



WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WORKING SESSION

October 18, 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. Bergman, Grewal, Gunn, Irwin, Ouimet, Peterson, Lovejoy Roe, and Sizemore.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Comms. Ping Mills, Schwartz, and Smith

OTHERS PRESENT:: Bob Guenzel, County Administrator; Verna McDaniel and David Behen, Deputy County Administrators; Gordon Burger, Dale Vanderford, Kim Wraight, Jim Zwolensky, Support Services; Denise Dalrymple, Children's Services; Damon Thompson, Jennifer Hall, Community Development; Bob Tetens, Parks and Recreation; Mark Lindke, Veteran Services; Trena Rusher, ETCS; 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:

West Willow Neighborhood Plan Progress Report

The presentation on the West Willow Community Plan was given by Derrick Jackson and Abby Wilson (On file in County Clerk's Office). Presenters also included Monica Ross-Williams, Jenny Bivens, Angela Riehn, Abby Wilson, Derrick Jackson, Rashaun Brown. Nathan Norman, and Rolland Sizemore.

Comm. Gunn stated that she is pleased with work that has been done with the neighborhood group.

Comm. Bergman asked about isolation in the neighborhood due to its location as well as access to services for its residents. She stated that she would like to see safe foot access. She discussed park services and how it appears things are improving.

Comm. Ouimet stated that he appreciates energy put in to this project by Comm. Sizemore. He stated that he was struck by the number of rental properties in the neighborhood. He added that he would like to look at opportunities to convert people from rental properties to home ownership.

Comm. Grewal thanked the presenters. She added that it is great to see how different entities in the community have come together. She stated that it is important to continue this program. She asked about stability of the project. Derrick Jackson stated that staff being added to Ballin' in the Willow for example, enriched the program. Comm. Grewal asked about the investment wanted in the future. Jackson stated that making the right connections to obtain resources and expertise is a key component that will continue to be needed in the future. Comm. Grewal stated that she urged a continued commitment in the program.

Comm. Lovejoy Roe discussed the issue of isolation issue with the neighborhood. She stated that all need to continue working on these solutions. She added that bike paths have been added with CDBG money. Comm. Lovejoy Roe added that another issue is the ability to safely cross both highways in the neighborhood. She stated that great work is being done in the area of changing renters to home owners. She added that she would like to see this program funded in the future. She also discussed jobs for youth as well as public transportation. Comm. Lovejoy Roe discussed the impact of fewer police services next year.

Comm. Irwin congratulated all that are involved in this project. He stated that he would like to see this used as a model for the rest of the community. He stated that the energy being used to conduct this project is coming from the residents. Comm. Irwin urged the pursuit of a pedestrian walkway across busy intersections. Comm. Irwin discussed spinning more properties into home ownership. He asked about strategies to improve rental properties. Ruth Ann Jamnick stated that through the Urban Executive Committee, a pilot project for rental inspections is being conducted. She added that the community has been very supportive up to this point. She also discussed improvements that will be made to signals to allow pedestrians to cross U.S. 12. She stated that she may return to ask for a letter of support for the pedestrian bridge crossing U.S. 12. She thanked the Board for their help. Comm. Irwin stated that he hopes there is success with the inspection program, and that there is success in building the pedestrian bridge.

Comm. Gunn stated that the Urban County Executive has the goal of homeowner rehabilitation, and down payment assistance and home buyer education. She added that coded enforcement will be on the agenda for the next meeting. Comm. Peterson stated that he appreciates the efforts of all. He stated that he is privileged to see changes that are taking place. He added that no community will thrive without investment from the residents.

Comm. Peterson discussed the interchange issue created by MDOT. He stated that he hopes pressure will be applied to the appropriate agencies to fix this problem. He added that this is how change comes about. Comm. Peterson added that he hopes the community is aggressive about how the community is changed, and referred to converting renters to owners. He stated that he would like to see the bank asked to be a partner in the process. He stated that the worst days for the community are behind them. He added that he thinks the true partner will be the private sector. Comm. Peterson discussed the best practices of different entities working within the community. He also recognized Growing for Hope and the work that they do.

Comm. Sizemore asked about after school programs at elementary schools. John ***check last name*** discussed the programs at three different elementary schools. He stated that this is just a start and that he would like to see the program expanded upon. Dalrymple discussed WATT and that tomorrow is the kickoff for the Youth Enterprise Center. She also discussed other events coming up such as a youth development forum and the Teen Arts Festival. Comm. Sizemore stated that Administration has been very helpful throughout this project. He stated that some issues that will be looked at in the future include transportation.

Housing Needs Assessment Update

Jennifer Hall gave the Housing Needs Assessment Presentation (On file in County Clerk's Office).

Comm. Bergman asked if the office is looking at keeping seniors in their homes and what funds are available. Hall gave examples of past investment. She added that most of subsidized housing is through federal funds. Comm. Bergman described a communal service program, and stated that Hall should take a look at this.

Comm. Irwin thanked Hall, and stated that he appreciated the document, and added that the maps are incredible.

Comm. Ouimet stated that he was trying to make the point of taking a density of rental properties and working with people interesting in purchasing. He stated that the need gap could then be figured out and needs for purchase could then be assessed.

Global Summary of Recommended Budget and Q+A

Jennifer Watson and Bob Guenzel gave the Global Summary of Recommended Budget presentation (on file in County Clerk's office).

County Administrator's Report

Items for Current/Future Discussion

Pending

Citizen Participation

None

Commissioners Follow-up to Citizen Participation

None

Adjournment

Comm. Gunn seconded by Comm. Irwin moved to adjourn until Thursday, November 8th, 2007, at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Room, Washtenaw County Administration Building. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Rolland Sizemore, Chair

Lawrence Kestenbaum, Clerk/Register

By: Jason Brooks, Deputy Clerk

APPROVED: