



WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WORKING SESSION

November 18, 2004

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Comms. Bergman, Brackenbury, Irwin, Kern, Prater, Sizemore, Solowczuk.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Comms, Armentrout, Gunn, Peterson, Yekulis.

OTHERS PRESENT: Bob Guenzel, County Administrator; Frank Cambria, Deputy Administrator; Kerry Sheldon, Administration; Ken Schrader, ITS; Tony VanDerworp, Patricia Denig, Michael DiRamio, Planning & Environment; Nancy Thelen, Michael Score, MSU Extension; Larry Molnar, University of Michigan; James D. Higginbottom, Deputy Clerk; various citizens; and members of the press.

Roll Call

Citizen Participation

None.

Commissioner Follow-Up to Citizen Participation

None.

Discussion Items:

Agricultural Marketing Project

Tony VanDerworp, Michael Score, Larry Molnar and Michael DeRamio presented the project concept to the board.

- Project Facilitators
- Neus of Facilitation Team
- Regional Approach
- Benefits from the Project
- Project Proposal
- Strategic Action Plan
- Scope of Work
- Leadership Team
- Southeast Michigan, Food System Inventory
- Project Outcomes

Comm. Kern asked how it would benefit the rural community. Mike Score responded that it would facilitate the connection between rural and urban areas.

Comm. Bergman asked if food processors would move to the area. Mike Score said that the project would evaluate that option.

Comm. Prater said that places like California can not compete with foreign markets and therefore would be a difficult task to complete.

Comm. Bergman asked how it would be funded. Mike Score and Tony VanDerworp said that it would be funded by the participating parties.

Comm. Solowczuk hoped the board could join in the plan. He said that 50 years ago there was food production in the area and efforts should be made to bring it back.

Comm. Kern said she supported the idea, and that making land profitable would help preserve the land.

Comm. Bergman asked what tools would be needed to complete the project. Mike Score responded that the study would be the tool for the entrepreneurs.

Comm. Solowczuk said that farmers want to work, but they do not have the ability to set their prices. He also pointed out that people do not know where their food really comes from.

Comm. Sizemore asked to hear from other public officials who support the project. He said that he hopes the project works.

Comm. Prater said that he does not oppose the proposal, but is critical in hope that it will bring forward accurate information.

Comm. Irwin said that there are many successes and failures and wondered how they would play into the research. He said that there were many government subsidies for farms and believes that they will still be needed in the future to compete with foreign markets. He also asked what the project wanted from the county. Tony VanDerworp and Mike Score said that they hoped to receive \$15,000 as well as participation with the study.

Comm. Prater said that there are challenges but the studies are necessary.

Criminal Justice Collaborative Council Update

None.

Commissioner Items

None.

County Administrator Report

None.

Items for Current/Future Discussion

Comm. Sizemore requested a Working Session on the use of the County Vehicle Fleet. Comm. Irwin responded that it would be tied in with the Facilities Management Working Session.

Pending

None.

Status of Annual Activities/Goals

None.

Citizen Participation

None.

Commissioners Follow-up to Citizen Participation

None.

Adjournment

Comm. Solowczuk seconded by Comm. Sizemore moved that the meeting be adjourned at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Room, Washtenaw County Administration Building. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Jeff Irwin, Chair

Peggy M. Haines, Clerk/Register

By: James D. Higginbottom, Deputy Clerk

APPROVED: 12/1/04