

**DEKALB COUNTY
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

**January 25, 2024
6:00 p.m.**

**Genoa City Hall
333 East First Street
Genoa, IL 60135**

AGENDA

- 1. Roll Call**
- 2. Approval of Agenda**
- 3. Approval of Minutes**
- 4. Public Comments**

Any member of the public may address the Commission for up to 3 minutes on any topic of their choosing. There will be no yielding of time to other members of the public and agenda time for public comments is limited to 30 minutes in total.

- 5. Transportation Corridors, Alternate Transportation and Roadway Safety**
- 6. Update on County Wind and Solar Projects**
- 7. County Annexation Policy**
- 8. Annual Dues**
- 9. Member Re-Appointments – Cortland, Hinckley, Lee, Sandwich, Shabbona, and Sycamore**
- 10. 2024 Agenda Items**
- 11. Municipal Development Permits / Projects / Challenges / Champions**
- 12. Next Meeting Date**
- 13. Adjournment**

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DEKALB COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

(October 26, 2023)

The DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) held a meeting on October 26, 2023, at 6:00 pm, in the Sandwich City Hall, Council Chambers, in Sandwich, Illinois. In attendance were Commission Members: Dan Olson, Alyssa Seguss, Robert Pritchard, Frank Altmaier, Dan Chambers, Theresa Voitik, Todd Latham, Becky Morphey, John Sauter, and Suzanne Willis. Also, in attendance were: County Staff members: Derek Hiland and Marcellus Anderson; and, Brian Grainger.

Roll Call – Ms. Aldis, Ms. Jergens, Mr. Simpson, Mr. Ecker, and Ms. Fahnestock were not in attendance.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Pritchard moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Ms. Willis, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes for the August 24, 2023 Meeting

Mr. Sauter moved to approve the minutes of August 24, 2023, seconded by Mr. Pritchard, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Public Comments

None

55+ Communities in our County

Mr. Hiland noted that one of the topics that had been suggested as a discussion item was the development of 55+ developments. He then introduced Mr. Brian Grainger, a local developer who has built a number of 55+ communities in and around the County.

Mr. Grainger gave an informative presentation talking about need and benefits of municipalities developing “Age Targeted” communities, and distributed a packet of information detailing several of the 55+ communities he had developed. He elaborated on the amenities provided in and around these communities, and the development trends he had noted in this industry.

Mr. Olson inquired whether they did any leasing. Mr. Grainger responded that there have been restrictions against leasing, but that some people have tried to get around that restriction. He noted that the community has worked hard to be owner-occupied only, However, he did note that the

Rivermist community had an incomplete phase were there has been some interest establishing leasing there.

Mr. Grainger discussed the trends in housing costs and how it has changed. He talked about the market and the economics going on. He also highlighted the benefits of these communities, such as no impacts on schools, and about how difficult it can be for people to find accessible housing.

Mr. Grainger then discussed the cost of these units, and resell. He elaborated on the various benefits to municipalities.

Mr. Altmaier inquired whether the units were customizable. Mr. Grainger responded that the units had a set footprint, but were customizable within that footprint.

Mr. Grainger then talked about the various challenges he has faced in developing 55+ communities.

Ms. Voitik inquired whether the common areas were run by a Home Owners Association (HOA). Mr. Grainger responded that there are HOAs, but that they have also started to bring in private management companies to manage the facilities. He also noted that the clubhouse on one of their facilities was actually run as a nonprofit entity.

Mr. Olson asked what was the number one thing a city could do to support a project like this. Mr. Grainger responded that each city was different and proceeded to talk about the various things that could be done.

Mr. Hiland inquired how many of the member communities had 55+ housing. Three communities indicated that they did; and most of those that did not, indicated that they would like to have some.

Mr. Grainger finished by talking about how communities that are interested in these developments could go about attracting them. He noted the forces driving the need for this type of housing, but highlighted that each community is different and would need to find developments that fit with their community. He also volunteered to show commission members his model homes and to sit down and talked with them about these developments.

Weather Siren Operation and Intergovernmental Discussion

Mr. Hiland noted that Mr. Chambers had suggested discussion of this topic.

Mr. Chambers noted that this issue started with the 2015 Fairdale Tornado. He noted that the residents of Fairdale felt that they had not received enough warning of the tornado, because their tornado sirens were controlled more by Kirkland, and that they were discussing that they should

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have control of their tornado sirens. He noted that it was a topic that seems to come up at every other Board meeting, and elaborated on the complaints they have received about it.

Mr. Pritchard informed the Commission that Hinckley was also looking into who should have control over when the sirens go off. He noted that they were looking at the fire department, the sheriff's department, the weather service, and someone else who would have the key to activate it. He then inquired as to how Sycamore or DeKalb handled it. Mr. Sauter responded that he did not off hand how Sycamore handled it. Ms. Seguss responded that Genoa recently went to a service that can be done remotely, where previously they had to have someone physically in the office to physically set the sirens off, which was not best idea in an emergency. She recommended that Fairdale could disconnect from Kirkland and have the County Dispatching center set them off based on the weather alert for that area. She noted that the remote software might be a solution to their situation.

It was noted that Fairdale had no official body who could be tasked with keeping control of the sirens.

Mr. Chambers related that after the 2015 tornado, Kirkland community went on "hyper-alert", and the siren was being set off for the least reason. He noted things eventually normalized.

Mr. Pritchard inquired whether anyone had heard of Braniff Communications out of Crestwood, noting that they were the ones seeking to update the system in Hinckley. Several members responded that they had heard of them, and Ms. Seguss responded that she believed that they were the company that Genoa used.

Municipal Development Permits / Projects / Challenges / Champions

Mr. Hiland thanked Mr. Latham for hosting the RPC meeting, inquired whether he would give the Commission members a tour of the City Opera House. Mr. Latham responded that he could.

Mr. Altmaier (Kingston) reported that there was not too much to report. He noted that a couple of lots in the Wood Haven subdivision, that had been sitting vacant for twenty years, had recently sold and that a permit had been submitted to build on one of them. He reported that house being built by Habitat for Humanity was almost completed. Mr. Altmaier noted that in the links to the Ancel-Glink website previously sent out by Mr. Hiland, he had found a discussion about a change in the state law regarding the adjudication process for non home rule communities, that the other member communities should check out and consider.

Ms. Morphey (Somonauk) reported that that they would be getting another solar farm, next to the one previously built. She also noted that they were putting in a dog park, and were looking at plans for installing a pickleball court.

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Mr. Pritchard (Hinckley) reported that not much was happening in Hinckley. He noted that they had an 80-lot subdivision that was not moving, primarily due to cost, and thinks that the Village should allow for than just single-family home in the subdivision to bring costs down.

Ms. Voitik (Lee) reported that exciting things were starting to happen in Lee. She reported that the 2003 Comprehensive Plan was being updated. She noted that they were doing their water project and that the IEPA hearing for their new well and water tower will be on November 1, 2023. She reported that they are working on economic development, however, Hexagon Energy is looking to develop phase 2 of its solar farm, which may result in the development landlocking the Village. Ms. Voitik recommended the book “Fragile Neighborhoods” by Seth Kaplan, which talks about building healthy communities. She noted that one of their big challenges is that the Village does not have sewers, which hurts economic development.

Mr. Chambers (Kirkland) reported that a new gym is supposed to be happening in the Village, noting that the building it would be going into was formerly a bank. He noted that there were a couple of solar projects going in north of the Village. He noted that they finally got their hoop structure up, so that they could make the IEPA happy and move their salt storage out of the floodplain where it is currently located.

Mr. Olson (DeKalb) reported that the DeKalb County Community Gardens were purchasing an 8-acre site on North Anne Glidden Road for their facility. He noted that they had been looking at that area for a long time, and had been granted zoning for it. He also noted that they still had some fund raising to do, but the site will be able to accommodate all of their uses and still have some extra space. Mr. Olson reported that the Council had recently approved a Special Use for the DeKalb School District so that they could establish an elementary school in the Annie Glidden North neighborhood. He noted that the School District had entered into a lease to purchase the NIU School of Nursing building, which they will use, expanding it to 70,000 square feet. He commented on the benefit of having an elementary school in the neighborhood. Mr. Olson reported that a cannabis dispensary, to be located on Locust Street, would hopefully soon be opening, pending state approval. He then reported that the City had annexed the Wessel Farm Stand, located on Sycamore Road, noting that it had been an unincorporated property in the middle of the City. He noted that the site was mostly unimproved, but that they had given them a phased approach, whereby the property will be brought into compliance over time.

Mr. Latham (Sandwich) reported that they had the redevelopment of the Indian Springs shopping center, now called The Springs, which will be a controlled climate storage. He reported that the City had started its \$14,000,000 public works upgrade, which will also include their solar field. Mr. Latham reported that their water rate study would be done soon. He noted that it envelops the northern part of the City, and was a \$216,000 project. Mr. Latham noted that their Park District had opened up a dog park in September. He finished by noting that there had been more growth

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and building permits, and they expected to have Fairwinds Subdivision built out by the end of the year.

Ms. Willis (DeKalb County) reported that the sale of the County Home was off, and talked about the County's efforts to address the impact on the budget this caused.

Mr. Sauter (Sycamore) reported that Sycamore had thirty single-family permits by the end of September, which was a little ahead of the previous year. He noted that they had a couple of proposed projects heading to their Plan Commission. The first is a special use permit to operate a distillery in the old Anaconda building, which would occupy a restaurant and a banquet hall. This will require that they seek to modify the Unified Development Ordinance ahead of the special use consideration to accommodate it. The second item is a proposed multifamily project, with 54 to 66 units. He noted that it was interesting because the land is currently zoned commercial and has been sitting vacant since 2008, but would be prime to be redeveloped into something else. He noted that it will be interesting to see their Plan Commission and City Council wrestle with it. Mr. Sauter finished by reporting the City had another round of lead water replacement coming up, hopefully before the snow flies. He noted that they had more grant money than they had people signing up for it, so the City is trying to get the word out.

Ms. Seguss (Genoa) reported that a new Taco Bell building had broken ground, and a three-unit commercial building that should be done in the next couple of weeks, which already had tenants lined up for it. She noted that they had couple of smaller industrial projects in progress, as well as a building expansion and a building acquisition by one of their largest employers, Custom Aluminum Products, totaling \$5,000,000 in industrial investment. Ms. Seguss noted that their residential development was still going strong, primarily due to the By Grainger units in the River Bend Subdivision. However, there has been a little bit of a slow down in the single-family homes. Ms. Seguss reported that the downtown revitalization project will be awarded at an upcoming Council meeting, to begin the spring of 2024. She noted that their facade grant program was still going strong, noting that they had two buildings downtown that were under construction, two more applications approved that just need to start construction, and a couple more going through the process. Ms. Seguss reported that they had been working on their Comprehensive Plan all year and hoped to get it approved in early December. She also reported that they were planning a Unified Development Ordinance update in 2024, that would reflect the community feedback in the Comprehensive Plan. She noted that they were working with Kingston, Kirkland, the DeKalb County Soil and Water Conservation District, and the County to develop a watershed plan. Ms. Seguss mentioned that they had just hired an intern through the NIU Ignite Intern Program, noting that it was free of cost, with the intern being paid by NIU. She described some of various tasks they were going to have them do, and recommended that this program might be a resource for smaller communities that need an intern or with research projects that need doing. Ms. Seguss finished by reporting that they were having a lot of discussions about how to address housing,

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talking about how to be creative with a lack of inventory and rising costs. She noted that it might be a good future topic for the Commission to explore.

Next Meeting Date

The Commission's next meeting date will be January 25th, at 6:00 pm, and will be hosted by the City of Genoa.

Ms. Voitik volunteered to host on of the spring RPC meetings in the Village of Lee, possibly the March meeting.

Adjournment

Mr. Sauter moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Morphey, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Olson
Chair, DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission

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DeKalb County
Regional Planning Commission
110 East Sycamore Street
Sycamore, IL 60178
(815) 895-7188
www.dekalbcounty.org

MEMORANDUM

TO: Regional Planning Commission

FROM: Derek M. Hiland
Regional Planning Commission Director

DATE: January 19, 2024

SUBJECT: Annual Dues -- 2024

The Regional Planning Commission (RPC) voted in 2007 to assess annual dues to its member communities. For the past 15 years the Communities of DeKalb County have continually supported the efforts of the RPC. These dues are intended to offset the County's costs of providing staffing, meeting room and materials. Invoices have been sent the week of January 15, 2024 to each member community for the \$500 dues. Dues are requested to be received by the end of March 2024. Staff appreciates members' attention to this detail.

DMH:dmh

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**DeKalb County
Regional Planning Commission**

110 East Sycamore Street
Sycamore, IL 60178
(815) 895-7188

MEMORANDUM

TO: DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission

FROM: Derek M. Hiland
Regional Planning Commission Director

DATE: January 19, 2024

SUBJECT: Re-appointment of Members

By consent of the members of the Regional Planning Commission, member terms are staggered by one-, two- and three-year terms. The following member's terms are due to expire in April of 2024:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Appointed</u>	<u>Alternate</u>
Town of Cortland	Brandy Williams	Cheryl "Cookie" Aldis
City of Sycamore	John Sauter	Open
Village of Hinckley	Bob Pritchard	Open
Village of Lee	Terri Voitik	Open
Village of Shabbona	Laurie Wilson	David Simpson
City of Sandwich	Todd Latham	Open

These individuals are requested to work with their city council/village board to forward in writing to County Board Chairman Suzanne Willis, or email Lisa Reser at lreser@dekalbcounty.org the names of a representative to the Regional Planning Commission and an alternate. The names of the member representative and an alternate need to be received no later than March 29, 2024, so that the County Board Chairman can make appoints at the April 17, 2024 meeting of the DeKalb County Board. Once appointed, terms will be for a three-year period.

DMH:dh

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DEKALB COUNTY
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
110 EAST SYCAMORE STREET
SYCAMORE, IL 60178
(815) 895-7188
WWW.DEKALBCOUNTY.ORG

MEMORANDUM

TO: Regional Planning Commission

FROM: Derek M. Hiland
Regional Planning Commission Director

DATE: January 19, 2024

SUBJECT: 2024 Agenda Items

The Regional Planning Commission has, since its inception, served as an important forum for communication, coordination and cooperation between the units of local government on issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries. Each year, several such issues are discussed and related information is shared. Issues previously highlighted have included: stormwater management; groundwater information; freedom of information laws; GIS data software implementation; the Countywide fiber optics project; urban agriculture; small and large wind and solar energy regulations; sidewalk programs and pedestrian infrastructure; property maintenance codes; intergovernmental agreements and boundary agreements, medical marijuana, video gambling, the Illinois Concealed Carry law, the County's Zero Waste Policy, planned developments as a flexible regulatory tool, watershed planning, and the County's Enterprise Zone. The Commission has sponsored workshops and seminars on subjects of interest to entities that have land use regulation authority.

Commissioners are requested to discuss possible topics of interest with elected and appointed officials in their municipalities, and be prepared to bring up these issues and ideas at the Regional Planning Commission meeting of January 25, 2024. Consideration should be given to what issues are currently taking place within member communities, with an eye toward sharing lessons learned from experiences and seeking input and ideas from each other. Possible topics include: Zoning 101 sessions; short term rentals; blighted properties; and/or advancements in building codes as it relates to new housing construction types (tiny houses, "barndominiums" and electrical vehicle adaptations).

Commission members are encouraged to review these possible topics and select which should be the topics for meetings of the Regional Planning Commission in 2024.

DMH:dmh

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