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DeKalb County Government  
Sycamore, Illinois

**DEKALB COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**  
(June 20, 2019)

The DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) met on June 20, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. in the DeKalb County History Center, in Sycamore, Illinois. In attendance were Commission Members: Cheryl Aldis, Dan Olson, Rich Gentile, Danielle Marion (alt), Steve Devlieger, Martha May, Brenda Jergens, Becky Morphey, Adam Orton (alt), Linda Swenson, and Suzanne Willis (alt). Also, in attendance were: Jerry Smith, Mayor of City of DeKalb; Sheila Santos, Bruce Hamilton and Chad Bergeson, of the DeKalb County Information Management Office; Mary Jo Warskow, of Elevate Energy; and, County Staff members: Derek Hiland, Jolene Willis, and Marcellus Anderson.

1. **Roll Call** – Commission members John Fisher, Les Redden, and Dan Nolan were absent.
2. **Approval of Agenda** - *Ms. Aldis moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Gentile, and the motion carried unanimously.*
3. **Approval of Minutes** – *Mr. Olson moved to approve the minutes of the April 4, 2019 meeting, seconded by Mr. Devlieger, and the motion carried unanimously.*
4. **Public Comments**

Mayor Jerry Smith, of the City of DeKalb, introduced himself to the Commission noting that it was his first opportunity to attend one of the Commission meetings.

**5. Presentation – Mary Jo Warskow, Elevate Energy-ComEd Streetlight Energy Efficiency Program**

Ms. Mary Jo Warskow, of Elevate energy, introduced herself as a representative of the ComEd Energy Efficiency Program. She informed the Commission that ComEd offers discounts, rebates, and other incentives for energy saving measures in residences, businesses, and municipal organizations. She noted that ComEd has a State mandated goal for the reduction of energy used each year, which they meet by offering this program. Ms. Warskow noted that her presentation would primarily focus on streetlights, which is her specialty, but that other programs also exist. She then distributed her contact information and some handouts regarding the ComEd Streetlight program. She then elaborated on the streetlight program, explaining which kinds of streetlights are eligible for the incentives, and the nature of the incentives being offered. She also highlighted the differences between the incentive being offered for a full head replacement for the streetlight versus the discount offered for the replacement of existing bulbs with LED bulbs. Ms. Warskow then elaborated on the application process for the incentive programs. Ms. Warskow explained that Elevate Energy is a non-profit organization based out of Chicago, contracted with

ComEd to inform municipalities about the incentives, help municipalities determine their eligibility for and make applications to the incentive programs.

Ms. Warskow then briefly talked about some of the other public sector energy efficiency incentive offerings from ComEd, such as free assessments of which incentives and discounts would be available to the municipality, and optimization of a municipality's energy efficiency. She noted that the assistance services were free. She then informed the Commission that the place to start would be to call ComEd and schedule a facility assessment.

Ms. Aldis noted that Cortland have 100% LED for the streetlights that the Town owns, but that the mapping is not yet done, and asked if that was part of the incentive program. Ms. Warskow responded that the mapping is something done by the municipality. Ms. Aldis then inquired whether they would help the community map those streetlights not owned by the town. Ms. Warskow responded that she did not have an answer to that question. Ms. Jolene Willis noted that the Village of Waterman got theirs through the mapping division.

Ms. Aldis mentioned that the Town was approached by a representative from Batteries Plus, offering to do an assessment of their Town Hall, and inquired whether it made a difference going through them or directly through ComEd. Ms. Warskow responded that they can definitely go through them, noting that there are companies designated as ComEd Energy Efficiency Service Providers, a list of whom is available online, who can do that.

Mr. Devlieger described the Village of Kirkland's experience using a third-party contractor that was tied into ComEd to do all of their streetlights and facilities. He described their experience as a positive one, and one that had produced savings.

Mr. Hiland asked Mr. Warskow to elaborate on her place in the overall incentive cycle. Ms. Warskow explained that she was the support to figure out what the process is to get the incentive, noting that she could give a municipality a list of Energy Efficiency Service Providers, but that she could not recommend any particular provider. She also noted that the best way for a municipality to find service providers in their area would be to go to the ComEd website, which has an option for finding a service provider.

## **6. Community Partner Program Update**

Mr. Hiland identified which communities had been paired up for the Commission's Community Partner Program, explaining how the pairing were developed. He noted that the Commission packet included a list of possible conversation subjects that the members might consider discussing. Mr. Hiland noted that he hoped that by the next meeting, they would be able to gauge how the process was going. He reminded the Commission members that this program was intended to be an ongoing one designed to help the members learn more about their fellow communities in the County.

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

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### **Waterman GIS Project**

Mr. Hiland informed the Commission that he had requested the Information Management Office of the County (IMO) to give a presentation on how the County's Geographical Information System (GIS) could be of use to them, using their recent work with the Village of Waterman as an example.

Bruce Hamilton and Chad Bergeson, of IMO, gave a presentation of the work they had been doing for Waterman, explaining the kinds of data that they incorporated into the system, describing the features and tools that were available in the GIS system, discussing its mobile compatibility and security measures, and, demonstrated the system that had been developed. They also explained that what had been prepared for Waterman was not the limit of what could be done.

Mr. Olson inquired whether there were similar GIS overlays for the other communities in the County. Mr. Bergeson answered no, and that Waterman was serving as the test pilot for what could be done. Mr. Hamilton noted that IMO was very flexible with the form that the source data comes in.

Mr. Bergeson then talked about and highlighted the different types of layers that may be created on the data, and demonstrated some ways those layers could be used.

Mr. Olson noted that it would be great if they could add Google street view to the program. Mrs. Santos responded that it was available and only two buttons away in the Compass system.

Mr. Gentile asked whether this program would be offered to any other communities after Waterman. Mrs. Santos said IMO was happy to work with any of the communities that contact them.

Mr. Hiland noted that this is a great tool and asset for any community, noting that CEDS group immediately wanted to make the Communities aware of it, and elaborated on some of the possibilities and how it developed over time.

Ms. Jergens noted that she found Compass very useful and used it often.

Ms. May inquired what would a person do if they felt the zoning on the GIS map was wrong, and described a problem the Village of Lee was having with a parcel in the Village on the Lee County side. Mr. Hiland noted that DeKalb County would try to help, but that we could not speak for the Lee County GIS system.

Ms. May inquired as to why Maple Park was not included in the Community Partner Program. Mr. Hiland responded that Maple Park had decided not participate as a member of the RPC this year.

Ms. Aldis commented that the Department of Revenue had their own GIS and wondered why they did not use the County GIS system. Ms. Santos replied that IMO does send them updates every year around April or May, and that things like annexations are updated as soon as they get the documentation.

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**10 Things article - #1 (p.5-6)**

Ms. Jolene Willis noted that the Commission's meeting packet contained a hyperlink in the agenda to an article from the National League of Cities: Center for Research & Innovation called "The Role of Elected Officials in Economic Development: 10 Things You Should Know". She also distributed to copies of the first item on the list "Your Local Economic Strengths and Weaknesses". She explained that it was about knowing your communities' strengths and weaknesses, all the basic economic conditions, and as the members partner with one another, to look into each other's assets and challenges. Ms. Willis then talked about the Location One Information System (LOIS), which she explained is the State's main database housing all available sites & buildings, and lists community profiles. She then passed out printouts of each community's profile for the members to look at and described the information contained in the printout. She noted that the information can be filled in by the communities themselves, and described how they could go about doing so. Ms. Willis noted that every community in the state has a profile.

Mr. Hiland suggested that the Commission members review the "10 Things" article, and as homework, to think about Item #1 as it applies to their community. He then noted that item #2: "Your Community's Place in the Broader Regional Economy" would be discussed at the Commission's next meeting.

**8. Municipal Development Permits / Projects / Challenges / Champions**

Ms. Aldis (Cortland) reported that they Town had been getting about one housing permit per month, and that they had a townhome project underway.

Ms. Marion (Hinckley) noted that the new Royal Estates Subdivision had opened its model home. She reported that the Village Board was starting to review and revise its land use plan. Ms. Marion also noted that they were starting to get some of the projects that were part of the Harvesting Our Future grant going.

Ms. Jergens (Malta) noted that it was her first time attending the Commission and was unprepared to speak on the Village's champions and challenges.

Mr. Gentile (Genoa) informed the Commission that permits were picking up a little. He noted that the City received two grants this year: a \$10,000 matching grant for work on their access road connecting their canoe launch to the parking area and some other paths; and, they were approved for an 75% IEPA Loan Forgiveness Grant for their water tower.

Ms. Swenson (Waterman) reported that the Village had no new permits. She noted that the Village was working through some major water issues, but that they were on the downhill side of it. Ms. Swenson reported that two empty store fronts were rented, however, another business was leaving and moving out of state.

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Mr. Orton (Sycamore) reported that, so far in 2019, they had eighteen single-family homes permits. He noted that they had just annexed Phase 1 of the northwest area subdivision plan. He noted that the City was undertaking a water master plan to evaluate their future water needs, and that street projects were underway for the summer. Mr. Orton reported that an expansion of the treatment plant was underway, and that they were using an IEPA loan to construct it. He noted that building permits had been issued for the new Meijers on Peace Road. He noted that the Library was getting a grant to replace their Carnegie Windows, and drew the member's attention to the new hanging baskets the city had attached to the light poles downtown. Mr. Hiland asked for an explanation of the City's new R-4 zoning in the northwest subdivision area. Mr. Orton explained that the R-4 zone would serve as the "feathered edge" or buffer area transitioning from the city to rural areas, noting that the lots would typically be three to five acres, on well and septic, with no curb or gutters. He also noted that livestock would be allowed on these lots.

Mr. Olson (DeKalb) reported that work had started on the Egyptian Theater, and that the walls were going up on Plaza DeKalb, which is across the street from the Egyptian, and will contain twenty-three apartments, with ground-floor commercial. He noted that work had started on the new 90-room Home2Suites hotel on south Anne Glidden Road. He noted that the Aldi relocation was underway, and expected to be done by the end of July. He noted that Planet Fitness had opened last week. Ms. Olson noted that the Mooney property on North 4<sup>th</sup> Street had been approved for a preliminary TIF incentive agreement with John Pappas to allow a mixed-use project there. He noted that City Hall was moving downtown to the Nehring Building, and that the City would be selling off the old buildings.

Mr. Devlieger (Kirkland) reported the Village had no new permits. He noted that the Village had dug the hole that IDNR had been after them to build. He noted that the Village had was that they had their people out mapping the water lines for the GIS survey. Mr. Devlieger noted that a new sports bar had opened, and that the Village had received a grant from the DeKalb County Community Foundation (DCCF) to help with their new community center.

Ms. May (Lee) reported that there had been inquiries into buying several lots on the DeKalb County Side of the Village, however, she also noted that the lots would not big enough to contain a house and septic system. She added that the individual interested in the lots wanted to construct a massive garage on the property, which the current zoning of the property would not allow. She noted that he had approached the Village board with his plans, but that the Board had yet to decide what they wanted to do. Ms. May reported that the Village had finished the surveys taken as part of the DCCF grant, and were getting ready to move on to the next step and apply for the rest of the grant. She reported that they now had a name for the project "Leading Lee Forward", and that they now had to decide how they were going to use the money.

Ms. Morphey (Somonauk) reported that there had been fifteen roof permits, and that the they had lost a business "Imperial Marble". She noted that Village had received a \$200,000 grant to repair sidewalks for the Walk to Schools program, and that the path from the library to the forest preserve was almost done.

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Mr. Hiland (DeKalb County) informed the Commission that the County Board had adopted the 2015 ICC Building Code series. He also reported to the Commission that the County was waiting to meet with those solar companies accepted as winners in the State's Community Solar Program lottery, to discuss where they were at in terms of planning & testing, and preparing to submit for permits from the County. He elaborated on the State's process and some of the issues the companies have faced during that process. He also noted that each of the Special Use Permits approving solar garden sites had a sunset date by which the project had to be substantially underway. Mr. Hiland reported that the County has still been busy taking in building permits, but that staff was still willing and able to offer aid to any community that requests it. He noted that the IMO contact information had been distributed. He asked that the Commission members review the LOIS sheets that for their communities and to contact Ms. Jolene Willis if they had any additional feedback or changes. He also requested that the Commission members review items #1 and #2 of 10-Things list, and noted that next time, they would be discussing them. He also asked that the members please contact either him or Ms. Willis if they had any other topics they wished addressed at the next meeting. Mr. Hiland noted that he was working on getting someone to give a presentation to the Commission on recreational cannabis at one of the future meetings. Ms. Aldis noted that the State was working on a model ordinance and checklist regarding the new law. Mayor Smith noted that he had recently spoken with Mayor Lang (Sycamore) regarding the need for local communities to try to get ahead of the cannabis legislation if they are to have any local control over it. He also noted that he would like to have a town hall meeting for everyone in the late summer/early fall regarding this issue.

Mr. Hiland informed the Commissioners that a Zoning 101 seminar was going to be held on July 18<sup>th</sup>, in the Ogle County Courthouse at 6:30 pm. He noted that he was working with Mike Reibel, the Ogle County Planning & Zoning Administrator, on the seminar, and that it will cover planning and zoning best practices.

#### **9. Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting will be held on August 22, 2019, at 6:30 p.m. in Waterman. Mr. Hiland noted that previously the June 20<sup>th</sup> meeting was going to be held in Waterman, but that it had been relocated to the DeKalb County History Center to allow the Commission members a chance to visit the facility and see the "Crossroads: Change in Rural America" traveling exhibit before it left the center on June 22<sup>nd</sup>.

#### **10. Adjournment – Mr. Orton motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Jergens, and the motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Cheryl Aldis  
Chair, DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission

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