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DeKalb County Government
Sycamore, Illinois

DEKALB COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

(August 23, 2018)

The DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) met on August 23, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. in the DeKalb County Administrative Building, Conference Room East, in Sycamore, Illinois. In attendance were Commission Members: Cheryl Aldis, Jo Ellen Charlton, Rich Gentile, Russell Kula, John Fisher, Steve Devlieger, Martha May, Les Redden, Dan Nolan, Becky Morphey, Adam Orton, and Linda Swenson. Also in attendance were: Nathan Schwartz, DeKalb County Engineer; Brad Belanger and Lisa Bergeron; and County Staff members: Derek Hiland, Jolene Willis, and Marcellus Anderson.

1. Roll Call – Commission members Bryan Rhodes, and Kevin Bunge were absent. Commission members John Fisher, Linda Swenson, and Martha May arrived late Alternate Commission Member Adam Orton took the place of Brian Gregory (Sycamore) for the meeting.

2. Approval of Agenda

Ms. Morphey moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Orton, and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes – *Mr. Gentile moved to approve the minutes of the June 28, 2018 meeting, seconded by Ms. Charlton, and the motion carried unanimously.*

4. Public Comment

None.

5. Presentation – National Center for Safe Routes to School Grant

Mr. Hiland informed the Commission that he had invited Mr. Schwartz to give a presentation on the National Center for Safe Routes to School Grant program. Mr. Schwartz and gave an overview of the program. He noted that it is a competitive federal grant program administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) with three primary goals: to enable children, from kindergarten to eighth grade, to walk or bike to school; to encourage these children to them to walk or bike to school; and, to make it safer for them to do so. He informed the Commission that the grant is only offered in odd numbered years and that IDOT will begin to start accepting submissions for the upcoming program on September 24th, and ending on Monday, November 19th. Mr. Schwartz noted that he would forward detailed information to Mr. Hiland, who would them make it available to the Commission members. He also provided a number of examples of types of projects that would acceptable to the program. He noted that this year, those awarded the grant will have one hundred percent of the construction costs covered by the program, but

cautioned that certain items were not covered. He added that those awarded the grant will be announced in March of 2019.

Mr. Devlieger asked whether the grant was offered every year. Mr. Schwartz informed him that it was generally offered every other year, but that it was ultimately depended on the Federal Government.

Mr. Redden described a project happening in Shabbona, and noted a couple of examples of what they were doing.

Mr. Kula inquired whether the project had to stay within municipal boundaries. Mr. Schwartz responded that the projects could cross municipal boundaries. Mr. Schwartz noted however that the applicant has to be a governmental entity.

Mr. Redden inquired whether the grant allowed for repairs to existing pathways. Mr. Schwartz noted that the grant was for new construction only, not repairs. He did note however that there was another grant, Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP), which does address such issues and is offered in even numbered years.

6. Update – DeKalb County’s Sustainable Energy Developments, both Solar and Wind

Mr. Hiland informed the Commission members about the type, number, and nature of the Special Use applications the County had been receiving for solar gardens and farms. He described some of the challenges the County has faced during the process and about some the statements made in opposition to some the proposed projects. In particular, he strongly recommended that solar developers be encouraged to speak with surrounding property owners, to try to address any issues they may have before going through the approval process. He also discussed the status to the State program and its impacts on the County’s efforts to regulate these uses.

Ms. Morphey informed the Commission that Somonauk had already held two public hearings on solar projects, and described these projects. She also noted that they had a third project coming.

Ms. May reported that Lee had developers come to its last Board meeting, due to their projects being within a mile and a half of the Village limits. She noted that the developers gave a good presentation and that the Village supported the project.

Ms. Charlton discussed the project being proposed next to the Suburban Estates apartment complex, and noted that the City was looking at possibly making a formal statement regarding the project. She also noted that the City had two other projects proposed within the City limits, that were going through the review process.

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Mr. Redden noted that a developer had come to Sandwich with a proposed project on to be located on City owned property (which did not work out), and that a number of projects were being proposed just outside of city limits.

Ms. Aldis noted that Cortland had also approached with three potential locations within town and another proposed outside of town. She noted that the Town Code did not allow for these uses, and that the town was in the process of deciding whether it wanted to change the Code or not. She also talked about the pros and cons of allowing for these uses.

Mr. Devlieger noted that Kirkland did not have any language allowing for them either, and that the Village had been visited by developers proposing projects within a mile and half from the Village.

Mr. Hiland then gave a detailed status update of the County's progress in adopting a new wind energy conversion system ordinance, highlighting the various elements looked at during the process and the challenges they have faced.

Ms. Charlton asked about the proposed setback from municipal boundaries included in the ordinance. Mr. Hiland gave a detailed description of what was being proposed and how it was envisioned as working.

Mr. Devlieger asked about the setback from forest preserves. Mr. Hiland responded that the Forest Preserve Committee would be addressing this at their next Committee meeting.

7. Municipal Development Permits / Projects / Challenges / Champions

Mr. Devlieger (Kirkland) noted a mistake in the previous minutes, in that, the Village did not purchase the property, but that the Village had given the property owner finances through the TIF District to demolish and (hopefully) redevelop the property. He noted that a citizen's committee working on ideas for turning the old IGA building downtown into the Kirkland Village Community Center, put forth a recommendation for an architect, which was approved by the Village. He noted that they will likely put the monies gained through the DCCF grant towards this project. He finished by noting that Hickory Ridge subdivision had lots up for sale. Mr. Devlieger noted that the Village was finishing up road and sidewalk projects.

Ms. May (Lee) reported that the Village was quiet, and that the Beautify Main Street project was progressing.

Mr. Orton (Sycamore) reported that they had 28 single-family detached house permits so far this year, and that the City had passed a Small Cell Wireless ordinance.

Mr. Nolan (Shabbona) reported that the new Village Mayor had been busy interacting with the citizens. He noted that signs ha been placed in the crosswalks, and that the Mayor was working w/ the crossing guards on improving their skills. Mr. Nolan noted that the RFPs were coming back for the sewer plant. He noted that two houses have been sold and another rented.

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Mr. Kula (Hinckley) reported that an individual was working on converting an older residence into an "Escape House". He noted that the developer of Royal Estates had been talking to the Village President and had indicated they had hopes of building a model home this year, with hopes of building homes next years.

Mr. Gentile (Genoa) reported that a new Dollar General Store had begun construction on a property on the east side of the City. He also reported that there was some uncertainty about the Dunkin Donuts project. He noted that they had a few houses being built, but that it was otherwise quiet.

Ms. Swenson (Waterman) reported that things were pretty quiet in Waterman. She noted that there was a new gazebo in the village park, which opened on their Tractor Show Day, and that "some" interest had been shown in possibly developing duplexes in an undeveloped subdivision. She also noted that the Village was still fighting to get the other unfinished subdivision to install the new well that they had agreed to do.

Ms. Charlton (DeKalb) noted that some of the projects that they have been working on were coming to conclusion. She noted that Devonaire Farms was having an open house that weekend, and that they had invited City officials over to view the model house. They got full permits for 20 lots they are working on and are already looking at another 20 or more lots. She also noted that they are beginning to issue permits in some of their other subdivisions in the City. She noted that Cornerstone project in downtown, had started leasing their apartments, and that permits had been submitted for the restaurant in the corner of the building, the Tavern on Lincoln. She noted that Barb City Bagels had relocated to a new building down the block. Ms. Charlton noted that H2 Hotel, to be located adjacent to the Hampton Inn, went through a public hearing before the Zoning Board of Appeals, but the nearby residents were opposed to it. She reported that Cornfest was that weekend, and that it was move-in weekend for NIU.

Mr. Redden (Sandwich) reported that they were trying to get a new Police Department building. He noted that they were only doing minor repairs to the streets, and maintenance on manholes. He reported that the Ford dealership would be spending about \$6.5 million on a new showroom. Two companies had approached the City about building senior housing projects. He noted that the old Burger King was to be rebuilt. Also, a national home builder has been looking at some of the City's empty lots.

Ms. Aldis (Cortland) noted that road projects would be starting in October. These roads are part of Phase 3 of Woodland Acres. She also noted that they would be beginning ADA sidewalk projects in September. She noted that a challenge was still working with developments where the developer walked away. She finished by noting that Cortland's Summerfest was quite successful this year.

Mr. Fisher (Kingston) reported that things were quiet in the Village.

Ms. Morphey (Somonauk) reported that things was quiet, other than the solar stuff that was going on. She did noted that they did issue another house permit.

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Ms. Willis (DeKalb County) informed the Commission she had been in contact with Jeff Desplinter, with USDA Rural Development, about coming to talk about the waste water, community facility, and grant programs. She noted that he would be available to come on September 5th or 6th, if the Commission members were interested. She also reminded the members that if they had not already availed themselves of the DCCF grant, to do so, as the deadline was in January 2019. She noted that they would be working on the County Economic Development Strategic (CEDs) planning action teams this fall. She directed the Commission member attention to the brochures on the table from the ComEd workshop held in July, and offered to answer any questions they had about it. She described the IEPA Brownfields Redevelopment workshop that had been held on July 25th, and highlighted the programs and grants discussed there. She noted that copies of the DeKalb County Reference and Yearbook produced by the County Clerk were on the table for them to have.

8. Next Meeting Date

Mr. Hiland noted that the next scheduled meeting date would be on October 25th, at 6:30 p.m. in the Conference Room – East, DeKalb County Administrative Building.

9. Adjournment – *Mr. Devlieger motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Fisher, and the motion carried unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Aldis
Chairman, DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission

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