



WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE

October 18, 2006

Chair Irwin 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. Bergman, Grewal, Gunn, Irwin, Kern, Ouimet, Peterson, Prater, Sizemore, Smith, Solowczuk.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

OTHERS PRESENT: Robert Guenzel, County Administrator; Frank Cambria, Deputy County Administrator; Curt Hedger, Corporation Counsel; Peter Ballios, Finance; Verna McDaniel, Diane Heidt, Monica Boote, Human Relations; David Behen, Dale Vanderford, Charley Wolfe, Mike Brogan, Information Technology; Patricia Denig, Jessica Eisenman, Planning and Environment; Mike Scholl Human Services Community Collaborative; Mary Udoji, Library; Mary O'Hare, Organizational Development; Donna Sabourin, Audrey Tisdale; Community Support and Treatment Services; Kerry Sheldon, Administration; Stephen Kirschner, Clerk's Office; various citizens; and members of the press.

Roll Call

Citizen Participation

Mayor Cheryl Farmer thanked the board for all of the assistance they have provided the City of Ypsilanti. She addressed the jail overcrowding situation, noting that if the law was being followed strictly, the jail overcrowding situation would not prevent criminals from serving their time.

Commissioner Follow-Up to Citizens' Participation

Comm. Gunn thanked Mayor Farmer for speaking to the board about the overcrowding situation at the jail.

Comm. Bergman asked Administrator if there is anything that can be done about the Sheriffs non-compliance with that law.

New Business:

Comm. Irwin noted that the citizen recognitions would be moved from the beginning of the regular meeting up to this time.

Comm. Prater presented a resolution of appreciation to Damon's for outstanding employer service to the citizens of Washtenaw County.

Comm. Prater presented a resolution of appreciation to McDonald's, Zingerman's and Country Market for their contribution to an inclusive employment environment in Washtenaw County.

Comm. Prater presented a resolution congratulating the Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled on their receipt of the 2006 Statewide Librarian's Excellence Award.

Mary Udoji recognized the commissioners, the administrator, the deputy administrator, Margaret Wolfe, Sonia Matthews and Gordon Burger for their help. She introduced a video about an art program at the library.

Office of the Administrator:

Report on SPARK – Michael Finney:

Michael Finney presented to the board on SPARK. [Report on File at County Clerk's Office].

Comm. Solowczuk thanked Mr. Kinney for the report. He stated that the combination of Ann Arbor SPARK and Washtenaw Community Development is a wonderful and effective thing.

Comm. Smith asked how SPARK is integrating with the Convention and Visitor Bureau. Michael Kinney stated that they have developed a great relationship with the bureau. Comm. Smith asked if companies are making decisions in where to locate based on where their employees would be happy to settle. Michael Kinney responded that this is becoming a dominant decision making factor for companies. Comm. Smith stated that tourism economic development is something the county should look into. Comm. Smith asked how they are looking at creative industries such as writing and art. Mr. Kinney responded that this is an area at which they have only taken a cursory look. Comm. Smith thanked him and wished him continued success.

Comm. Gunn stated that she is delighted to hear that there will be a wet lab created and that she thinks they are headed in the right direction.

Comm. Ouimet asked about SPARK's strategy for encouraging business retention. Michael Kinney responded that they have retention as one strategy, adding that a retention only strategy would miss opportunities to strengthen the community. Comm. Ouimet asked about the pre-seed program. Mr. Kinney responded. Comm. Ouimet asked if SPARK members will sit on the board of those companies in which SPARK has invested. Mr. Kinney responded that they do not plan on doing this. Comm. Ouimet asked if there are discussion about modifications on taxation ceilings. Mr. Kinney responded that they have not had any companies address taxation issues.

Comm. Grewal thanked Michael Kinney for his presentation. She asked if it would be good to start working with regions outside of the county. Michael Kinney responded that working regionally can be beneficial to all parties. Comm. Grewal encouraged them to work in close cooperation with the planning department. Mr. Kinney responded that Tony VanDerworp has been working with them since their inception.

Comm. Prater asked is there is an initiative concerning the branding issue. Michael Kinney stated that they are not involved in branding initiatives at this time. Comm. Prater stated that there have been discussions of this on the Accommodations Ordinance Committee.

Comm. Solowczuk asked about their involvement in traditional business such as construction. Michael Kinney stated that he does not have an answer to this question specifically, but noted that the creation of new jobs will have a positive impact on other industries in the community.

Comm. Peterson stated that he enjoyed the presentation tonight. He stated that SPARK needs to have the whole community involved. He asked how they are to prepare county residents for these new industries being attracted to the community. Michael Kinney responded that it would be beneficial to have a forum that allows public input, and encouraged the county to pursue something that would allow this. Comm. Peterson stated that the eastern corridor would like to compete for the jobs that SPARK will be bringing to the county.

Reorganization of the Office of the Administrator:

Comm. Bergman seconded by Comm. Solowczuk moved to recommend that the Board of Commissioners approve the resolution approving the position modifications and confirming the appointments of Verna J. McDaniel and David Behen as co-deputy county administrators effective January 1, 2007.

Roll call vote: YEAS: 9. NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 2. [Comm. Sizemore, Smith] Motion carried.

Comm. Peterson asked about the decision to put the IT director position on hold. Robert Guenzel responded that they are not ready to recommend that the position be eliminated, but not ready to fill yet either. He stated that if they plan to fill that position, they would bring it to the board. Comm. Peterson raised the issue of the increasing cost associated with the administration of county government, adding that it is important to show cost savings of implementing new technology.

Community Collaborative of Washtenaw County:

Comm. Bergman seconded by Comm. Solowczuk moved to recommend that the Board of Commissioners approve the resolution authorizing the county administrator's signature o the leadership services agreement and payment of dues required for Washtenaw County to become a founding steward of the Community Collaborative of Washtenaw County.

Roll call vote: YEAS: 9. NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 2. [Comm. Sizemore, Smith] Motion carried.

Comm. Bergman noted that this is a community effort and she would like people to attend a meeting on the Community Collaborative on the 14th at 7:30 at the Morris Lawrence building on the WCC campus.

Planning and Environment Community of Interest:

Planning and Environment – Brownfield Redevelopment Plan Amendment:

Comm. Bergman seconded by Comm. Solowczuk moved to recommend that the Board of Commissioners approve the resolution adopting the proposed amendment to the Brownfield Plan for Washtenaw County and approving tax increment financing incentives for the “Water Street” Brownfield Redevelopment Project in the City of Ypsilanti.

Roll call vote: YEAS: 9. NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 2. [Comm. Sizemore, Smith] Motion carried.

Report of the Administrator:

Executive Session: Labor Relations and Consideration of Purchase of Property

Comm. Ouimet stated that he wanted to make sure that the public had the opportunity to speak.

Comm. Peterson seconded by Comm. Bergman moved to amend to agenda to have the executive session after the second citizens participation and commissioner follow-up.

Voice vote. YEAS: 9. NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 2. [Comm. Sizemore, Smith] Motion carried.

Report of the Chair of the Board

Comm. Prater noted that there will be a resolution added to the Board meeting agenda.

Items for Current/Future Discussion

None.

Citizen Participation

Wendy Burkhardt addressed the board thanking the Washtenaw County Road Commission for resolving the access road problem in Manchester. She spoke about the importance of teachers.

Stephanie Davis addressed the board concerning an issue with the WC Sheriffs departments. She stated that she was removed from her home, has had her dog maced and shot in front of her children by Washtenaw County sheriff's deputy and has been harassed by the Sheriffs department since the incident. She stated that the police should be peace makers, not attorneys or judges.

Rich Cook stated that it is important to preserve historic parts of the county and spoke to the board concerning the East Delhi Bridge. He stated that the Road Commission has not dealt with the citizens concerning this in an honest or fair way.

Tina Alexa-Sedgeman asked the board that the next time a seat becomes available on the Road Commission, they appoint someone from the western side of the county.

Lee Tooson addressed the board concerning a death at the hands of the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Department in June, a child beaten in July, and other incidents of abuse by the Washtenaw County sheriff's department. He stated that the board of commissioner is not off the hook in these incidents, as they hold the responsibility to do what is right.

Leslie Desmond commented that on Wednesday October 26 at noon at the LLRC there would be an impact forum that deals with police community relations. She addressed the board concerning the East Delhi Bridge.

Qu'an S.L. Davis stated that he is not satisfied with the Washtenaw County Sheriffs Department and related an incident regarding his dog having been shot by Sherff's department.

Richard Ulrich address the board concerning his dealings with the Road Commission. He stated that western Washtenaw needs some representation on the Road Commission..

Kathleen Timberlake concurred with the statements regarding the Washtenaw County Road Commission and expressed her support for the western side of the county in their need for an appointment on the road commission.

Commissioners Follow-up to Citizen Participation

Comm. Gunn seconded by Comm. Prater moved to add the Community Collaborative and Brownfield resolutions to the agenda of the regular Board meeting on October 18.

Voice vote. YEAS: 9. NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 2. [Comm. Sizemore, Smith] Motion carried.

Comm. Bergman thanked the gentleman, woman and young man who addressed the board concerning the incidents with the Sheriffs Department. She also thanked those from Scio township who addressed the board and stated she would support their wished for representation of the western county on the Washtenaw County Road Commission.

Comm. Kern stated that it is possible to rehabilitate the bridge with federal funding though there would be a long term increased maintenance cost. She stated that some of the Road Commission supported the rehabilitation.

Comm. Prater stated that there will be more public opportunities to speak at the board meeting after executive session.

Comm. Ouimet stated that some of the concern and frustration about the East Delhi Bridge comes from the fact that the conservatory has done everything they have been asked to do to have the bridge rehabbed. He stated that it would be remiss of the Road Commission to not take a vote on this sometime very soon. He added that it would be a travesty to lose the East Delhi Bridge.

Comm. Peterson asked if there is a status report on the East Delhi Bridge. Comm. Ouimet responded that the information is there to make the decision. Comm. Peterson stated that a major concern in this issue is the treatment of the citizens by the Washtenaw County Road Commission. He addressed the complaints against the Sheriffs department. He asked the administration create a vehicle to respond to this type of issue against the sheriff's department. He said it is important to give citizens a reasonable response to their concerns.

Comm. Prater stated that he will ask Road Commissioner Puree to come to the next board meeting to respond to the East Delhi bridge situation. He spoke about the various factors involved with the East Delhi bridge decision.

Comm. Gunn reminded everyone that the Sheriff is an elected official, and is responsible to the voters. She encouraged people to attend the Sheriffs Community Relations Advisory Board.

Comm. Peterson seconded by Comm. Prater moved to amend the agenda to place the executive session after the last commissioner follow-up to citizen participation in the regular meeting.

Voice vote. YEAS: 9. NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 2. [Comm. Sizemore, Smith] Motion carried.

Comm. Bergman thanked Comm. Gunn for mentioning the SCRAB, and stated that she left this committee because she felt that it was unresponsive to community concerns. She stated that it might be time to revisit the effectiveness of this committee. She asked Mr. Guenzel to look for other ways to reach out to citizens.

Comm. Solowczuk stated that he believe the committee is done meeting for the year, but if people would like to meet again this year, they should contact Joe Schwarz at the Sheriffs Department.

Adjournment

Comm. Solowczuk seconded by Comm. Prater moved that the meeting be adjourned until November 1, 2006.

The meeting adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

Jeff Irwin, Chair

Lawrence Kestenbaum, Clerk/Register
By: Stephen D. Kirschner, Deputy Clerk

APPROVED: