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DeKalb County Government  
Sycamore, Illinois

**Planning and Zoning Committee Minutes  
(September 23, 2015)**

The Planning and Zoning Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on September 23, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Conference Room East located in the DeKalb County Administration Building. In attendance were Committee Members John Emerson, Frank O’Barski, Tim Bagby, Tracy Jones, Steven Faivre, and Anita Jo Turner. Also, in attendance were staff members Gary Hanson, Pete Stefan, Paul Miller and Rebecca Von Drasek.

Mr. Emerson, Planning and Zoning Committee Chairman, called the meeting to order and noted that Kevin Bunge was absent.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*Mr. O’Barski moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Ms. Turner, and the motion carried unanimously.*

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*Mr. O’Barski moved to approve the minutes of August 26, 2015 meeting of the Planning and Zoning Committee, seconded by Mr. Faivre, and the motion carried unanimously.*

**FUTURE LAND USE PLANNING & ZONING FOR BUSINESS**

Mr. Miller pointed out that the Planning and Zoning Committee had discussed, at its meeting of August 26, 2015, the issue of how the County might become more “business-friendly.” Staff presented at that meeting a report to help initiate the discussion regarding land use planning and regulation as it relates to business development, expansion, and retention. The history of planning and zoning in the County was reviewed, and possible changes to the DeKalb County Unified Comprehensive Plan, and the Zoning Ordinance, and possibly the County’s Building Codes, were suggested for consideration. Subsequent discussion by Committee members at the August meeting generally endorsed the idea of pursuing changes to these documents in order to make it easier for future businesses to locate in unincorporated DeKalb County. The Committee specified that such changes should not eliminate the general policy of preserving prime agricultural land for agriculture, nor of encouraging new residential uses to take place within and adjacent to municipal boundaries. Mr. Miller referred to the September 10, 2015 memorandum to the Committee which made recommendations and suggestions for creating a more “business-friendly” environment in the unincorporated areas of the County. He highlighted the suggestion of allowing for applications for Planned Development - Commercial uses if the County Board agreed that staff should pursue the

expansion. Mr. Miller noted that this could be seen as a significant change to the current vision of the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Jones thanked Mr. Miller for his memorandum of this topic. He agreed that any revisions to the Comprehensive Plan should not be done without a thorough review. He asked Mr. Miller what the next steps would be to move this issue forward. Mr. Miller suggested that the County Board should pass a resolution indicating its desire to pursue this review, and directing staff to initiate the amendment processes. Mr. Jones asked if it needed to be reviewed by the County Board prior to determining the exact language for the proposed text amendments. Mr. Miller responded that undertaking the Comprehensive Plan Amendments and Text Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance will require a significant amount of staff resources. He felt it prudent to confirm that the County Board agreed that this was an issue prior to staff committing the necessary time and energy. Mr. Jones stated that he supports preservation of the agricultural areas of the County but wants to open it up to some other uses.

Mr. O'Barski agreed that he did not want agricultural lands whittled away but that the County needed more jobs.

Following further discussion, the Committee agreed that, with the County Board's direction, the process for the public review would allow input from a variety of stakeholders.

*Mr. O'Barski moved to forward a Resolution to the County Board to initiate a review of the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance to allow for more "Ag-compatible" uses in the A-1, Agricultural District, seconded by Mr. Jones, and the motion carried unanimously.*

## **PZ&B FY15 BUDGET REVIEW**

Mr. Miller presented the draft FY 16 Planning, Zoning and Building Department budget that has been submitted for review and approval by the County Board. He pointed out that, per the instructions to departments from County Administration, the budget has a zero percent increase in the commodities and services line items. Mr. Miller explained that an appeal had also been submitted to review the County Administration's denial of a request to increase the hourly rate of the Building Inspector. He noted that the increased revenue generated through proposed changes to the fees schedules for permits issued through the Department could pay for the proposed increase. Mr. Miller alluded to his July 29, 2015 memo detailing the proposed fee change and billing method, wherein the cost for permits would be based on the actual time devoted to each by members of staff. This would change the fee schedule from a "flat fee" to a "cost-based" approach. Mr. Miller suggested that in this economic situation of flat revenue and rising costs, the County can no longer afford to subsidize discretionary permits.

Mr. Faivre asked if other jurisdictions were using this form of billing for services. Mr. Miller responded that he was not aware of other communities using this type of system but that it was common place in the private sector.

Mr. Jones asked why Mr. Miller was asking for the salary to be increased to the maximum. Mr. Miller explained that Mr. Reynolds had served at the City of DeKalb for 18 years, yet the County is able only to pay him an entry-level salary. He pointed out that Mr. Reynold's eventual pension

would be affected by the decrease in hourly pay. And he stated that the County should seek to pay employees based on their expertise and years of experience, if it can afford to do so.

Mr. Hanson was recognized by the Committee. He referenced a future job study to be conducted by the Administration and a determination of the salary for staff positions in consideration of comparable Counties. He also explained that he has recommended that the pay increase be denied because of the potential impact on the County's general fund. Further, any additional revenue generated from a change to the fee schedules may be better used for other purposes.

The Committee briefly discussed the billing for services and the Building Inspector's pay rate. The Committee encouraged Mr. Miller to seek an alternative form of funding a \$3.50 per hour increase for the Building Inspector. Mr. Miller agreed to review fees for similar services in neighboring counties and present a recommendation for increasing fees but staying with a flat-fee approach.

*Mr. Faivre made a motion to table the discussion to allow staff additional time to research fee increases to accommodate the \$3.50 per hour increase, seconded by Ms. Turner, and the motion carried unanimously.*

#### **EVERGREEN VILLAGE MITIGATION PROJECT**

Mr. Miller reported that following a recent site visit that the remaining site improvements were cleanup-type items. He noted that the final billing for the project's demolition should be completed in October.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No comments were offered.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Planning and Zoning Committee is next scheduled to meet Wednesday, October 28, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Conference Room East.

*Mr. O'Barski moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Bagby, and the motion carried unanimously.*

**Respectfully submitted,**



**John Emerson**  
**Planning and Zoning Committee Chairman**  
RGV:rgv