, 2003.

Announcements

A. Introductions

Betty Gajewski had the members of the audience introduce themselves. The attendees included the following: Keri Pell, MacTV; Greg Chandler, Grand Rapids Press; Matt Stevens, WOOD TV; Joanne Marcetti, Grand Haven Township; Paul Heidel, Ottawa County Health Department; James Szejda, Ottawa County Health Department

B. Reports of Meetings Attended

John DeGrazia has been away on vacation and had nothing to report.

Cornelius VanderKam had nothing to report.

Betty Gajewski attended the Parks & Recreation Commission meeting. She said there was a public hearing that was held for an application to receive grant funding for property that the County is looking into purchasing. It is called the Riverfront Park and Natural Acquisition Project and involves two parcels along the Grand River in Robinson Township. The grant request is over \$1.5 million dollars. One of the unique features they would like to consider is developing a campground owned and operated by the County. She said there will be an open house on Tuesday, April 22, 2003, to review the status of the Grand River Greenway Project.

Robert Rinck attended the West Nile Virus presentation in Allendale on March 31, 2003. On March 25, 2003, he attended the LinkMichigan meeting and also attended the Michigan Association of Counties Transportation Committee in Lansing pertaining to the Governor's transportation funding cuts.

Jim Miedema attended a presentation on the West Nile Virus at the Grand Valley Metro Council meeting.

Bill Miller had nothing to report.

Presentations

Dr. Paul Heidel and Jim Szejda, Ottawa County Health Department, provided a presentation on the West Nile Virus. Dr. Heidel said this is an emerging disease in the United States, but cases can be tracked as far back as 1937 in Uganda Africa. It was not until 1999 in New York, that the first known case of the West Nile Virus appeared in the United States. At first it was a mystery disease until the appearance of many dead crows and blue jays.

The West Nile Virus is spread through the saliva of a mosquito. The main transmission is from infected birds, but is also known to be transmitted through blood transfusions, organ donations, and through breast milk. He said there was a total of 600 cases in the State of Michigan, and 10 cases in Ottawa County. Michigan ranked 2nd in the total number of cases in the United States. Ottawa County ranked 5th in Michigan. He said Ottawa County is taking a three prong approach on tracking the outbreak of the West Nile Virus. This approach is through surveillance, prevention and control, and education. Surveillance involves trapping of mosquitos, collecting dead birds, and keeping count of horse and human transmissions. This will help track and target "hot areas" in the county.

Jim Szedja said there are measures that can be taken to control and prevent the outbreak of the West Nile Virus. This can be achieved by educating the public on ways to prevent breeding grounds for mosquitos such as old tires, bird baths,

etc. Other options are using larvaside and adulticides (spray). Another way to prevent the transmission of the virus is by wearing long sleeve shirts and pants and to use repellents that contain the ingredient "Deet." He said symptoms of the West Nile Virus range from no symptoms, to a flu-like symptom such as a headache, muscle aches and pains, and a low grade fever.

Petitions & Communications

A. FYI Folder

B. Communication to Spring Lake Village Community Services Director Regarding the Blendon Township Smart Growth Demonstration Project Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance CD.

C. Communication to Local Real Estate Agencies Regarding the Agricultural Awareness Brochure.

D. Communication to and from Wright Township Regarding the Wright Township Zoning Ordinance Amendment, Section 1202.

E. Communication to the Friends of Ottawa County Trails and Paths Committee.

F. Communication to M.C. Smith Associates & Architectural Group regarding the Holland Charter Township's 2003 Community Parks and Recreation Plan

G. Communication to and from Chester Township Regarding Amendments to the Chester Township Zoning Ordinance.

03-18 Motion: To receive for information Items A - G

Moved by: VanderKam Supported by: Miedema **UNANIMOUS**

Public Comments

Joanne Marcetti, Grand Haven Township, said that the township has committed to implementing GIS technology. It will be used for administration and planning purposes. Also, Grand Haven Township is creating a five year Transportation Master Plan for streets and roads. She also reported that they have received a FEMA Grant for \$40,000 to construct a wellness and fitness facility for fire personnel. She said construction will begin in approximately 3-4 weeks. She reported on several other miscellaneous items.

Old Business

A. North/South Corridor Study (Update)

Mark said a meeting was conducted with the consultant on April 15, 2003. As a result, the consultant has agreed to redraft the document he originally provided.

B. M-104 Study (Update)

Mark said interviews were conducted with four consultants and a selection should be made within a week. He said that the completion date is anticipated in December 2003.

C. Ottawa County Planning & Grants Web Page (Update)

Mark reported that the FrontPage software was recently installed. He anticipates to have a sample of the web page available at the next Planning Commission meeting.

D. Local Planning Commission Meetings (Update)

Mark provided a brief update on the meetings that have been conducted with the local units of government within the past month. He said that the Planning and Grants Department has received a favorable response regarding these meetings.

E. Friends of Ottawa County Trails and Paths

Mark said the first Steering Committee meeting was conducted. At that meeting, the committee had set some goals and established a vision for the committee. There will be a meeting in May with the sub-regional groups. The two primary goals is to look at funding issues and prioritizing the pathways.

Adjournment

03-19 Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 8:48 p.m.

Moved by: VanderKam Supported by: Rinck **UNANIMOUS**