

**OTTAWA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

**PROPOSED MINUTES**

DATE: December 18, 2006

PLACE: Ottawa County Fillmore Complex, Conference Room A

PRESENT: Betty Gajewski, Robert Rinck, Cornelius Vander Kam, Jim Miedema, Gary Scholten, Jeffrey Wincel

ABSENT: Bill Miller

STAFF: Mark Knudsen, Tabitha Rowley, Meghann Rauscher

GUESTS: None

**Call to Order:**

Chair Gajewski called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. A quorum was present to do business. Invocation was given by Cornelius Vander Kam.

**Approval of the Agenda:**

**06-42 Motion:** To approve the December 18, 2006 Agenda, with the following amendments:

- Under “Discussion Items”, add “Item E – Urban Smart Growth” and “Item F – Standardized Zoning and Mapping”.

Moved by: Rinck    Supported by: Vander Kam                        **UNANIMOUS**

**Approval of the Minutes:**

**06-43 Motion:** To approve the minutes of the November 27, 2006 meeting.

Moved by: Rinck    Supported by: Wincel    **UNANIMOUS**

**Announcements:**

**A. Introductions**

None

**B. Reports of Meetings Attended**

Betty Gajewski attended the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting. She mentioned a recent editorial in the Grand Rapids Press regarding the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Department’s Master Planning process for North Ottawa Dunes. The editorial was very complimentary of Ottawa County. In addition, two grants have been approved for funding from the Natural Resources Trust Fund. The first grant will fund the

acquisition of property along the Grand River in Polkton Township, and the second grant will fund construction of a stairway on Mt. Pisgah in Park 12. Betty reported that it is very unusual for an organization to have two projects approved, and both projects scored very highly as well.

Betty also reported that the Parks and Recreation Department is also working on public outreach regarding Red Pine Disease. In Hiawatha Forest and Robinson Township Forest, 50-75% of the trees have been thinned in order to slow the spread of the disease. The Parks and Recreation Department wants to make sure the public knows why the tree thinning is taking place and wants to educate the public regarding other tree diseases, as well. The Emerald Ash Borer, Beach Tree Disease, and Oak Wilt are also becoming an issue for the County and some parks.

In addition, Betty reported that there has been discussion regarding the construction of a Nature Center for Ottawa County. Fundraising efforts are starting to be organized so that the funding for construction of the Nature Center will not be dependent solely on millage dollars.

Betty also mentioned that deer have been an issue in North Ottawa Dunes, Rosy Mound, and Park 12. A nationally renowned deer expert will be in the area over the holidays and is going to discuss options that the County might have in controlling the deer population.

Jeff Wincel attended the Tree Legacy Committee meeting and the Park Township Planning Commission meeting. Jeff reported that Park Township continues to have difficulty adhering to their Master Plan. Even when ordinances are in place, nearly every project seems to be appealed for a variance. The Park Township Planning Commission is hoping to have a training session prior to each meeting, to help prepare the commissioners to address each issue. Mark Knudsen mentioned that Grand Haven City had similar issues and offered training sessions to their ZBA members to ensure that statutory and theoretical aspects of ZBAs were understood. Betty suggested the Michigan Planning Association trainings that are offered once per quarter.

Per Jeff's request at the last Planning Commission meeting, Mark had contacted Dave Smeenge, chair of the Park Township Planning Commission. Dave asked for information regarding a Rural Smart Growth Presentation that is conducted by the Department. Mark faxed him information about the presentation.

Betty asked if data could be used to compare townships with and without professional planners, showing their rate of growth, hours per week the planner works, and other tasks the planner could be responsible for, such as zoning administration. Betty thought that it might be possible to use that data to show how Park Township might benefit from having a professional planner on staff. Mark said that he would work on compiling the information and make it available. Cornie Vander Kam also asked about the possibility of sharing a planner with another township.

Gary Scholten attended a school board meeting and reported that schools are concerned that the state may revoke some of the funding it had already promised to schools.

Mark Knudsen reported that Meghann Rauscher, Tabitha Rowley, and he met with the Grand Haven Community Foundation to discuss the creation of a Non-Motorized Trails Fund. The Foundation was very supportive of the idea. As a kick-off to the fundraiser, the Planning Department has planned to create a Trails CD that will be recorded by groups of

local officials. To begin the CD recording process, roughly \$2,000 is still needed to purchase the licensing fees and rights. In addition, Mark mentioned that the Planning Department needs to have a public relations plan in place before the CD recording process begins. The Foundation also suggested setting up a “Friends of the Trails” group. Mark asked for input as to whether the fund should be endowed or non-endowed. Jeff Wincel suggested having both an endowed and non-endowed fund. This would allow for immediate usage of the non-endowed fund dollars, but the endowed fund dollars would also provide for future needs. Mark also said that an advisory group would need to be created to oversee the usage of fund dollars. In addition, Mark said that he would come back to the Planning Commission to discuss who potential members of the advisory group might be. Mark also reported that Meghann and Chris are contacting potential corporate donors, in hopes of raising the funds needed to begin the CD recording process.

Jim Miedema attended the Stormwater Phase II meeting. The Stormwater Phase II program requires townships to implement practices to control polluted stormwater runoff. Jim reported that there was a ruling in Kalamazoo stating that these unfunded mandates were not legal. The DEQ has not yet filed an appeal, but it was possible that they might.

Cornie Vander Kam attended the Board of Commissioners meeting, and he reported that Bill Miller was re-elected to the Planning Commission. In addition, the Planning and Policy Committee forwarded their support of the Purchase of Development Rights program to the full Board. The Commission also voted to ban using fertilizers containing phosphorus. Two exceptions for use of fertilizers containing phosphorus are in new lawns and in flower beds.

Bob Rinck also attended the Board of Commissioners meeting and reported that he voted against the phosphorus fertilizer ban. He did not believe there was enough information given to make a well-educated decision on the matter.

#### **Petitions and Communications:**

- A. FYI Folder
- B. Letter of communication to Tree Legacy Committee members, dated 12/4/06, regarding the next Tree Legacy Committee meeting, along with backup information for the Tree Legacy Committee meeting.

**06-44 Motion:** To receive for information Items A - B

Moved by: Wincel

Supported by: Rinck

**UNANIMOUS**

#### **Presentations:**

None

#### **Public Comments:**

None

#### **Action Items:**

None

## Discussion Items

### A. Excellence Through Training

Mark handed out a paper showing the breakdown of attendees from Ottawa County for the last Excellence Through Training seminar. Approximately 30% of the attendees lived in Ottawa County.

Mark also handed out the schedule of future training topics, including trainings on farm markets and the flood insurance program.

### B. Transit Study (Update)

Mark presented the information contained in the draft Transit Study Request For Proposal (RFP) that is being developed by Meghann. The project scope includes a Transit Needs Assessment, Feasibility Study, Impact Analysis, and Study Coordination information. In addition, Mark handed out a list of potential Transit stakeholders and suggested bringing some members of the list in for the next meeting to get their input. Jeff Wincel asked if the Chambers of Commerce should be included as stakeholders.

Betty suggested sending out a draft of the RFP and also asking if each potential stakeholder would like to be involved in the Transit Study process and/or attend a meeting discussing the Transit Study. She suggested gauging their interest by asking the following questions:

- 1) Does the scope-of-work cover all of the topics/issues you would like to see addressed in the Study?
- 2) Does your agency have data available that may provide insight to the public transportation needs in Ottawa County?
- 3) Once a consultant is selected to complete the transit study, would your agency be interested in attending meeting(s) to provide input regarding public transportation needs in Ottawa County?
- 4) If you are aware of any public transportation consultants that you think should receive a copy of our Request for Proposal (RFP), please list them.

Cornie also said that stakeholders should know that their views would be considered equally by the County and that one group would not be able to lobby for their interest over any others.

### C. Water Quality Study (Update)

Mark introduced an initial version of a Proposed Scope of Work for the Ottawa County Ground Water/Surface Water Inventory and Analysis, but he recommended that discussion wait until next month's meeting because the scope was still being revised.

Mark passed around a copy of the Summary of the Statewide Groundwater Study conducted by USGS that Betty had asked about at the last meeting. Cornie suggested contacting the National Association of Counties and possibly the EPA (Mark Florey) for further data.

### D. Build-out Analysis (Update)

The Planning and Grants Department is conducting a build-out analysis of the City of Ferrysburg. Mark handed out a document showing the future projected number of structures and a current acreage inventory for each of the land use districts in Ferrysburg.

Based on the future projected population of the City, the Planning Department is working to project how many structures will potentially be needed and built in subsequent years. In addition, the personnel needs for fire and police, water and sewer needs, and schooling needs may also be projected. Meghann will be projecting traffic volumes as well.

E. Urban Smart Growth (Update)

Mark reported that the Urban Smart Growth Architectural Guidebook is completed, and the City of Hudsonville is working with Nederveld on plans to restructure the downtown area of Hudsonville. One concept that has been discussed is the ability to board the train in Hudsonville. Additionally, MDOT is considering major improvements to Chicago Drive, and variations of engineering designs for the roadway are being discussed.

Mark also passed around a map showing restructuring options that MDOT and the City of Hudsonville have studied.

F. Standardized Zoning and Mapping

Mark reported that the City of Grand Haven has adopted the standardized mapping colors, but not the terminology. However, they will be including the County's standardized terminology in a chart that depicts both the City's and County's standardized terminology for comparison purposes.

### **Input and Strategy Session**

None

The meeting adjourned at 8:21 PM.