

# DRAFT

**DEKALB COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
July 26, 2012**

The DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) met on July 26, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the DeKalb County Administration Building, Conference Room East, in Sycamore, Illinois. In attendance were Commission members Cheryl Aldis, Ken Andersen, Bill Beverley, John Fischer, Rich Gentile, Brian Gregory, Derek Hiland, Martha May, Don Pardridge, and Anita Sorensen. Nathan Schwartz, Justin Miller, and Jeff Englehart were also present. Staff included Paul Miller and Rebecca Von Drasek.

- 1. Roll Call** -- *Commission members Les Bellah, Suzanne Fahnestock, Becky Morphey, Jim Roderick, and Linda Swenson were noted absent.*
- 2. Approval of Agenda** -- *Mr. Andersen moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Gregory, and the motion carried unanimously.*
- 3. Approval of Minutes** -- *Mr. Pardridge moved to approve the minutes from May 24, 2012, seconded by Mr. Gentile, and the motion carried unanimously.*

**4. Pedestrian Infrastructure**

Mr. Miller highlighted that the planning for pedestrian activities in communities is an increasingly important element of comprehensive planning. Economic realities make it likely that an increasing number of persons will seek to walk to work, shopping and service areas, recreational uses, schools, institutional and civic buildings and facilities, and places of worship. Having a network which identifies safe and efficient routes can facilitate and encourage pedestrian activities. Safe pedestrian access to central business districts and places of public use can result in increased trips to these areas, which help maintain and build the vitality of the community.

Mr. Miller encouraged the members of the Regional Planning Commission to consider developing Pedestrian Maps for their communities. Such maps should be developed through careful consideration of likely destinations, available walk ways, and opportunities for providing connections to fill gaps in a pedestrian network. The maps should also include the Safe Routes to Schools network, if the community has participated in that program. On the question of the use of dedicated alleyways that have never been paved, he said that staff has verified that, once dedicated, an alley may be used by a municipality at any time subsequently, even if the dedication was many years ago. It is only after vacation of an alley by the local government that the right-of-way is lost.

Mr. Miller explained that a Pedestrian Network map can be developed and adopted as a stand-alone document or as part of a municipal comprehensive plan. The pedestrian infrastructure could also be included on chamber of commerce-type maps that highlight businesses and key civic and public uses. He offered that the County's GIS may facilitate the development of such maps.

*Ms. Aldis and Ms. Sorensen arrived at 7:05 p.m.*

Mr. Gentile reported that he was attempting to incorporate unimproved alleys in his planning for pedestrian paths.

Mr. Beverley stated that in Sandwich there was some interest in dedicating bike paths.

The Commission discussed the risks and benefits of pedestrians and bicyclists sharing paths. Mr. Miller observed that these types of issues should be addressed when discussing the pedestrian maps.

Mr. Miller emphasized putting together the maps so that sidewalk and path connectivity to various public points are shown. He noted the municipalities have the right to use dedicated easements as public paths. Mr. Miller also highlighted that by mapping the paths, out areas that need to be improved are obvious.

The Commission briefly discussed the vacation of alleys and easements, noting that once an easement is vacated the public loses the access.

Mr. Hiland asked Mr. Gentile how the maintenance would be handled if a community choose to utilize the alleys and easements for pedestrian routes. Mr. Gentile responded that the city maintains the paths, and he pointed out that the paths are popular with officials and the public because they offer safer routes in town.

Mr. Miller encouraged members to take this information back to their Councils as this type of project is affordable and can offer a great benefit by encouraging walking within the community.

The Commissioners noted the importance of compliance with ADA (American Disabilities Act) requirements when considering these paths.

## **5. Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement Program**

Mr. Miller informed the Commission about the Illinois Public Works Mutual Aid Network (IPWMAN). This program is a statewide network of public works-related agencies intended to provide mutual aid and recovery in response to natural and man-made disasters. It was formed to coordinate resources for local municipal public works departments, public water agencies, public waste water agencies, township road districts, county highway departments, and any other local governmental entity that performs a public works function as they respond to emergency situations.

Mr. Miller observed that the Regional Planning Commission briefly discussed IPWMAN at its meeting of May 24, 2012. Currently, only the City of Genoa and the Village of Somonauk in DeKalb County participate in the program. Several nearby counties, including Kane and McHenry, are partners in the program, as are dozens of municipalities. Participation in IPWMAN requires the passing of an inter-governmental agreement at the local level.

Staff provided printed documents from the IPWMAN website, [www.ipwman.org](http://www.ipwman.org) for the Commissioner's review. These include a FAQ, instructions for filling out the mutual aid agreement on-line, a submission checklist, a draft ordinance for a mutual aid network agreement and a copy of the agreement itself.

Ms. Aldis observed that through another agency she had recently forwarded information regarding IPWMAN to all of the mayors within the County, so the information should be a refresher for some local officials.

Mr. Gregory asked Mr. Gentile about the frequency and type of the requests he receives from Genoa's involvement. Mr. Gentile explained that an "e-mail blast" is sent out by IPWMAN when there is a need in one of the member communities, and that responding is optional. He stated that Genoa had responded once and assistance had only be requested a handful of times.

Mr. Andersen encouraged township involvement.

Mr. Gregory asked if Genoa had ever requested assistance. Mr. Gentile responded that Genoa has never requested assistance, although he had contemplated requesting help with brush removal during the recent storms.

Mr. Gentile detailed that IPWMAN coordinates the response and informs the members of who is responding to each request.

Mr. Gregory asked if the request could be for specific equipment. Mr. Gentile noted that was the case, and that generally both staff and equipment are sent.

Mr. Miller encouraged members to take this information back to their Councils. He pointed out that there is a fee for membership, but that it is minimal given the potential for coordination and the benefits of being part of the organization.

Mr. Hiland mentioned the City of DeKalb was also considering a reverse 911 service.

Ms. Aldis explained that Cortland had used NIXEL to provide reverse 911 service in the past, until it became fee-based.

## **6. "Zoning 101" Reminder**

The Commission discussed the "Zoning 101" Seminar. The seminar will be held on September 15, 2012 in the "Gathertorium" at the Legislative Center in Sycamore, and is intended to be a primer on planning, zoning and the review of growth and development proposals. Staff would be distributing the seminar flyer in August.

Mr. Gentile suggested reaching out to Kelly Cahill as an additional presenter at the seminar. Mr. Miller agreed to follow-up with Ms. Cahill.

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

Ms. Sorenson said that there was nothing to report from Malta. Mr. Miller noted that Kishwaukee College near Malta had submitted a Text Amendment application to allow for proposed electronic signage.

Mr. Gentile stated that road projects were underway in Genoa.

Mr. Beverley noted the highway widening project and the proposed l.e.d. lights in Sandwich.

Ms. May informed the Commission that Lee was attempting to find ways to survive financially in the current economy.

Mr. Andersen reported that there are a few commercial development in unincorporated DeKalb County. He also emphasized that the agricultural community continues to build and add improvements to farms in the area.

Mr. Pardridge stated that sewer and water projects were ongoing in Shabbona. He announced that Resource Bank was going to open a branch in Shabbona.

Ms. Aldis observed that it was fairly quiet in Cortland, although there was some anticipation that the addition of the local school back to the tax roles would be a benefit to the town.

Mr. Gregory reported that a sidewalk program had been approved in Sycamore. He passed around a photo of a sidewalk repair by a company called Safe Step. Mr. Gregory noted the City was also working on signage improvements as well.

Mr. Fischer reported that the Illinois Municipal League was sending out a risk management specialist to Kingston to review and look for compliance issues of Village improvements.

Mr. Hiland stated that the CVS is almost ready for occupancy. He said that grading work has begun at the Police Station site. He also reported that the NB&T Branch and Hampton Inn & Suites projects are progressing.

Mr. Andersen announced that the Courthouse was expected to be completed by the end of August. He noted that the County Board was still waiting for a decision on the landfill, which is necessary before the County can undertake consideration of a jail expansion. He highlighted the prospective funding of the FEMA mitigation project for Evergreen Village. He also reported on the continuing search for a County Administrator.

**8. Next Meeting Date -- The Commission agreed that the next RPC meeting would be on September 15, 2012 at 9:00 am in the Gathertorium.**

**9 Adjournment** -- *Mr. Beverley moved to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Aldis, and the motion carried unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

Derek Hiland  
Chairman, DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission

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