

OTTAWA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

APPROVED MINUTES

DATE: February 26, 2007

PLACE: Ottawa County Fillmore Complex, Board Room

PRESENT: Betty Gajewski, Bill Miller, Jim Miedema, Jim Holtvluwer, Gary Scholten, Matt Hehl, Jeffrey Wincel

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Mark Knudsen, Tabitha Rowley, Chris Clement

GUESTS: Ken Rizzio, Ottawa County Economic Development Office; Craig Bessenger, City of Ferrysburg; Elizabeth Council, Grand Haven Tribune

Call to Order:

Vice-Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. A quorum was present to do business. Invocation was given by Jim Miedema.

Approval of the Agenda:

07-01 Motion: To approve the February 26, 2007 Agenda, with the following amendment: under "Announcements", add Discussion of Meetings Attended.

Moved by: Scholten Supported by: Miedema **UNANIMOUS**

Approval of the Minutes:

07-02 Motion: To approve the minutes of the December 18, 2006 meeting.

Moved by: Miedema Supported by: Wincel **UNANIMOUS**

Introductions and Welcome New Members:

The following individuals were introduced: Matt Hehl, the new County Commissioner serving District 5; Jim Holtvluwer, the new County Commissioner serving District 11; Ken Rizzio, from the Ottawa County Economic Development Office; Chris Clement, from the Ottawa County Planning and Grants Staff; and Elizabeth Council, from the Grand Haven Tribune.

Election of Officers:

07-03 Motion: To nominate Betty Gajewski as Chair, Bill Miller as Vice Chair, and Tabitha Rowley as Secretary.

Moved by: Scholten Supported by: Holtvluwer **UNANIMOUS**

Presentations from Staff:

A. Water Quality Study

Mark Knudsen reported that the County Board has established a goal to conduct a countywide Water Quality Study. Chris Clement, Planning and Grants Specialist, developed a scope of work for the Study. The scope will focus on water quantity and quality issues for both ground water and surface water. Because of the extensive list of potential work tasks included in the scope of work, the Planning Department will itemize each work task so task specific pricing can be provided. If the total price to conduct the work is greater than the available funding, work tasks will need to be prioritized to determine which tasks are completed.

The Planning Commission will first approach the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to determine what assistance and in-kind services they could provide to complete the study. If the response is not satisfactory, the Planning Commission will then explore a competitive bid process to obtain cost information.

Betty Gajewski asked if this study could be used to supplement or improve the Road Salt Monitoring Program. Chris indicated that the study does list the monitoring of sodium and chloride levels as a part of the work scope. Chris will also be working with MSU to determine if this data will be beneficial to use with the current Road Salt Monitoring Program.

Chris reported that USGS has previously prepared similar studies for Oakland and Kalamazoo Counties, although they were not as extensive. Betty asked what information from the studies those two counties found to be most valuable. According to Chris, Oakland County has received important information regarding their water quality, surface water, and the interaction between surface and ground water levels. Chris was not certain about the information that Kalamazoo County found valuable, but he said that he will research that and report back to the Planning Commission.

Betty also asked if there was other federal funding available to conduct the study. Chris indicated that he has researched many options but has been unsuccessful thus far in finding any alternative funding sources.

Mark stated that the next step in the study process would be to get input from stakeholders regarding the scope of work. Mark indicated this would be accomplished through a questionnaire that would be mailed to stakeholders. Jeff Wincel said that the questionnaire should also determine which elements of the study are most important to each township so they could be ranked. Mark indicated this would be best completed after all input was received and a final list of work tasks was completed. After this information is received, Mark will provide the Planning Commission with a draft timeline for the project as well as potential funding options.

B. Road Salt

Three years ago, the Planning Commission appointed a Road Salt Commission for the purpose of developing a plan to reduce the use of road salt in Ottawa County. That plan was implemented in the Winter of 2004 and the goal of the Commission was to reduce

overall road salt applications by 25% and road salt usage in environmentally sensitive areas by 75%.

In the Fall of 2004, the Planning and Grants Department began collecting and monitoring ground water samples to track the effects of the Road Salt Reduction Plan. At the present time, the Planning and Grants Department is working with MSU to modify the monitoring program to ensure it is as effective as possible. Two recommendations have been made by MSU. These include increasing well monitoring to once per month, and to install recording devices to determine which direction the groundwater is flowing. Chris Clement will be working to implement these recommendations. Chris also reported that MSU has been testing plant root zones and tissue samples four times per year. Those results will provide helpful comparisons to our data, as the salt does not wash out of leaves.

Jeff Wincel asked if there is a way to measure sodium and chloride levels through an electronic device, similar to or in conjunction with the flow monitors. Mark said that this would be cost-prohibitive based on the amount of funding that is available for the monitoring program.

Mark also mentioned that the Planning and Grants Department was invited to apply for a Pioneer Institute Award for the Road Salt Reduction Plan.

C. Tree Legacy Committee

Last spring, a large amount of tree trimming was done by Consumers Energy in Park Township. At that time, the Planning Commission, in conjunction with the Parks and Recreation Commission, appointed a Tree Legacy Committee for the purpose of maintaining and improving the aesthetic beauty of the tree canopies and tree lines over scenic roads in Ottawa County.

The Tree Legacy Committee is working to create a guidebook that would include information on what types of trees are appropriate to plant in specific areas. The Committee is also discussing the creation of special road designations. The Tree Legacy Committee is meeting again on March 12.

Presentations:

A. Ken Rizzio of Ottawa County Economic Development Office (OCEDO), presenting information regarding the OCEDO's Activity/Performance Report for the second half of 2006

Ken provided an overview of the goals and objectives of the OCEDO as well as information regarding projects that he was involved in during the second half of 2006. Ken explained that the OCEDO works to support industrial expansion and retention. Ken indicated he works directly with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and MDOT to help facilitate expansions. Ken indicated he specializes in grant writing, and the OCEDO's top three goals are retention, grants to provide long-term funding, and tax abatement programs. An example of a recent project Ken was involved with was the Gentex expansion in Zeeland. Ken has worked with Gentex on two grants to increase infrastructure (i.e. water, sewer, etc.) and to repave sections of State Street near their facility.

Ken also reported that Ottawa County has a 38% manufacturing base, which is much higher than the state average which is 19%. Ken noted that Ottawa County is typically first or second in the State as it relates to the number of tax abatement programs which are approved by local units of government. Ken indicated he recently worked with NuWool in Georgetown Township and Zeeland Farm Services in Zeeland to obtain tax abatements.

Ken also performs an annual employment survey to find the ten largest manufacturing and non-manufacturing companies. Ken said the twenty largest companies in the county provide roughly 29,000 jobs.

Action Items:

A. City of Ferrysburg Proposed Master Plan

Mark introduced Craig Bessenger, City Manager of Ferrysburg. Mark discussed the goals that were included in the Ferrysburg Master Plan. These included, but were not limited to, maintaining a small town character, improving traffic flow, promoting open space, improving aesthetics and streetscapes. Mark reported that Ferrysburg's proposed plan is consistent with the Ottawa County Development Plan and is consistent with the Master Plans of surrounding local units of government. He also noted the plan utilizes Ottawa County's standardized colors and terminology.

Craig answered questions from the Planning Commissioner members regarding the City's sand mining operation and storm water management measures.

07-04 Motion: To support the City of Ferrysburg Proposed Master Plan

Moved by: Scholten

Supported by: Holtvluwer

UNANIMOUS

Announcements:

A. Discussion of Meetings Attended

Planning Commission members discussed the amount of time that commissioners should spend providing reports. They also determined that reports should only address subjects which were relevant to planning issues.

B. Reports of Meetings Attended

Betty Gajewski reported that she attended the Farm Market Presentation and was able to gather some valuable information. Betty indicated she would like to have been provided with more information about its relationship to zoning and master plans.

Bill Miller reported that the state is not funding gypsy moth spraying this year. Because of this, the County has agreed to pick up half of the cost associated with gypsy moth spraying, and the townships will cover the other half.

Matt Hehl reported that he attended a farmland preservation meeting along with Erica Rosebrook.

Jeff Wincel stated that at the last Park Township Planning Commission meeting, a PUD was approved that had a natural buffer area. A developer removed some trees on a site that

were supposed to be preserved, and a homeowner subsequently constructed a fence in that location. The Planning Commission then had to define a natural buffer area, and work with the Board to determine which aspects of the ordinance could be enforced from a preservation standpoint. Jeff also reported that there continues to be a lack of understanding of what a Master Plan means in the community.

Gary Scholten asked if schools should be built on east-west or north-south roads, or on corners. He also said the development that is built up around a school, along with the lower speed limits, have an impact on whether the school is built on a county corridor.

Jim Holtvluwer had nothing to report.

Jim Miedema had nothing to report.

B. 2007 Meeting Schedule

The 2007 meeting schedule was distributed.

C. Reappointment of Bill Miller to Planning Commission for three year term

It was announced that Bill Miller was reappointed to the Planning Commission by the Board of Commissioners.

Petitions and Communications:

A. FYI Folder

B. Correspondence sent to Wright Township regarding Signage Ordinance (12/19/06)

C. Correspondence received from the Michigan State University Land Policy Institute regarding a seminar titled, "Helping Michigan Communities Get From Here to Prosperity" (1/12/07)

D. Letter of correspondence dated 2/2/07 from Grand Haven Charter Township, regarding an intent to update their Master Plan

E. Letter of correspondence dated 2/12/07 from City of Holland, regarding an amendment to their Master Plan

07-05 Motion: To receive for information Items A - E

Moved by: Miller

Supported by: Miedema

UNANIMOUS

Public Comments:

None

Discussion Items

A. Excellence Through Training

Mark noted that the registration for the National Flood Insurance Seminar was lower than expected. He indicated that unless more registrations came in the seminar would likely be cancelled. He also reported that based on input from “on-staff planners” in the County, the Basic Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals trainings, which have been traditionally scheduled for the Fall, were being rescheduled for the Spring/Summer training.

Mark also provided the attendee survey results from the Farmers’ Market training. There were a total of 16 attendees, of which five were from Ottawa County. All participants rated the program as either “Excellent” or “Good”.

B. Urban Smart Growth

Mark reported that the Planning Department and City of Hudsonville have been meeting with MDOT regarding the Urban Smart Growth Project and the future realignments of Chicago Drive that will be undertaken by MDOT. Other aspects of the project were also discussed.

Betty asked if the lessons we have learned in this project can be shared with other communities. Mark indicated that it was probably too early to share results. However, he did indicate that the Architectural Guidebook may be an aspect of the demonstration project that could be shared with communities since it has been completed and is in use in Hudsonville. Gary Scholten indicated he thought this would be a good idea.

C. Local Planning Commission Meeting Assignments

In previous years, each Planning Commission member has been assigned to attend local planning commission meetings within each of the local units of government as their schedule permits. A listing of each local unit of government was given to each Planning Commission member, which also included the meeting date and time of each planning commission. Each Planning Commission member was asked to rank their top choices. Based on that information, the Planning Department would provide a list of assignments at the next meeting.

D. Township Survey Regarding On-Staff Planners

A telephone survey was conducted of all of the local township supervisors, which included questions regarding whether townships have an on-staff planner, how many hours per week they work, how they are used, and whether agricultural zoning was being eliminated. These questions were derived from the December Planning Commission meeting. The results of the survey were provided.

Jeff Wincel would like the townships that said they would be interested in sharing a planner to be contacted again. Mark indicated that he would attempt to provide administrative options that would allow local units to consider sharing a planner. Mark said that this issue will be brought back to the Planning Commission before being presented to the local units.

E. Local Planning Assistance

Mark provided a list of services that the Planning Department is able to provide local units of government. Services included, but were not limited to, providing GIS queries,

facilitation of multi-jurisdictional projects, data research, sample ordinance research, basic ordinance drafts for overlay zones, website links, databooks, library, training, training packets for Planning Commission, ETalk Ottawa, strategic planning, buildout analysis, and facilitating shared planners.

F. Trails CD

The County's Non-Motorized Pathways Plan was completed a few years ago, with the goal of creating new pathways to link existing pathways, creating a network of regional trails throughout the County. Mark presented a few options that are being considered by the Department to raise funds to speed up the implementation of the Plan.

G. Build-out Analysis

Mark reported that Nate Lisenbee is working on the Build-out Analysis for Ferrysburg. This involves reviewing the Zoning Ordinance and Master Plan and determining how many new structures can be built based on each type of zoning. In addition, Nate is looking at future growth projections and determining what additional services would need to be provided in the future, how the growth would impact that tax base, and what water and sewer needs would result from the growth. At the last meeting, Betty had asked if Census data could be used to show the number of existing dwelling units. Mark reported that there was information for 1990 and 2000, but not for previous decades.

H. FEMA – Robinson Township Flood Property

Mark distributed a list of the parcels that have been acquired to date in Robinson Township. Six of the seven acquired parcels were for the bridge that MDOT will be constructing for the bypass. It was reported that lots which are acquired by FEMA must remain in a natural state in perpetuity.

I. Building Heights

Mark reported the Planning Department is working with Spring Lake Township to develop a Building Heights Ordinance. Mark indicated that Paul Sachs has drafted a tentative ordinance and that a work session would be scheduled in the near future with their Planning Commission to discuss options.

Input and Strategy Session

A. Transit Study

At December's meeting, the Planning Commission members had requested that potential stakeholders be contacted regarding the proposed Transit Study. Based on the input that was obtained from the potential stakeholders, a final draft of the Transit Study RFP was crafted. Mark asked for permission to send the RFP out for bids, and the Planning Commission members agreed.

B. County Development Plan

Due to a lack of time, the Planning Commission decided to postpone discussion until the next meeting.

Planning Commission Picture

The Planning Commission decided to wait to take the picture until April.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 PM.