

**DEKALB COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**January 28, 2010**

The DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) met on January 28, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the DeKalb County Administration Building, Conference Room East, in Sycamore, Illinois. In attendance were Commission members Frank Altmaier, Ken Andersen, Mike Becker, Bill Beverley, Rich Gentile, Derek Hiland, Dave Maroo, Becky Morphey, Bill Nicklas, Martha May, Don Pardridge, Suzanne Sedlacek, and Jerry Thompson. Staff included Paul Miller and Rebecca Von Drasek. Also in attendance was Kate Schott

1. **Roll Call** -- *Commission members Cookie Aldis and Kathleen Curtis were noted absent.*
2. **Approval of Agenda** -- *Mr. Pardridge moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Nicklas, and the motion carried unanimously.*
3. **Approval of Minutes** -- *Ms. Sedlacek moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Andersen, and the motion carried unanimously.*

**4. Annual Dues**

Mr. Miller thanked the Commission members that already had sent in their annual dues. He also asked the Commission members from Hinckley and Lee to assist County staff in facilitating this payment. Mr. Maroo asked that a second invoice for the Village of Hinckley be sent.

**5. Update of County Stormwater Plan**

Mr. Miller explained to the Commission that DeKalb County has been working on Phase 2 of the Countywide Stormwater Management Plan over the course of the last year. The primary feature of this phase will be the creations of "County-wide Surface Water Maps." He outlined the projects to add county-wide two-foot contour intervals (topography), wetlands, and watershed boundaries into the County's digital maps as part of the Phase 2 work. Mr. Miller explained that the final appearance of the contour data will be as brown lines on the GIS maps, with ten-foot increments depicted as a different color, possibly red lines. The actual elevation above sea-level will pop up as users scroll across the maps. He anticipated that this work will be finished by the end of March, 2010. The contour data will be available to the public on the County's GIS Zoning District maps as a button which can be turned on or off. Mr. Miller informed the Commission that county staff had met with Dr. Richard Greene of Northern Illinois University on December 7, 2009 to discuss the watershed boundaries delineation project. Dr. Greene suggested that some of his students in the GIS program might be able to do the delineations of the County's watersheds using the County's contour data. A protocol for doing the work will be developed by Dr. Greene using existing methodologies. Mr. Miller also reported that this project would be accomplished without requiring any significant funding from the County. It is anticipated that the protocol for the mapping project will be developed before the end of January 2010 and the project should be completed within a few months. Mr. Miller also explained that staff has been in contact with Mike Richolson of the Natural Resources Conservation Service

regarding obtaining GIS shape files for designated wetlands. These files, Mr. Miller explained, depict wetlands based on records of known wetlands and likely wetlands based on soil types, but do not necessarily depict delineated wetlands. Mr. Miller anticipated that the wetland inventory could become a “button” that can also be turned on and off on the comprehensive surface water maps. He explained that future projects that require a Site Development Permit on a property that includes such a designated wetland may be required to do a wetland delineation prior to moving dirt. Should a wetland be confirmed on the property, the applicant would either have to protect the wetland (including an area around it), or possibly mitigate the wetland through participation in the County’s wetland banking system. Mr. Miller concluded by encouraging DeKalb County communities to utilize this newly available information .

Mr. Beverley stated that the City of Sandwich has six-inch contour maps. Mr. Miller offered to contact Tom Horak about possibly incorporating this information with the County’s GIS.

Mr. Gentile noted that the County’s GIS system was a really great tool to perform measurements with and noted that the snap shot of information could be used as documentation on a particular piece of property.

Mr. Nicklas noted that the GIS system was a generous gift that the County offers to the municipalities and its citizenry.

Mr. Gentile suggested that the Commission have a presentation on the GIS system at the March meeting. Mr. Miller agreed that would be possible and suggested that members encourage staff from the municipalities to attend so that they could also learn more about the maps and the information available to them.

## **6. Topics for 2010**

Mr. Nicklas noted that it might be timely to discuss the successes and failures that the member communities have had with enforcing and collecting on financial guarantees for public improvements that were to be part of approved subdivisions.

Mr. Miller agreed with Mr. Nicklas that many municipalities might be suffering similar issues given the economic downturn. He asked the members to share topics that are in front of their councils.

Mr. Gentile related that the City of Genoa had called on a letter of credit on one development and had been working with other developers to give incentives for completing improvements. He noted that in the instance were the letter of credit had been used, the bank that issued the letter had asked to be allowed to contract out the work. Mr. Gentile observed that the City worked with the bank and both parties benefitted. The bank saved on construction costs and the City was able to get the improvements completed.

Mr. Miller asked if some of that success was also based on the fact that the City had a letter of credit versus a bond. Mr. Nicklas responded that with bonds the bank will generally push back first. He hypothesized that national/international banks may be less likely to work with a community than local banks.

Mr. Gentile had questioned if either a bond or a letter of credit would have value if the bank itself closed.

Mr. Beverley related that the City of Sandwich also had an unfinished development and that the developer had not been maintaining the lot. He noted that the City had raised the maintenance rates and would bill property owners failing to maintain properties. He also noted that a local landscaper had suggested de-rutting and planting low maintenance (native plants) while properties were in limbo.

Mr. Miller recapped that the unsold condition or interim status of the properties were another issue facing communities.

Ms. Sedlacek reported that one issue the Village of Waterman was working through was their Planning Commission's revisions to the Village's subdivision ordinance. She noted that the Village Board had requested a summary of justification for each revision and that the budget was being cut for the Planning Commission. Ms. Sedlacek relayed that this in turn caused the Chairman of the Planning Commission to resign. Ms. Sedlacek further explained that the Planning Commission was attempting to tighten the ordinance while development had slowed. She provided some examples from the experience Waterman had with the Kennedy Homes development as the reason the Planning Commission was attempting to revise the subdivision ordinance.

Mr. Nicklas suggested that the funding may be less of an impediment to the Waterman's Planning Commission than the politics of the situation.

Ms. May asked how much investigation had gone into Kennedy Homes before they were allowed to build in Waterman. Mr. Partridge noted that at the time Kennedy Homes was a very large national home builder. Ms. May questioned the quality of the product. Mr. Partridge responded that it was hard to generalize. Ms. Sedlacek observed that many of the buyers wanted a larger home that they could also afford.

Mr. Thompson stated that Malta has had luck working with the bank owners of a Malta development. He pointed out that the bank is based in Wisconsin, and that once notified it paid to have the property cleaned up. Mr. Thompson also noted that the bank was being billed for snow removal and miscellaneous maintenance, and he hoped they would continue to pay those invoices. Mr. Thompson felt that the Malta example was one of a small community rolling up its collective sleeves and tackling an issue.

Mr. Nicklas noted that even in good times a community should negotiate the amount of the public guarantees and requirements for developments.

Mr. Andersen suggested that local builders should be involved in any discussion the RPC may sponsor related to finishing subdivisions or encouraging development. He asserted that there are many tools that the communities could use to attract further developments. Mr. Andersen noted

as an example some property owners may be willing to farm a vacant lot but sometimes regulations prevent this type of use.

Mr. Pardridge asked if the Regional Planning Commission was the right forum for that type of discussion. Mr. Nicklas suggested that first the municipalities should have a handle on the fiscal exposure that the developments place on them. Then he suggested opening up the discussion to include not only the development community but also the banking industry representatives. Mr. Nicklas observed that he had not met a banker who wants to be a developer.

Mr. Beverley agreed that the banks were bent on keeping their cash.

Mr. Thompson noted that Malta had a good relationship with their developer's bank.

Mr. Maroo offered that from the banker's prospective a clear and complete ownership of a property had to be established before any work can be done. This often takes a long time, during which time the bank cannot take responsibility for the property.

Mr. Beverley also asked about property taxes and the method by which they are generated. He noted that this is an issue he is asked about frequently.

Mr. Miller noted that there were some detectable trends in the conversation . He offered to gather the information and converse with Mr. Nicklas and Mr. Gentile before the next meeting to format a discussion around these issues.

## **7. Municipal Development Projects/Issues**

Ms. May asked if all the developments listed on the "Current Developments Projects" worksheet were still taking place. Mr. Pardridge responded that they were open projects that may or may not be moving forward. Mr. Nicklas also explained that the pace had slowed but that the member communities continue to update the projects.

## **8. Next Meeting Date -- The Commission agreed that the next RPC meeting would be March 25, 2010 at 7:00 pm in the Conference Room East.**

Mr. Altmaier reminded staff about handouts for the next meeting regarding the GIS system and property tax information.

## **9. Adjournment -- Mr. Pardridge motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Sedlacek, and the motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Rich Gentile  
Chairman, DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission

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