



MINUTES
OF
STANDING COMMITTEES

NAME

Ways and Means Meeting

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WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE

July 18, 2007

Vice Chair Smith called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Room, Administration Building, 220 North Main Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Comms. Grewal, Gunn, Irwin, Ping Mills, Ouimet, Peterson, Lovejoy Roe, Schwartz, Sizemore and Smith

MEMBERS ABSENT: Comm. Bergman

OTHERS PRESENT: County Administrator Robert Guenzel, Deputy County Administrators David Behen and Verna McDaniel, Corporation Counsel Curt Hedger; Catherine McClary, County Treasurer; Dale Vanderford, James McFarlane, Andy Brush, Ken Schrader, Information Technology; Denise Dalrymple, Children's Services; Patricia Denig, Planning and Environment; Nancy Thelen, MSU Extension; Damon Thompson, Community Development; Gordon Burger, Jim Zwolensky, Support Services; Jennifer Watson, Budget; Trenda Rusher, ETCS; Mary Udoji, Library; Kerry Sheldon, Joanna Bidlack, Administration; Jason Brooks, Clerk's Office; various citizens; and members of the press.

Roll Call

Citizen Participation

Phil Volk, 1382 Russell St., Ypsilanti, stated that all members are in full support of those with alternate lifestyles. He added that differences need to be ignored and union workers should stick together to gain the same benefits.

Andrea Plevek, 1017 Fountain Street, Ann Arbor, discussed steps taken at MSU Extension to prevent foreclosure. She stated that education, crisis management, and community outreach are provided. She reported that MSU Extension reiterates its support.

Terry Allon stated that she supports MSU Extension efforts to prevent foreclosure. She discussed current funding (6:37:00). She stated that she advocated adding \$25,000 to rescue funds.

Beverly Davidson, 2002 Alice Street, Ann Arbor, stated that she is proud to be an employee of the County. She added that she has benefited from the domestic partner benefit program. She stated that she is here to advocate for stronger communication from Administration and labor unions. She added that she has been informed that research is ongoing to preserve these benefits. She stated that she would like to see any information brought forward.

Moonson Eninsche, 1443 Rosewood, Ann Arbor, stated that he is a social worker in the County Treasurer's Office. He discussed the potential of the creation of a Mortgage Foreclosure Specialist, and how helpful these people can be.

Kassie Weiland, 2737 Holy Oak Lane, stated that she is an employee of Washtenaw County and stated that domestic partner benefits are very important. She asked that the Board work as hard as possible to preserve these benefits.

Tanya Hilgendorf, 3080 Ashburn, Ann Arbor, thanked the Board for review of the Humane Society proposal. She stated that \$3.5 million of the \$7.5 million goal has been raised. She stated that she hopes to bring all pledges in by year end.

Heather Mooney, 3341 Beaumont, stated that she is a Foreclosure Prevention Specialist, and thanked the Board for their previous support. She discussed an experience with stopping a foreclosure, a day before the home was lost. She added that it is often difficult for homeowners to get correct information. She stated that this position would allow more people to be reached. She reported that a major issue pointed out is that there is a severe lack of infrastructure to deal with the current foreclosure crisis.

Pat Gordon, 2017 Fair Street, Ann Arbor, stated that she feels Washtenaw County is a bright star in the region, and that there are great politicians.

Tom Partridge stated that from his perspective there is much to be done in local government. He added that this is the 43rd year since the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Act, and that it has been over 40 years since the Medicare and Medicaid Acts were passed. He discussed the principles upheld by Ladybird Johnson. He stated that there is a need to update the initiatives mentioned above. Partridge added that there is a lot of work to be done in eradicating homelessness. He stated that this is the business of all levels of government.

Shannon Richards, Ann Arbor, stated that she has loved working for the County. She added that she hopes the Board considers benefits to those who would not normally be able to have benefits.

James Toy, 1723 Dexter Ave., Ann Arbor, stated that when he heard of the possibility of possible removal of benefits, his breath was taken away. He stated that he has known the Board to uphold human liberties.

Commissioner Follow-Up to Citizens' Participation

None

Report on Domestic Partner Benefits

Hedger gave an update on domestic partner benefits. He discussed the history of the benefits, current County criteria for obtaining the benefits, the Marriage Amendment to the Michigan Constitution passed in 2004, and court rulings that have led to the current situation. Hedger reported that developing new criteria for benefits is an option and added that the County is still evaluating possible new criteria. He stated that County Administration will bring forth criteria this fall.

Comm. Gunn stated that this is good news. She added that all families need to be considered, and that she is gratified that a possible way to continue these benefits is being investigated.

Comm. Peterson asked about the registration requirement with the City of Ann Arbor. He asked about the effect on new employees and those who failed to register. Hedger stated that the current criteria were put in place in 2000. Diane Heidt stated that currently, not registering with the City of Ann Arbor would disqualify an employee from receiving domestic partner benefits. Heidt discussed some examples of possible new criteria.

Comm. Peterson stated that he is very pleased up to this point, and hopes that a vehicle to communicate can be created. He stated that he hopes something acceptable to all involved can be adopted.

Comm. Grewal thanked all who came to speak on domestic partner benefits. She stated that there is still discrimination on certain levels, and she would support the effort to find an alternative.

Comm. Smith stated that he appreciates all who came to speak on this topic. He stated that he encouraged improved communication to employees. He added that if something catastrophic takes place, enough timely notice needs to be given to ensure that families can continue their coverage. He stated that he appreciates the work done by Heidt and Hedger. Hedger stated that the wheel does not need to be reinvented on this topic.

New Business:

Land Use and Environment Community of Interest:

Planning and Environment:

Fees for Privately Owned Community Sewage Systems

Comm. Gunn seconded by Comm. Grewal moved to recommend that the Board of Commissioners approve the resolution adopting the fee schedule for Privately Owned Community Sewage Systems be adopted.

Roll call vote: YEAS: 10. NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 1 (Comm. Bergman). Motion carried.

Brownfield Redevelopment Plan Amendment

Comm. Gunn seconded by Comm. Grewal moved to recommend that the Board of Commissioners approve the resolution adopting the amendment to the Brownfield Plan for Washtenaw County, approving single business tax credit incentives for the "2810 Baker Road" Brownfield redevelopment project in the Village of Dexter be adopted.

Roll call vote: YEAS: 10. NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 1 (Comm. Bergman). Motion carried.

Wind Power Budget Adjustment

Comm. Gunn seconded by Comm. Grewal moved to recommend that the Board of Commissioners approve the resolution authorizing the Administrator, upon review of Corporation Counsel through a formal bidding process to perform an investment grade wind study, including purchasing meteorological towers for the amount of \$86,000 which will come from unearmarked reserve funds to the Department of Planning and Environment's budget be adopted.

Comm. Lovejoy Roe stated that she cannot support the wind power resolution at this time. She stated that she feels it is time to be more fiscally responsible and added that costs add up with measures like this.

He stated that in working with staff there are indications in recapturing this money in the next phase of the project. He stated that government is currently the only player in the game. Comm. Ouimet stated that he feels there is a very successful prototype.

Comm. Ping Mills stated that she favors environmentally conscious programs, but added that she is not sure that she can support this moving forward.

Comm. Peterson stated that he appreciates anything that can be done to reduce the cost of energy. He stated that he is really concerned. Comm. Peterson stated that he is not good at making blind investments and added that gaining revenue is the responsibility of the County Treasurer. He stated that it is a private sector responsibility to speculate. He stated that he would like to see part two of the project. Denig stated that the \$86,000 is for the tower and anemometer. She reported that it has been found that this money will be recouped if enough wind is found to be present. Denig stated that interest has been found in this project. Comm. Peterson asked about the next phase of investing in this project. Denig reported that a public-private partnership would be the next step.

Comm. Peterson stated that he would like to know the end cost of this project. Comm. Peterson stated that the County should be prepared to go to the end of the project. He stated that he would support the measure if the dollar amount was capped. He stated continued investment could result in a reduction of County services. Guenzel stated that it is not the County's intent to spend more than \$86,000. Joshua Long stated that the initial consultants built in a higher figure to keep from coming back to the Board.

Comm. Sizemore stated that this is also an educational opportunity for youth in the community.

Comm. Smith stated that his priorities have focused on the protection of human services, and economic development. He stated that Michigan is transforming with a new economy, and this is an investment toward making the transition. Comm. Smith stated that a lot would be done to work with partners. He added that this is an item that helps the economy in Washtenaw County. He stated that this could reap enormous economic benefits.

Comm. Lovejoy Roe stated that there is no obligation to move forward at this time. She added that she appreciates staff work. She stated that she hopes that she is wrong. Comm. Lovejoy Roe stated that there are windmills in Michigan, and that if the technology was more reliable, more people would be investing. She stated that it is too risky for her.

Comm. Ping Mills asked if another month would help lock something in. Denig stated that \$86,000 is the top figure. She stated that she expects the private sector to do the investing. She added that interest has been received from many people.

Comm. Peterson stated that there is a spending cap in place. He stated that he will vote for this, but that he does not feel this is going anywhere, and that he would question this project from a business standpoint. He stated that he wants to be supportive of alternative energy. He stated that the private sector should be coming up with these funds.

Comm. Gunn stated that she supports the \$86,000 investment, and that it is necessary to find out if this works.

Comm. Schwartz stated that he was originally skeptical, but that he is somewhat more convinced after conducting research. He stated that it is important to work with the local planning commission on this project.

Roll call vote: YEAS: 8. NAYS: 2 (Comms. Ping Mills and Lovejoy Roe) ABSENT: 1 (Comm. Bergman).
Motion carried.

Housing and Homelessness Community of Interest:

Office of Community Development:

Reorganization and Staffing contract with the City of Ann Arbor

Comm. Gunn seconded by Comm. Grewal moved to recommend that the Board of Commissioners approve the resolution authorizing the Administrator to sign contracts with the City of Ann Arbor, creating 1.0 FTE Housing Manager Analyst Position, removing 1.0 FTE Management Analyst I/II from Hold Vacant, for the period of July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008, creating a partnership revenue contract with the City of Ann Arbor to provide housing and rehabilitation services not to exceed \$180,000, and increasing the General Fund appropriation by \$37,674 be adopted.

Comm. Lovejoy Roe asked about the increase in the general fund contribution. David Behen introduced Damon Thompson, the new Interim Director of Community Development. Thompson stated that because the general fund appropriation is the difference between the actual expenditures and anticipated CDBG program. He stated that passage of this measure will lead to a functional rehab department. Comm. Lovejoy Roe talked about using Building Department officials to help fill some gaps. Behen stated that conversations are taking place with the City of Ann Arbor. Behen stated that this is a good deal because the Department is not set up for success structurally. He stated that the number of people reporting to the Department Head will be cut in half. Behen added that City and County will be brought together to do community work. Comm. Lovejoy Roe stated that she does not understand why Building Department officials are not used. She asked if this has been to CDBG for approval. Thompson responded that it has.

Comm. Grewal stated that she was glad to see the reorganization. She added that this would increase efficiency. She stated that inspectors are doing work other than just regular inspections. She added that having Urban County step up and become an active partner will be helpful.

Comm. Sizemore asked if five people will be cut. Thompson stated that staff was not actually being cut. He added that this funding is to absorb rehab funding back into the office. Comm. Sizemore asked why the partner is Ann Arbor. Behen stated that Ann Arbor is the first, but that regionalization is a priority, and that this could be one of the first partnerships.

Comm. Gunn stated that the partnership gave eligibility to receive CDBG money. She stated that she feels this has been successful. She stated that the City of Ann Arbor has formed a task force to explore joining Urban County. She stated that this consolidation is important to continue cooperation.

Comm. Peterson stated that he appreciates this, and that there is a workforce that is not as busy at certain times, causing thoughts on departments working closer together. He stated that less bosses should be needed. He stated that cooperation is an opportunity.

Comm. Ouimet stated that he appreciates the team putting this together. He stated that consolidation is a positive thing. He added that government has to figure out how to make this work. He thanked the presenters.

Comm. Lovejoy Roe asked about the revenue contract for \$180,000. Thompson stated that the City is paying costs for staff. Comm. Lovejoy Roe asked why the County needs to kick in this amount from the general fund. Thompson responded that federal caps are remaining the same and there are also federal reductions being seen.

Comm. Smith stated that the City of Ann Arbor is under different pressures. He added that this poses some interesting challenges.

Roll call vote: YEAS: 10. NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 1 (Comm. Bergman). Motion carried.

MSU Extension/Treasurer/Office of Community Development

Comm. Gunn seconded by Comm. Grewal moved to recommend that the Board of Commissioners approve the resolution creating 1.0 FTE Mortgage Foreclosure Prevention Specialist I/II/III position, group 11, grade 19/21/23, salary range: \$35,984.26-\$54,117.5, funded using Housing Contingency Funds for the balance of 2007 and budget years 2008-2009, with the anticipation of grant funds thereafter be adopted.

Roll call vote: YEAS: 10. NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 1 (Comm. Bergman). Motion carried.

Public Safety and Justice Community of Interest:

Trial Court-Community Corrections:

Annual Comprehensive Community Corrections Plan

Comm. Gunn seconded by Comm. Grewal moved to recommend that the Board of Commissioners approve the resolution ratifying the submission of the application to the Michigan Department of Corrections for the period of October 1, 2007 through September 30, 2008, for a total program of \$1,655,048 be adopted.

Roll call vote: YEAS: 10. NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 1 (Comm. Bergman). Motion carried.

Sheriff:

Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant

Comm. Gunn seconded by Comm. Grewal moved to recommend that the Board of Commissioners approve the resolution ratifying the submission of the grant application to the Bureau of Justice Assistance in the amount of \$39,082 for the period of July 1, 2007 through July 31, 2010; authorizing the Administrator to sign the Notice of Grant Award; amending the budget and authorizing the Administrator to sign delegate contracts be adopted.

Roll call vote: YEAS: 10. NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 1 (Comm. Bergman). Motion carried.

County Administrator:

Five Year Lease at 301 W. Michigan Avenue in Ypsilanti, MI

Comm. Gunn seconded by Comm. Grewal moved to recommend that the Board of Commissioners approve the resolution Authorizing the Administrator to sign a five year lease with Bancsites, Inc. for the period of August 1, 2007 to July 31, 2012, with an annual lease amount of \$80,897 or approximately \$14.67 per square foot for Employment Training & Community Services (ETCS), with no general fund impact be adopted.

Comm. Sizemore asked about an out clause. Hedger stated that there is no automatic out. Hedger stated that the company wanted more time initially.

Comm. Lovejoy Roe asked about the lease costs, and where the money comes from. Rusher explains that it comes out of the ETCS overall budget. She asked if the agreement is locked in for the square foot.

Comm. Peterson stated that he is more interested in where to go after the lease. He stated that he supports this resolution because it means something to the area. Comm. Peterson added that it is important to find a permanent location. He added that he wishes this was a three year lease and that he would like to see the Director and the staff in the same location. He stated that the Board should make decisions on location.

Comm. Sizemore asked if there is a tie into a use. Hedger stated that the lease is just for space. Comm. Sizemore stated that he does not like things divided up.

Comm. Irwin stated that having co-location for these departments will be a good thing, but that a long term strategy needs to be developed. Rusher stated that the staff is used to having multiple locations. She stated that she is interested in engaging in relocation plans in the future. Comm. Irwin stated that he feels things are on the right track. He added that there is a benefit to being located in downtown Ypsilanti.

Comm. Schwartz asked how many employees will be transferred down to the new location. Rusher reported about 16. She stated that when SPARK and others are included there may be 60-100 people there on a given day. Comm. Schwartz stated that he concurred with a long term vision but that a lease was a good short term solution.

Comm. Sizemore asked if this is being taken off the tax roll. Hedger replied that it is not.

Roll call vote: YEAS: 9. NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 2 (Comms. Bergman and Peterson). Motion carried.

Humane Society of Huron Valley (HSHV) – two resolutions

Comm. Gunn seconded by Comm. Grewal moved to recommend that the Board of Commissioners approve the resolution authorizing the advancement of \$1 million from capital reserves to be placed in the construction fund, not to be repaid, and considered the County’s participation on the capital campaign, and the resolution authorizing the \$6.5 million bond issuance to be used for land acquisition and shelter construction to be repaid within seven years and ceasing the County’s ownership interest upon repayment be adopted.

Comm. Lovejoy Roe asked if there are plans to review the Space Plan in lieu of this information. Guenzel stated that after initial analysis, this should not affect the first phase of the Space Plan. He stated that this will be a challenge for the two remaining projects. Comm. Lovejoy Roe asked about getting reserves back to prior levels. Guenzel stated that the issue will be dealt with in the next phase of the Space Plan. He stated that this will not affect the two projects already approved. Comm. Lovejoy Roe asked if recommendations could be brought to the next meeting. Guenzel stated that a revised schedule could be brought.

Comm. Peterson stated that these projects say a lot about the citizens in this County. He stated that there is a lot of community involvement. He stated that this need exists and that citizens that work to raise money for these causes should be commended.

Comm. Ouimet stated that there is an obligation to the Humane Society. He stated that strong numbers have been raised in the first part of the campaign. He added that the public-private relationship is very important. He stated that these factors increase the need for continued success.

Roll call vote: YEAS: 10. NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 1 (Comm. Bergman). Motion carried.

Report of the Chair of the Board

None

Items for Current/Future Discussion

None

Citizen Participation

Tom Partridge stated that the Board failed to pass a measure backing Scio Township's affordable housing development. He added that there is no public transportation west of the western boundaries of the City of Ann Arbor. He stated that an appropriation of \$75,000 would have upheld some form of transportation in Western Washtenaw. He stated that he disagrees with the Board turning their backs on existing needs.

Commissioners Follow-up to Citizen Participation

Comm. Smith asked Damon Thompson to talk with Tom Partridge on housing.

Pending

None

Adjournment

Comm. Irwin seconded by Comm. Sizemore moved that the meeting be adjourned until August 1st, 2007 at 6:30 p.m. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 10:38 p.m.

Barbara Levin Bergman, Chair

Lawrence Kestenbaum, Clerk/Register
By: Jason Brooks, Deputy Clerk

APPROVED: