

DEKALB COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

June 20, 2019

6:30 p.m.

DeKalb County History Center
1730 N Main St., Sycamore, IL 60178

AGENDA

1. Roll Call
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes
4. Public Comments
5. Presentation by Mary Jo Warskow, Elevate Energy – ComEd, T:773-922-3018, to discuss streetlight energy efficiency program.
6. Community Partner Program Update
7. DeKalb County’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) Update
 - a. [10 Things article - #1 \(p. 5-6\)](#)
 - b. Waterman GIS Project
8. Municipal Development Permits / Projects / Challenges / Champions
9. Next Meeting Date –
10. Adjournment

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DeKalb County Government
Sycamore, Illinois

DEKALB COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
(April 4, 2019)

The DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) met on April 4, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. in the Sycamore Park District Community Center, Classroom A, in Sycamore, Illinois. In attendance were Commission Members: Dan Olson, Rich Gentile, Russell Kula, Steve Devlieger, Martha May, Les Redden, Dan Nolan, Becky Morphey, Brian Gregory, Linda Swenson, and Misty Haji-Sheikh. Also, in attendance were: Curt Lang, Mayor of City of Sycamore; Bruce Hamilton and Chad Benson, of the DeKalb County Information Management Office; Dan Halverson, of DeKalb Fiber Optic (DFO); Amit Patel and Will Finney, of Syndeo Network; and, County Staff members: Derek Hiland, Jolene Willis, and Marcellus Anderson.

- 1. Roll Call** – Commission members Cheryl Aldis, John Fisher, and Brenda Jergens were absent. Commission member Misty Haji-Sheikh arrived late for the meeting.

Derek Hiland called the meeting to order, noted that the Commission Chair and Vice-Chair were both absent, and called for a motion to appoint a Chair Pro Tem for the meeting.

Mr. Gentile moved to have Mr. Gregory to serve as Chair Pro Tem for the meeting, seconded by Ms. Morphey, and the motion carried unanimously.

- 2. Approval of Agenda** - *Ms. Morphey moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Gentile, and the motion carried unanimously.*

- 3. Approval of Minutes** – *Mr. Gentile moved to approve the minutes of the February 21, 2019 meeting, seconded by Mr. Nolan, and the motion carried unanimously.*

- 4. Public Comments**

Mayor Lang welcomed the Commission members and guests to the facility and to the community, and Mr. Gregory briefly described the Community Center’s history, development, and amenities.

- 5. Presentation – Fiber Networks in DeKalb County**

Mr. Halverson, Mr. Patel, and Mr. Finney introduced themselves and described the history of their respective companies and the partnership they formed in 2014, the DFO-Syndeo Network, which is a regional fiber optic internet carrier & provider covering a five county region in northern Illinois.

They described the history of the DeKalb Advancement of Technology Authority (DATA), noting that it is a part of the DeKalb County government and was started almost ten years ago, and the role of their company in it. They explained that DATA provides connectivity for not-for-profit, educational, and municipal entities throughout DeKalb County. Mr. Halverson noted that a number of people were inquiring why, since the County had a fiber network, they didn't just give it away as part of economic development. He explained that the grant that allowed for the creation of DATA requires that they establish sustainability, which requires a variety of services that must be covered financially.

Mr. Finney talked about the advantages of the way the network is organized and how it benefits and impacts local businesses, including the impact on business retention. He related some of their experiences with local companies, such as: Autometer; Solotech; and, Aligus Packaging.

Mr. Halverson talked about the impacts and benefits of DATA on health care and not-for-profit entities, such as: Northwestern Medicine's health care network; the DeKalb County Community Foundation; Hope Haven; and, Tails. He also mentioned that if any other not-for-profits were interested, they can simply go to the DeKalb County website, which has a section on DATA, and they can inquire right there.

Mr. Halverson noted that all of the school districts in the County were now connected to the DATA backbone, which allows them less expensive internet costs, access to internet phone service, and better and more reliable connectivity.

Mr. Halverson then explored the future of wireless: "5G", giving a detailed description of this type of network, and talking about their company's 5G network: AirCell. He also talked about Enhanced 4G and LTE, noting how these systems have improved accessibility and reliability, noting MetroNet's emergence into the local markets. Mr. Halverson discussed the financial advantages to businesses using these services, in particular noting the lower costs for bandwidth per month.

Mr. Finney talked about the residential impact of systems such as AirCell. He delved into the history and impact of AirCell, using the Fairdale tower as a representative example. He also noted that AirCell was operating in five communities in DeKalb County, Fairdale, Shabbona, Hinckley, Malta, and Kirkland, and looking into expanding into Genoa, Waterman, Lee, and some other communities.

Mr. Devlieger inquired where fiber optics are currently run in DeKalb County. Mr. Halverson responded that the County's website contained a map of the fiber optic lines. He pointed out that at one end, it ran from Kirkland to Genoa, down Route 23 to DeKalb, Sycamore, Cortland, and Malta, then down Somonauk Road to US Highway 30, where it connected with Waterman, Shabbona, Hinckley and Big Rock, and continuing south along Somonauk Road to Sandwich, Somonauk, and Earlville. He also noted that at Earlville, Kirkland, and Sandwich, this system connects to the I-Fiber network.

Ms. Haji-Sheikh noted that the fiber network did not appear to extend to homes and inquired as to why. Mr. Halverson replied that largely, it was due to the expense, and because of how the grant was written.

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He noted that there were five purposes eligible for the grant: education, health care, not-for-profit, municipal, and commercial. The first four were covered by the grant, but the last, commercialization, was left for outside of the grant, which is where the partnership with DFO-Syndeo came in. He elaborated on what the expense to municipalities would be to provide the service to homes, noting that communities like DeKalb and Sycamore already had several providers operating in them. Mr. Halverson noted that they were focused more on the rural and less well served areas. Mr. Devlieger noted that Kirkland worked with AirCell to provide service in their Village. Mr. Patel then gave an in-depth explanation and history of the current situation of internet and telecom service in the County.

Mr. Hiland noted that the all of the local communities within DeKalb County were being served by AirCell, or in the process of getting the service established, except Maple Park, and asked who provides service to that village. Mr. Patel responded that Woodstream (under Mediacom) is the primary carrier in the Village, but that this would be changing soon. He noted that they were in the process of working with other carries there to extend the network to that village as well.

Mr. Nolan noted that Shabbona residents were overwhelmingly positive about AirCell. He noted that the question he had heard was whether 5G technology was line-of-sight? Mr. Finney responded that 5G was composed of a variety of technologies, including line-of-sight. Mr. Patel noted that actual 5G was actually limited to approximately three blocks, and still being developed.

Mayor Lang inquired as to the security of these networks. Mr. Finney and Mr. Patel responded that all signals are encrypted.

6. Presentation – Upcoming Census Process

Bruce Hamilton and Chad Benson, of the DeKalb County Information Office gave a presentation regarding the ongoing US Census and the three projects being undertaken by their office for the US Census. Mr. Hamilton started by giving a detailed presentation regarding the Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS), which they complete every year. Mr. Benson followed by detailing the Local Update of Census Addresses, explaining that this project was seeking to confirm, update, delete, or add new addresses in the Census database. He noted that these were only for residential addresses, and a lot of focus was on syncing up spellings and word choices (i.e.: 1st vs First), and explained the process used to verify the addresses. Mr. Benson finished by describing the results they found and the changes they needed to make.

Mr. Gentile inquired whether they would notify a community of a corrections. Mr. Hamilton responded that they could do so.

Mr. Hamilton explained that their third project was the Participants Statistical Area Program (PSAP), which provides an opportunity to update census tracts and/or census block groups. He displayed a couple of maps showing tracts and block groups and what the Census thinks needs to be changed. He also noted that this census information can be important for funding.

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Mr. Hiland explained to the Commission the need for accurate tract boundaries, and encouraged the members to avail themselves of Mr. Hamilton's and Mr. Benson's offer to aid them in doing so.

7. DeKalb County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update

Ms. Willis updated the Commission on the current status of CEDS Teams 3 and 5, which focus on community cooperation, marketing, and development. She reported on the success of the Economic Development Bootcamp, which had occurred in January, and talked about the possibility of arranging another Bootcamp later in the year.

Mr. Hiland reminded the Commission members about the Paired-up Initiative which had been suggested at the previous meeting as a way for the members from the various constituent communities to learn more about other parts of the County. The idea being to divide the commission members into seven pairs, and each member of the pair would take turns hosting the other member in their community, so that they could learn more about their community. Mr. Hiland noted that they had developed the list of pairs: Lee & DeKalb; Shabbona & Sycamore; Hinckley & Genoa; Kingston & Sandwich; Waterman & Cortland; Kirkland & Somonauk; and, Malta & DeKalb County.

Ms. Willis offered the following ideas, as suggestions of possible activities for the pairs:

- Attend each other's board/council meetings, as schedules allow
- Tour each other's city/village halls
- Attend a staff or department meeting
- Tour each other's municipal facilities, such as waste water treatment plants or maintenance areas
- Tour available commercial buildings and sites
- Tour recent residential development projects
- Identify and tour community assets, like parks, community buildings, school campuses, etc.
- Spotlight major employers, full-time equivalent numbers, industry sectors, and commuting radiuses.

Mr. Hiland noted that they can't raise all ships with the tide, if they don't know what they are attracting to the County. He noted that he would be sending out all the pairings and contact information.

8. Municipal Development Permits / Projects / Challenges / Champions

Mr. Olson (DeKalb) reported that construction would soon be starting on the new Home2Suites hotel on south Anne Glidden Road. He noted that the Pizza Hut on West Lincoln would be demolished in May and a new restaurant constructed, and the Plaza DeKalb building downtown, containing twenty-three apartments and ground floor commercial, would be opening in the spring. He noted that the Egyptian Theater had received approval for an extension of the theater and some planned improvements to

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existing facilities. He noted that Aldi would be moving to a new location on the opposite side of State Route 23. Mr. Olson reported that the City was working on updating their signage codes, to make them more content neutral. He noted that three new alderpersons had been elected. Mr. Olson mentioned the discussion regarding a possible Zoning 101 class to be put on by the County, and noted that the Illinois American Planning Association (IAPA) was offering some training classes for about \$500 per session.

Mr. Nolan (Shabbona) reported that they now had a Building Inspector in place. He noted however, that one of their challenges was the election for Village president, which was very intense, especially the social media aspect of it all. As for champions, he noted that a four-unit commercial building sold downtown, one of the units will be occupied by a barber, who is a disabled veteran, and is renovating the laundry mat on the other side of the building. Mr. Nolan noted that the Village lost a hairdresser, who moved her shop to Waterman, but did gain a printing company. He noted that Banner Up signs would be installing new directional signage in the Village and near the State Park, to direct traffic downtown. Lastly, he noted that their Zoning Board would be meeting on Monday night to annex a property on the east side of town.

Ms. May (Lee) reported the Village was in the planning stage for their DCCF grant, and talked about their survey efforts. She noted that the Village would be having a community meeting on April 22nd, to discuss how the grant money should be spent. Ms. May noted that that the dilapidated house had been removed, and talked about trying to get people out and involved.

Ms. Haji-Sheik (DeKalb County) informed the commission that she was stepping down from the County Board and the Commission next month due to her moving out of state. She noted that the County had the following current challenges: harsh weather and road work; the need to fix some issues on the website; and, the murder of an assistant Deputy State's Attorney. She noted that the County was working on appointing a new Commission member as its representative.

Mr. Kula (Hinckley) noted that the Royal Estates Subdivision had a model home framing was up and they were hopeful that it would be ready for viewing by June. He reported that the Village Board was going to vote on a mobile food vendor ordinance at its next meeting. He noted that a mobile vendor was hoping to open a coffee truck in the parking lot of the Brown Pub, along State Route 30. Mr. Kula reported that the interim Police Chief would be appointing a new Police Chief.

Ms. Swenson (Waterman) reported that a new home would be getting built. She also noted that they were now using the same new building inspectors as Shabbona. They noted that they had recently worked through some major water issues. Ms. Swenson also reported that they had rented a building to the hairdresser who had moved from Shabbona. She also mentioned a website that was being worked on, Visit30.com.

Mr. Kula added that Shabbona/Lee, Waterman, and Hinckley would be having combined, community-wide garage sale, Three on 30 Garage Sale Days, May 2nd through 5th.

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Mr. Devlieger (Kirkland) reported the Village had three new trustees were elected. He noted that their public works department had leveled a bunch of trees to the west of town for the Big Dig. He also noted that they had sent out proposals to the excavators and waiting for responses from them. He reported that they might have a building permit in the next month, the first since 2006 or 2007. Mr. Devlieger noted that the former pizza place downtown, which had been abandoned and acquired by the bank, had been purchased by a new owner who was renovating it. He noted that the owner had not said what kind of business they hoped to bring into the structure yet. Finally, he noted that a sports bar should be opening within the next few weeks.

Mr. Redden (Sandwich) reported that the City had one new alderman elected. He noted that a local business had been bought by a larger company. He also noted that a downtown restaurant, which consisted of three different units, had closed, but that a gaming parlor would be opening in one of the units. As for challenges, he noted that the Village had their cell phones FOIAed, and that, after four years of negotiations, they may lose a local auto dealer to the Village of Plano.

Mr. Gentile (Genoa) informed the Commission that they got a developer, who is more into seniors and active adults' development, to purchase one of their failed subdivisions. He noted that the City was also trying to establish a façade grant for businesses within the downtown area. He also that the City was working on a grant with the EPA, in their low interest and forgiveness program.

Ms. Morphey (Somonauk) reported that things were quiet in Somonauk. She noted that an individual had purchased the old school gym from the school district, and was planning to open a Somonauk Recreation Center. She mentioned the path from the County Forest Preserve they were working on with the County was coming along, but that there were some drainage issues. She noted that they were planning a fundraising race for the opening day of the path, and mentioned that they had the first bench to be placed along the path donated by a local bank. Ms. Morphey reported that they had a new gaming place in the Village. She noted that Rambo's changed hands, and that the new owners were thinking about expanding. She mentioned that a challenge the Village has is the presence of some empty buildings downtown.

Mr. Gregory (Sycamore) reported that the new waste water treatment plant and the new Meijer's store should be breaking ground within the next month. He also noted that the Bemis auto dealership changed its name to Sycamore-DeKalb Auto Group.

9. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held on May 23, 2019, at 6:30 p.m. Ms. Swenson offered to host the next meeting at the Waterman Winery, and would check with them to see if it would be available. Mr. Hiland added that if accommodations could not be made in Waterman, he would contact Ms. Aldis about having Cortland host the meeting.

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DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission Minutes
(April 4, 2019)

- 10. Adjournment** – *Ms. May motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Morphey, and the motion carried unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Gregory
Chairman Pro Tem, DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission

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DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission

Community Partner Program: June 20, 2019

Cities & Villages

<i>Name</i>	2010	2000	1990	1980	1970
<i>Town of Cortland</i>	4,270	2,066	963	1,010	541
<i>City of DeKalb</i>	43,862	39,018	34,925	33,099	32,949
<i>City of Genoa</i>	5,193	4,169	3,083	3,276	3,003
<i>City of Sandwich</i>	7,421	6,059	5,567	5,241	5,046
<i>City of Sycamore</i>	17,519	12,020	9,708	9,219	7,843
<i>Village of Hinckley</i>	2,070	1,994	1,682	1,447	1,053
<i>Village of Kingston</i>	1,164	980	562	618	481
<i>Village of Kirkland</i>	1,744	1,116	1,011	1,155	1,138
<i>Village of Lee</i>	337	319	319	145	121
<i>Village of Malta</i>	1,164	969	865	995	961
<i>Village of Maple Park</i>	1,310	765	641	124	
<i>Village of Shabbona</i>	925	929	897	851	730
<i>Village of Somonauk</i>	1,893	1,295	1,263	1,107	1,012
<i>Village of Waterman</i>	1,506	1,224	1,074	943	990
<i>TOTAL</i>	90,378	72,923	62,560	59,230	55,868

Community Partner Pairings

Lee & DeKalb

Shabbona & Sycamore

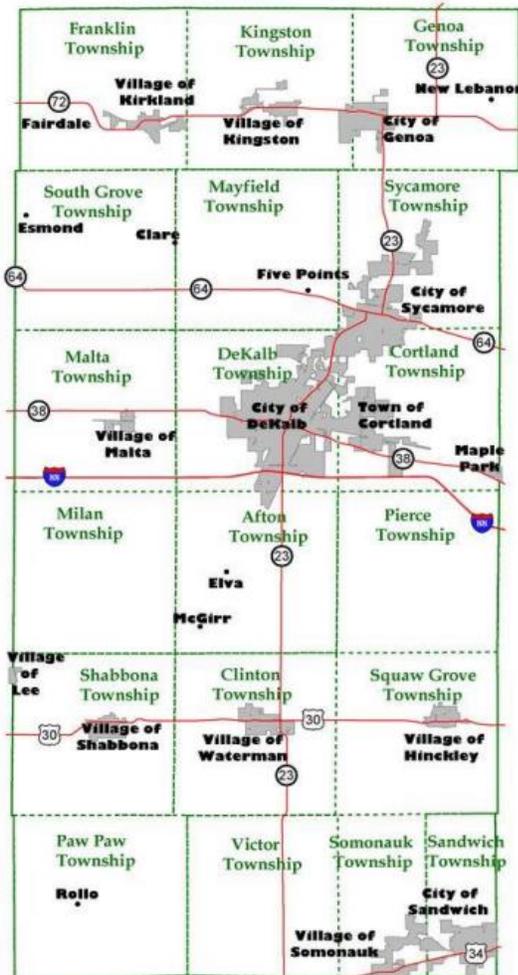
Hinckley & Genoa

Kingston & Sandwich

Waterman & Cortland

Kirkland & Somonauk

Malta & DeKalb County



Slide Set Checklist

(Here are some slides you might want to include)

- ❑ **Each approach to the town**
- ❑ **Most appealing neighborhood**
- ❑ **Problem housing**
- ❑ **Schools**
- ❑ **Downtown scenes and streetscape**
- ❑ **Signs**
- ❑ **Window displays**
- ❑ **The store you would come back to visit**
- ❑ **Local parks**
- ❑ **Churches**
- ❑ **Tourist attractions**
- ❑ **Recreational facility which most surprised you**
- ❑ **Infrastructure, including sidewalks and streets**
- ❑ **Industrial facilities**
- ❑ **Most positive things about the community**
- ❑ **Most outstanding feature of the community**
- ❑ **Greatest problem area**
- ❑ **What you would most like to bring back to your community**
- ❑ **Slides to illustrate comments made by team members**

1. Your Local Economic Strengths and Weaknesses

Your community's strengths and weaknesses, such as quality-of-life amenities, infrastructure and workforce skills, determine the potential of your local economy to support economic growth. This economic profile lays the foundation for creating a realistic vision and strategic direction for economic success that is unique to your community. Information about your local economy can also help engage and educate constituents and build community support for economic development decisions.

ASSESSING YOUR LOCAL ECONOMY

IMPORTANT FACTORS	KEY INDICATORS
Economic conditions	Unemployment, types and sizes of firms/industries, wages, income, new business starts, retail sales, housing prices, types of imports and exports, number of businesses closed
Population characteristics	Population size and growth, age, education level
Labor force characteristics	Labor force participation, occupations, skills, commuter characteristics, productivity
Physical conditions	Land use, zoning, land values, condition of buildings, vacancy rates, building activity, parking facilities, condition and capacity of infrastructure, air and water quality
Business climate	Community attitudes, labor relations, business taxes and regulations, level and quality of municipal services, workforce training, access to and cost of capital, public and private infrastructure
Knowledge-based resources	Federal labs, science and research parks, industry incubators, colleges and universities, technical training schools
Quality of life	Housing availability, public services, education system, crime rate, cultural and recreational activities, parks and other natural amenities
<small>Source: <i>Economic Development Strategic Planning</i>. International Economic Development Council, Washington, D.C., 2006, pp. 44-48.</small>	

With the assistance of your economic development staff and input from stakeholders, you can identify factors within and outside of the control of local government that impact and shape your local economy. Identifying strengths and opportunities is crucial, but local officials also should pay attention to weaknesses and potential threats.

For example, what industries in your community and region are growing or struggling? What are the skills of your workforce, and are they sufficient to meet the needs of business? What barriers and sup-

port services exist for local entrepreneurs and small businesses? Is the local and regional housing stock diverse enough to provide for a wide range of housing needs?

All of these factors should be understood in comparison to other communities and in the context of broader economic trends. As a result of this process, you will have a stronger sense of your unique local assets, as well as what you can and should be doing to build on strengths and mitigate weaknesses.

Taking Action, Asking Questions

- What unique strengths can your community build on for economic development and growth?
- What weaknesses pose a barrier to economic development? To what extent can you mitigate these weaknesses – and how?
- How do your community's strengths and weaknesses compare to those in other communities?
- How are economic conditions changing in your city and region?

San Buenaventura, Calif. (Ventura) (population 109,000)

After many decades of slow economic growth, the traditionally blue-collar City of San Buenaventura began to realize that its anti-business reputation had actually been undermining its economic prosperity. The city had very few middle class jobs and a limited industrial base and service sector. Moreover, many high-tech firms were heavily concentrated in much of the city's surrounding area and seemed to bypass Ventura when making location decisions.

Through an analysis of the community's strengths and weaknesses, city leaders in Ventura determined that the city's location between two high-tech hubs, its pool of entrepreneurs and venture capitalists and significant quality of life amenities placed them in a unique position to expand high growth technology sectors. The city developed and pursued a strategic plan for economic development, including new activities to increase the local tax base, diversify the economy and create high value, high wage jobs.

The city created a self-sustaining fund to support the new plan, specifically growth of businesses from within the community, by using a \$5 million loan payoff from the Redevelopment Agency. The Jobs Investment Fund (JIF) provides "mezzanine capital" to expansion projects or venture capital to new projects as either loans or direct investments. JIF, managed by a private investment partner, allows for a higher return potential to the city than is traditionally available with a standard investment portfolio.

Constituents have expressed concern that the city has too great a risk exposure in these investments. "There are requests that we redirect the money from the fund back to general government operations each time we face additional budget cuts, but due to political will and improved communications with our constituents, so far we have been able to maintain funding," said Councilmember Neal Andrews. City leaders have made a special effort to bring community opinion leaders into a position where they understand what JIF is about and why it's important.

JIF has allowed the city to engage in a number of business development activities, including capital raising conferences, entrepreneurship events and a business incubator. As of January 2010, 10 firms have located in the incubator, and in 2008, Forbes magazine ranked Ventura number 68 on the "Small Business list of 100 best places to live and launch a business."

Contact:

City of Ventura
Department of Economic Development
Phone: (805) 677-3935