

OTTAWA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

APPROVED MINUTES

DATE: February 25, 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: Bernice Berens, Robinson Township; Peter Daining, Grand Haven Tribune; Charles Gould, MSU Extension; Dennis Kent, MDOT; Ken Larson, Friends of River Road; Pat McGinnis, Grand Haven City; Christopher VanNorwalk, MDOT; Marjie Viveen, Friends of River Road; Vicki Weerstra, MDOT

Call to Order:

Vice-Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. A quorum was present to do business. Invocation was given by Jeff Wincel.

Approval of the Agenda:

08-12 Motion: To approve the updated February 25, 2008 Agenda, with the following amendments:

- Change Item 9 (B) to read as follows: “**Motion:** To direct the Planning and Grants Department to begin notifying entities, in accordance with the requirements of the County Planning Act, that the Planning Commission intends to amend the County Development Plan.”

Moved by: Miedema

Supported by: Holtvluwer

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Approval of the Minutes:

08-13 Motion: To approve the minutes of the January 28, 2008 meeting, with the following amendments:

- Modify minutes to indicate that the election of chair was not valid.

Moved by: Holtvluwer

Supported by: Wilson

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Introductions:

Each of the guests present introduced themselves.

Election of Officers:

08-14 Motion: To nominate Jim Miedema as Chair.

Moved by: Holtvluwer

Supported by: Wilson

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Presentations:

A. M-231 Non-Motorized Pathway – Representatives from Michigan Department of Transportation (Vicki Weerstra, Dennis Kent, Chris VanNorwick)

Dennis Kent stated that the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is nearly completed and will be sent to the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) for review. He is hoping that all reviews of the EIS will be completed by August or September 2008.

Dennis stated that MDOT's proposed construction schedule will be as follows:

2008	Design, Property Acquisition
2009	Property Acquisition
2010	Bridge Construction
2012	Northern connection between bridge and M-104/I-96
2013-2014	Southern connection between bridge and M-45
2014	Widening of US-31 between Lakewood and Quincy in Holland
2015	Widening of US-31 between Franklin and Jackson in Grand Haven

Dennis also said that the timing of this construction schedule is dependent upon federal review as well as state and federal funding. The cost for the project is currently projected to be \$150 million. The bridge alone is projected to cost \$35 million, depending on the piers that are selected for the river crossing.

Commissioner Hehl asked if the proposal to bypass Holland and Grand Haven was still an option. Vicki Weerstra stated that the entire bypass would cost \$1 billion, but because of the cost, it is not a top priority to complete the entire bypass at this time. The river crossing is the highest priority.

Vicki discussed the possibility of a non-motorized pathway being included as a part of the bridge construction. She stated that the cost for a pathway addition would range from \$3.9-9.3 million, depending on the structure needed. She said that MDOT did not know the amount they would be able to contribute toward a non-motorized crossing at this time; however, MDOT had determined that they would not be able to fund the entire non-motorized pathway. Funding would need to be determined by May 2009.

Dennis stated that several funding options could potentially help pay for the project, including applying for Federal Enhancement Funds through the U.S. Department of Transportation, contacting the Metropolitan Planning Organizations, local foundations, and the Department of Natural Resources.

Mark Knudsen asked if a date had been set to finalize the project cost. Vicki stated that this should be determined by mid-summer. Mark invited MDOT to return later in the summer to discuss the issue further.

Action Items:

A. River Road Proposal

Mark Knudsen stated that the Planning Commission had received a request from an organization called “Friends of River Road”, asking for support for their proposal to consolidate Waverly, Mercury, Green, 128th, and North Cedar Roads into a single road which would be named River Road.

Further, Mark stated that the local units of government were contacted to determine if they were supportive of the proposal. Grand Haven Township and Grand Haven City had not taken positions at that time. Pat McGinnis, from Grand Haven City, stated that he had received many comments, of which more were negative than positive. Additionally, Grand Haven City was holding a public hearing on March 3 to receive input from residents. Robinson Township was opposed to the proposal because of concerns about the cost of changing tax records, voter records, assessing records, street signs, and other items.

Jim Miedema stated that he had spoken with Kent Rubley from the Road Commission, who expressed concern about the cost of changing road signs.

Bernice Berens stated that the route did not appear to be correct in the proposal. She had researched Grand Haven historical records, and found that River Road was shown in a different location. Additionally, she stated that the Tri-Cities Museum also listed the River Road route in the different location. Bernice stated that she would like to see a petition, signed by each resident on the route, stating that they would support the proposal before any changes are made. She proposed giving the road an honorary designation and signs, such as the Martin Luther King Memorial Boulevard route in Grand Rapids.

Marjie Viveen, author of the River Road proposal, stated that River Road was a historical pathway used by Native Americans that followed the Grand River from Grand Haven to Detroit. She showed maps that she had found from a survey performed in 1830. Marjie stated that “Friends of River Road” is attempting to correct the road’s nomenclature and return it to its original name. Additionally, by changing the road name to one instead of five, the organization believes that it would lessen confusion and provide a descriptive name of the area.

Marjie also stated that “Friends of River Road” had kits available to assist residents with filing change of address documents.

Jeff Wincel stated that, from his perspective, lifetime residents of the area underestimated confusion caused by road names in this area. He also stated that he believed there was tremendous value in preserving history. He also believed that this route would encourage tourism to that area.

08-15 Motion: To authorize a letter of support for the proposal to consolidate Waverly, Mercury, Green, 128th, and North Cedar Roads into one and be named River Road

Moved by: Wincel

Supported by: Kamphuis

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B. County Development Plan Amendment

08-16 Motion: To direct the Planning and Grants Department to begin notifying entities, in accordance with the requirements of the County Planning Act, that the Planning Commission intends to amend the County Development Plan.

Moved by: Wincel

Supported by: Miller

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08-17 Motion: To direct the Planning and Grants Department to submit, in accordance with the County Planning Act, the proposed amendments to Chapter 5 - Tier B Policies of the County Development Plan to the County Board of Commissioners for review and approval.

Moved by: Miller

Supported by: Holtvluwer

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Announcements:

A. Planning Commission Picture

B. Reports of Meetings Attended

08-18 Motion: To skip Reports of Meetings Attended, due to time constraints.

Moved by: Miller

Supported by: Hehl

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Petitions and Communications:

A. FYI Folder

B. Letter of correspondence to Jerry Diekema, dated 1/31/2008, regarding information for National Association of Counties Achievement Award application

C. Letter of correspondence from Wright Township, dated 2/5/2008, regarding an application for Farmland Agreement (P.A. 116) for Aaron and Karla Potts

D. Letter of correspondence to Wright Township, dated 2/13/2008, regarding an application for Farmland Agreement (P.A. 116) for Aaron and Karla Potts

E. Letter of correspondence from Michigan Department of Agriculture, dated February 2008, regarding completed P.A. 116 contracts

F. Letter of correspondence to Duane Roskoskey of MDEQ, dated 2/18/2008, regarding regulations on ethanol production facilities

G. Letter of correspondence to all Ottawa County local unit of government planning commission chairs, dated 2/19/2008, regarding updates to Home Foreclosure and Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance data

H. Press release, dated 2/18/2008, regarding countywide deployment of high-speed wireless broadband network

I. Letter of correspondence from Allendale Township, dated 2/19/2008, regarding the 2008 Allendale Township Parks and Recreation Plan

08-19 Motion: To receive for information Items A-I.

Moved by: Wincel

Supported by: Holtvluwer

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Public Comments:

None

Discussion Items

A. PDR Program

At the last Planning Commission meeting, it was determined that a Public Hearing would be held to review the PDR Ordinance, Scoring System Criteria, and Application.

Mark reviewed the updated Ordinance with the Planning Commission, stating that a few grammatical changes had been made.

The PDR Ordinance stated that individuals serving on the Agricultural Preservation Board were not eligible to apply to sell their development rights under the program. Jeff Wincel asked if that language could be removed, and stated that the individual could simply remove his or herself from the vote if it was regarding the member's farm. Mark stated that he would ask Corporate Counsel to review that section of the ordinance to determine if it could be removed.

Mark also reviewed the other PDR documents with the Planning Commission. It was determined that the Planning Commission would move forward with the Public Hearing, which would be held on March 13 at 7:00 p.m.

B. Wright Township Ethanol Production Facilities Ordinance

Mark stated that Charles Gould, Adam Kantrovich, and he had been researching ethanol production and ordinances. It was reported that Charles had received notice that ethanol production would not be considered a Right to Farm issue.

Mark stated that the DEQ had stringent regulations in regards to setbacks and disposal of ethanol byproducts. However, distiller's grains were allowed to be applied to fields under Generally Accepted Management Principles for Farms. Syrup was allowed to be applied to fields under very limited circumstances. Charles stated that syrup stillage was limited to 10% if used in a digester.

Mark recommended that a model ordinance follow DEQ guidelines to address setbacks, storage, and disposal issues. Further, he explained that since this was only a model ordinance, local units of government could still establish standards that were different than the model.

Mark stated that the most important issue yet to be determined was the point at which an operation would be considered commercial. The Planning Commission discussed whether ethanol production volume should be the determining factor in an operation being viewed as commercial. The Planning Commission decided, for the purpose of the model ordinance, that the

production of ethanol for any use other than what is used on the individual's farm should be considered commercial.

Mark stated that he would try to have a draft ordinance available for review next month.

C. Comprehensive Water Resource Assessment

At the last meeting, the Planning Commission had decided to seek private sector bids to conduct the Water Resources Assessment. Mark stated that he had reviewed the Scope of Work with Adam London from the Environmental Health Department, and they had made some minor changes to the Scope of Work.

Roman Wilson asked to have a few items clarified. It was determined that Mark would meet with Roman to make clarifications where needed. After those changes were made, Mark will send the proposal to companies for bids.

D. Wind Energy Model Ordinance

Mark stated that Commissioner Kuyers had asked the Planning Commission to draft a Wind Energy Model Ordinance. Mark stated that he would survey the local units to determine who currently has a Wind Energy Ordinance and bring that information back at the next meeting.

E. Transit Study

Based on the discussion at last month's Planning Commission meeting, the Scope of Work for the Transit Study had been revised to focus on inter-urban connections, instead of a county-wide study.

Mark reviewed the changes that were made to the Scope of Work, and he stated that Grand Valley State University had agreed to facilitate the process. The Planning Commission members approved.

F. New Planning Commission Member Packet

Due to a lack of time, this item was postponed to the next meeting.

G. Rescheduling March 31 Meeting

08-20 Motion: To reschedule the March 31 meeting to March 24, 2008.

Moved by: Miedema

Supported by: Kamphuis

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Input and Strategy Session

None

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.