



WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WORKING SESSION

November 6, 2008

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Comms. Gunn, Ouimet, Peterson, Ping, Lovejoy Roe, Schwartz, and Smith

MEMBERS ABSENT: Comms. Bergman, Grewal, Irwin, and Sizemore

OTHERS PRESENT:: County Administrator Robert Guenzel; Verna McDaniel and David Behen, Deputy County Administrators; Catherine McClary, County Treasurer; Mary Jo Callan, Community Development, Jim Zwolensky, Support Services; Ken Schrader, ITS; Caryette Fenner, CSTS; Joanna Bidlack, 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:

Aerotropolis Presentation

Robert Ficano and Marsha Ennis. Presentation on file in County Clerk's office.

Comm. Gunn asked about the Washtenaw County local government unit(s) involved. Guenzel reported that the City of Ypsilanti and Ypsilanti Township are included.

Comm. Smith asked about the feeling of local governments around mass transit, green development and sustainability. Ficano reported on the proposed Ann Arbor to Detroit transportation plan. VanDerworp stated that growth has been experienced along U.S. 23 due to the low cost of land. He stated that the Aerotropolis may actually reduce the residential sprawl due to the cost of land. Comm. Smith asked if there has been conversation on adoption of common green building initiatives. Ennis reported that some discussion has taken place. Ficano reported that there is a tax incentive for building green and stated that companies have no problem complying due to these incentives.

Comm. Schwartz asked about commercial absorption models. Ficano stated that the current model depends on investment before anything is built. Comm. Schwartz asked about public investment in infrastructure. Ficano reported that infrastructure would be a government investment. VanDerworp reported that a lot of the infrastructure is currently in place.

Comm. Ping asked about bringing in a consultant. Ficano reported that there is currently a consultant at Wayne County.

Comm. Peterson stated that he appreciates the aggressiveness in moving this project forward. Comm. Peterson asked about the allocation of seats on this board. Ennis reported that the seats change regularly and it is up to the Executive Board to do the appointment for the local seat. Comm. Peterson asked about long term funding for the

project. Ficano reported that eventually some of the revenue streams will be used to fund the corporation. He stated that the model would be similar to the MEDC. Comm. Peterson stated that this is worth the chance of engagement and added that we must find another way to fund this project in the long term.

Comm. Lovejoy Roe stated that it is exciting to see where this project has come. She stated that this project may lead to the redevelopment of unused sites and overall growth of the economy.

Comm. Ouimet asked about scenarios of how this would work. Ficano stated that there would be a standard once legislation has passed. He stated that it would initially be aimed at logistics. Ennis reported that needs may be met based on the master development plan. Comm. Ouimet stated that the organizational model being used is traditional. He asked about qualities that would be sought in a chief executive. Ficano reported that a pro business salesperson specializing in business attraction would be desired. He added that no final criteria have been set.

Community Success Presentation

Anthony VanDerworp and Rick Sheridan gave the Community Success Presentation (Report book/presentation on file in County Clerk's office).

Comm. Gunn asked if there is going to be any impact due to passage of proposal 2. Sheridan reported that he believes that it will have a positive impact and will not have a negative impact. Comm. Gunn stated that if members of the team could help with workforce housing it would be appreciated. She added that there needs to be attention to human services.

Comm. Smith asked how the Success Strategy fits in with sustainable investments and land use. VanDerworp reported that the ingredients were a home close to work, a third place, and nightlife. He stated that transit discussions continue. VanDerworp provided the next steps including working on third places. He stated that there is a goal of developing transit between Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti. He asked about following the Cool Cities model. VanDerworp reported that this will appear in the business plan.

SPARK Update

Mike Finney gave the presentation on SPARK Update (on file in County Clerk's office).

Comm. Schwartz asked for an update on SPARK East. Finney reported that he has done a walkthrough and added that the developer is on target for the end of December or early January. Finney reported that it is his goal to open with a first tenant. He stated that EMU is still a partner.

Comm. Peterson stated that he would like the Board to engage in getting all parties into one room to discuss leveraging in economic development. He added that the Visitors and Convention Bureau should also be a part of the discussion. Comm. Peterson stated that marketing good public education is necessary. He added that he would like Administration to bring all parties under one umbrella.

Comm. Ping asked for an update on the financial situation surrounding SPARK. Finney reported that some areas of non-compliance were detected during an audit. He reported that most of these issues have been dealt with. Finney added that a small number of transactions were identified as issues. Finney reported on the SPARK contract with LDFA. He stated that the LDFA has been invited to conduct an audit of SPARK for this year.

Comm. Smith stated that there needs to be a measure of flexibility to be the center of development. He reported that the open source model could answer a lot of questions. Finney reported that SPARK has been heavily engaged on the state level. Comm. Lovejoy Roe stated that understand where dollars are going through all these programs can be difficult. She added that she feels it is important for SPARK East to be a regional project. Finney reported that SPARK East was open to using some funding for marketing. Comm. Ouimet stated that people will be anxious to see the follow through on the audit process.

County Administrator's Report

None

Items for Current/Future Discussion

Comm. Smith congratulated Kathy Angerer for being elected majority floor leader and Pam Byrnes for being elected Speaker Pro-Tem

Pending

None

Citizen Participation

None

Commissioners Follow-up to Citizen Participation

None

Adjournment

Comm. Gunn seconded by Comm. Schwartz moved to adjourn until Thursday, November 20th, 2008, at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Room, Washtenaw County Administration Building. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Rolland Sizemore, Chair

Lawrence Kestenbaum, Clerk/Register

By: Jason Brooks, Deputy Clerk

APPROVED: