



WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WORKING SESSION

April 22, 2010

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Comms. Bergman, Gunn, Irwin, Ouimet, Ping, Prater, and Schwartz

MEMBERS ABSENT: Comms. Judge, Peterson, Sizemore, and Smith

OTHERS PRESENT: Verna McDaniel, Deputy County Administrator; Bob Tetens, Parks and Recreation; Tony VanDerworp, Brett Lenart, Economic Development and Energy; Peter Collinson, Finance; Ken Schrader, ITS; 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:

Clarification of the NAPP Ordinance 128 – *Director of the Legacy Land Conservancy Susan Lackey*

Comm. Gunn stated that she believes that the farmers have now come aboard. She asked how this can be explained through ballot language. Tetens reported that Corporation Counsel is currently looking at this issue. Lackey reported that she wanted to get this done prior to this issue going onto the ballot.

Comm. Ouimet stated that making sure people understand this transition is critical. He added that he feels that the best definition needs to get out to ensure that people are comfortable. Lackey reported that she wanted to get started early in the process to ensure enough time.

Comm. Prater asked what the 75%-25% agricultural land mirrors. Lackey reported that land has been bought to protect areas in the County. She added that 20-25% of this land is farmland. She stated that this takes the property off the tax rolls and requires a manager of the land to be found. Tetens reported stated that some parcels have more agricultural land than anticipated within the natural areas purchased. Comm. Prater stated that he feels it will be a benefit to purchase more agricultural land. He added that the property would stay on the tax rolls if purchased as conservation land.

Comm. Bergman stated that she would like a fulsome descriptive ordinance in place before putting anything on the ballot. She added that she is fully in support of the program and stated that she wants the voter to understand the issue clearly.

Comm. Schwartz asked if the ordinance will be brought back at the next Ways and Means meeting. Tetens stated that this is his intent. Comm. Schwartz stated that he would support some of the agricultural land coming off the tax rolls if it provides a long term benefit to local jurisdictions. He added that he strongly supports this and will take a look at the ordinance changes.

Comm. Irwin stated that this has been a successful program. He asked if the split of 75% to 25% in land was created because of a past program. He asked if there is some flexibility in the plan on parcels that seem appealing. Tetens reported that he feels that the flexibility is already built in. Comm. Gunn stated that this will take a political campaign.

Comm. Ping asked what the current millage is. Tetens reported that it is a quarter mill. Comm. Ping stated that the wording in the language is going to be extremely important.

Internal Controls – *Interim Finance Director Pete Collinson*

Comm. Bergman stated that she would like to thank Collinson for the intellectual presentation. She stated that she would like make sure that people of a high capability hired. She asked if the County is ready to hire someone to make sure that all of the presented items are covered. Comm. Bergman thanked Collinson for the presentation.

Comm. Gunn stated that she appreciated the large picture presentation. She added that she has great confidence in the internal financial controls.

Comm. Prater asked how designing implementing and enforcing internal controls can be presented to the Board. Collinson stated that many departments have specific laws dealing with them individually. McDaniel reported that an exception report may be provided whenever something does not go as desired. Comm. Prater stated that he feels that very little information has been provided on internal controls on what management is doing. He added that he has some concern about misuse if controls are not monitored. Comm. Prater stated that he feels that there needs to be a process for oversight. McDaniel reported that any charges out of the ordinary are brought to her attention. Comm. Prater stated that information has not yet been given to the Board. He added that he would like to see some additional information. Comm. Prater stated that he feels that good systems are in place and added that he would like more information. Kettner stated that the Board can let management know expectations and evaluate.

Comm. Gunn stated that top management has been nothing but ethical since her time here.

Comm. Ouimet stated that a critical thing in any audit trail is the discipline. He added that he assumes that there is a schedule in place on the conduct of the internal audit. Collinson stated that he feels that his communication with Administration on this process could be improved. He added that site visits are conducted periodically to observe cash handling procedures. Comm. Ouimet stated that refocusing on internal controls is a senior management issue. He added that he would suggest putting a document in place with Administration so that there is a blueprint for everyone to follow.

Comm. Ping asked if money and grants coming in and going out are being looked at more carefully. Collinson stated that the WCHO has changed their process to include two people. He added that the same internal controls apply across the board.

Draft Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy – *Energy and Economic Development Director Anthony VanDerworp*

Comm. Gunn stated that she is astounded by the number of employees at the University of Michigan. She stated that she does not see the AATA as a partner in the report and stated that she would like discussion to take place with the AATA.

County Administrator's Report

Verna McDaniel reported that the Deputy Administrator candidates have been invited in on May 5th for an assessment.

Items for Current/Future Discussion

Comm. Prater stated that he would like unfunded liabilities with the pension system should be looked at in order to get a total number. He added that he feels that the VEBA needs to be focused on. Comm. Prater stated that he would like a little time at a Working Session.

Pending

None

Citizen Participation

None

Commissioners Follow-up to Citizen Participation

None

Adjournment

Comm. Gunn seconded by Comm. Ouimet moved that the meeting be adjourned until May 6th, 2010 at 6:30 p.m.
Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Jessica Ping, Chair

Lawrence Kestenbaum, Clerk/Register

By: Jason Brooks, Deputy Clerk

APPROVED: May 5, 2010