



WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WORKING SESSION

October 4, 2007

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Comms. Grewal, Irwin, Peterson, Lovejoy Roe, Sizemore, and Smith.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Comms. Bergman, Gunn, Ping Mills, Ouimet, and Schwartz

OTHERS PRESENT:: Bob Guenzel, County Administrator; Verna McDaniel, Deputy County Administrator; Janis Bobrin, Drain Commissioner; Catherine McClary, County Treasurer; Tony VanDerworp, Dan Myers, Planning and Environment; Peter Ballios, Finance; Gordon Burger, Jim Zwolensky, Support Services; Damon Thompson, Community Development; Mark Lindke, Veteran Services; Ben Toole, ITS; Kerry Sheldon, Administration; Jason Brooks, Clerk's Office; various citizens; and members of the press.

Roll Call

Citizen Participation

None

Commissioner Follow-Up to Citizen Participation

None

Discussion Items:

State Representative Rebekah Warren discussed the State of Michigan budget situation. She added that payments that the State Treasurer ensured her that payments owed by the State would be paid. Warren reported that she was available to provide help when needed.

Comm. Smith asked about the process of deciding on the upcoming cuts. Warren reported that broad themes have been laid out. She added that nothing has been finalized at this point. Comm. Irwin asked about revenue sharing, and what is being heard among other legislators. Warren reported that the most encouraging thing is that the State House defeated significant cuts to revenue sharing. She added that there is a group meeting to restructure the revenue sharing formula. Comm. Peterson asked about the most vulnerable citizens. Warren stated that she is lucky to represent a constituency that has an understanding of what Michigan needs to look like in the future. Comm. Sizemore reported that State legislators would be invited back at the beginning of the year.

Recommended Budget & Community Impact Presentations:

Housing & Homelessness

Guenzel gave the Housing and Homelessness presentation (On file in County Clerk's office).

Comm. Irwin stated that there are varied resources of revenue in this field, and that it must present a lot of work for staff. Thompson reported that staff does work hard to ensure that requirements are met. Comm. Irwin asked about the benchmarks in the 10 year plan to end homelessness. Guenzel reported that some preparation is needed and added that these statistics could also be reported out to the community.

Comm. Grewal stated that the housing assessment is a great document, and suggested that it would be useful to have sentences based on priorities. Thompson stated that he would make sure to bring this document to the forefront. Comm. Grewal stated that some of the linkages between housing and other areas is missing. Thompson reported that he would make sure to include this in the presentation scheduled to take place on the 18th.

Comm. Lovejoy Roe discussed the fact that over 50% of affordable housing is located in Ypsilanti Township. She expressed concern on the topic of future service provision. Thompson reported that his staff has been meeting with Township officials to try to address some concerns.

Comm. Peterson stated that he is interested in service provision in heavily populated areas. He stated that local municipalities should be a part of the planning process. He added that he is interested in needs assessments that are taking place. Thompson reported that neighborhood groups would get a chance for feedback in this process. He stated that it would be important to properly invest the \$250,000. He added that he is interested in getting non-profits on the same page. Thompson stated that he would address those concerns at the meeting of October 18. Jennifer Hall stated that the needs assessment is being rolled out with local communities and non-profits.

Land Use & Environment

Verna McDaniel gave the Land Use & Environment Presentation (On file in County Clerk's Office).

Comm. Lovejoy Roe asked about the Road Commission and bridge program. VanDerworp stated that this item regarded historic bridges and ensuring that they are not closed.

Comm. Grewal asked about the food service license fee. Myers reported that there is a state bill that has been passed by both houses. He added that the school exemptions have been removed. He added that the fee would be based on the overall size of the facility. Myers reported that the schools would now have to be included in the fee schedule. Comm. Peterson asked for the list of non profits that are affected. He added that calls and complaints within the Department are handled professionally and excellently. Comm. Lovejoy Roe asked if the actual opinion could be obtained from Curt Hedger.

Economic Development (including SPARK, Aerotropolis, Eastern County Leadership)

Guenzel gave the presentation on the Economic Development Community of Interest (On file in County Clerk's Office). Mike Finney gave the presentation on SPARK. A packet was presented to the Board (On file in County Clerk's Office).

Comm. Peterson stated that he feels the County has played a significant role in this project. He added that he feels government has the responsibility of providing a climate that will encourage business to locate within the County. Comm. Peterson stated that there is a fight for survival involving the industrial base in the eastern side of the County. He stated that he would like to see the County and SPARK be more aggressive in this area in this budget cycle.

Comm. Lovejoy Roe stated that she has been supportive of being a part of the eastern initiative group. She stated that she would support funding in this area in this budget cycle. Finney stated that he feels Washtenaw County is the best in the field of economic development, and that growth is needed.

Comm. Irwin stated that he feels the budget recommendation covers this project. He added that Finney makes the decision to invest in this project easy.

Comm. Smith stated that he is excited about have a program like this and added that he would like to see more investment. He asked about the talent and marketing side of the County. Finney stated that this community has great potential. He added that around \$220,000 would be the marketing budget for the year. Finney discussed types of marketing. Comm. Smith asked about the effort to brand the region. Finney pointed to Ann Arbor USA as tremendous brand value. Comm. Smith asked about the trend of sustainability and economic development. VanDerworp reported that there needs to places for talent to live. He added that housing as well as land use need to be evaluated at the same time. Comm. Smith asked about the SPARK prioritization in terms of economic development.

Finney reported that SPARK is participating in a variety of processes such as the eastern leaders process, as well as many other activities. He added that the idea of an eastern incubator is a starting point. Finney reported that talent support is done for many companies. He discussed immigration and how it is currently hurting the State of Michigan. Finney reported that this needs to be a friendly center for experienced workers. Finney also discussed the partnership with Workforce Development. He added that this partnership has been working to bring talent to companies. Comm. Smith stated that the investment in economic development could be larger. He discussed integrating all of this activity in the County.

Comm. Peterson stated that he would like to see a plan for improving. He stated that this could go in the budget without the entire plan. He stated that he would like to see Guenzel move forward with putting forth a short document. Comm. Peterson added that he is in favor of a 5 year commitment. He added that he is lobbying for a funding increase in this area. He stated that he is pleased with the efforts at Eastern Michigan University.

Comm. Grewal thanked Finney for the presentation. She added that the conversation today is reflective of the plan. She asked about the money that is spent outside of the County. Finney reported that an application was sent to receive pre-seed investment dollars. He discussed the requests of all of the SMART zones in the State. He reported that \$8 million would be needed to serve all of the needs, and would be distributed on a first come, first serve basis. Finney pointed out the dynamics of the business community in this SMART zone.

Comm. Sizemore stated that economic development and SPARK is a large part of what is needed in this community.

County Administrator Report

None

Items for Current/Future Discussion

Comm. Sizemore reported that he would like Working Sessions to be held on the AATA and Economic Development in the coming year.

Pending

- October 18 Global Summary of Recommended Budget; Q + A
 Plus: Housing Needs Assessment Update and West Willow Neighborhood Plan
 Progress Report

Citizen Participation

None

Commissioners Follow-up to Citizen Participation

None

Adjournment

Comm. Peterson seconded by Comm. Lovejoy Roe moved to adjourn until Thursday, October 18th, 2007, at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Room, Washtenaw County Administration Building. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Rolland Sizemore, Chair

Lawrence Kestenbaum, Clerk/Register

By: Jason Brooks, Deputy Clerk

APPROVED: 10/17/07