



WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WORKING SESSION

July 8, 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, Irwin, Judge, Ping, Prater, Schwartz, Sizemore, and Smith

MEMBERS ABSENT: Comms. Gunn, Ouimet, and Peterson

OTHERS PRESENT: Verna McDaniel, County Administrator; William Reynolds, Deputy County Administrator; Janis Bobrin, Water Resources Commissioner; Bob Tetens, Tom Freeman, Parks and Recreation; Mary Jo Callan, Community Development; Ben Toole, ITS; Joanna Bidlack, County Administration; Jason Brooks, Clerk's Office; various citizens; and members of the press.

Roll Call

Citizen Participation

Susan Lackey, 1100 N. Main, Ann Arbor, stated that she is representing a variety of conservation and environmental organizations requesting that the Board of Commissioners place the Natural Areas Renewal on the November ballot. She added that this is an opportunity to finalize the work that began ten years ago. Lackey stated that she feels that this is an opportunity to give the voters a choice as to whether this is an important priority in Washtenaw County.

Dan Benefiel, 602 Dale, Ypsilanti, stated that he is running for County Commission in District 5. Benefiel added that crime has increased significantly on the east side of the County. He stated that people on the east side of the County are hurting and added that police response times are slower. Benefiel stated that there are funds in the County that can be reallocated to County officers. He requested that the Board keep a good relationship with SEMCOG.

Commissioner Follow-Up to Citizen Participation

Comm. Irwin stated that he would like to thank Susan Lackey for her comments and added that the Natural Areas program has been a great success. Comm. Irwin stated that the amount of dollars being placed into the Ann Arbor to Detroit Rail Project from the general fund is \$0. He added that he was disappointed that the Township reduced patrols. Comm. Irwin stated that the number estimated by Benefiel to put an officer on the road is actually far greater.

Comm. Judge stated that she attends SEMCOG meetings to try to ensure that the County is getting its monies worth. She stated that the County must be present to ensure that transportation dollars come to the County. Comm. Judge stated that she is also working on shared services with SEMCOG.

Discussion Items:

Update on the Blueprint to End Homelessness – *Community Development Director Mary Jo Callan and Shelter Association of Washtenaw County Executive Director Ellen Schulmeister*

The Update on the Blueprint to End Homelessness was presented by Ellen Schulmeister, Julie Steiner, and Michael Appel. The presentation is on file in County Clerk's office.

Comm. Bergman asked about the role of the WCHO and CSTS. Schulmeister stated that that these groups are members on the alliance. She added that there is actually a CSTS person at the shelter. Comm. Bergman stated that there are some contracts with CSTS to provide support. Schulmeister reported on the new substance abuse program. Callan reported that Barrier Busters is funded by the County, City, AAACF, United Way, and a state department. Comm. Bergman stated that there are vouchers and added that they are finite. Schulmeister reported that there is also a transition center that works with former inmates. Comm. Bergman asked if the WHA Executive Committee could be discussed. Schulmeister reported that there are 26 agencies that sit around the table. She added that there are also operations committee meetings which allow other agencies to participate and give input. Comm. Bergman stated that these meetings should be open. Callan reported that the body is a broad group and stated that the Open Meetings Act is not applicable. She added that anyone is welcome to come and stated that broad opinions are often expressed. Comm. Bergman stated that she would like all meetings to be publicized.

Comm. Smith asked if homeless needs could be contextualized based on category. Appel reported that he does not have the statistics. He added that people categorized as chronic have not been able to secure housing over a long period of time. Appel stated that they have a great deal of needs. He stated that family homelessness has been growing at a faster rate than single adult homelessness. Appel reported that economic conditions often drive family homelessness. Steiner stated that a count of homeless people is done every year and added that a wealth of information is gathered. She stated that this data gets stronger every year. Steiner added that a database on this information is maintained.

Comm. Smith asked how many supportive housing units are available. Appel reported that 88 units have been added since the start of the projects and stated that he would estimate that there are about 200-250 total units/vouchers. Comm. Smith asked about the financial need for service provision. Schulmeister reported that the approximate number is \$3,000-\$5,000 per unit per year for supportive housing services. Comm. Smith asked if any thought has been given to revenue sources to set up a trust fund. Schulmeister reported that the Task Force came up with a fundraising capital campaign and an ongoing millage. Comm. Smith stated that there are not enough beds for people that need help right now. He asked how this may be addressed strategically. Schulmeister reported that housing is first and stated that she is seeing constant budget cuts. She added that her board is working on fund raising. Schulmeister stated that the new strategy is coming but will take time. Comm. Smith asked how much of the problem is caused by the mortgage foreclosure crisis. Callan reported that the foreclosure prevention initiative has been successful. She added that she would have to bring a number back and added that it has probably been pretty pronounced. Comm. Smith asked how work being done through NSP, Land Bank potential, foreclosure prevention, and other prevention programs is being targeted toward the population with a precarious housing situation. Callan stated that historically this has not been dealt with. She added that NSP is fairly narrow in this regard. She stated that all tools should be thought about in development of a strategy. Comm. Smith thanked all for their work and added that is proud to be in a community taking on this challenge.

Comm. Judge thanked all for their work. She added that it is important to keep this on the radar. Comm. Judge asked if the engagement center could help fill the gap for people that are camping out. Schulmeister reported that anyone can be approved to enter and stated that it is a 24 hour stay and assignment of a case manager. Comm. Judge stated that there is a hole in the system and she would like to help find a way to fix it. Comm. Judge asked if anything is being done in cooperation with the Humane Society to temporarily house pets. Steiner stated that there is a program set up and added that she thinks that everyone utilizing the program has been reconnected with their pet. Comm. Judge stated that she wanted to ensure that this is on the radar.

Comm. Prater asked if records are kept on people being transported to Washtenaw County for treatment. Schulmeister reported that a preference has been given to people from Washtenaw County. She added that people now must have become homeless in Washtenaw County. Schulmeister reported that she has seen people come on their own and added that she has not seen people dropped off very often. Comm. Prater asked what is done if a person does not have documentation to be in the country. Schulmeister reported that there is a requirement to get documentation.

Comm. Irwin asked if the County could do anything to decriminalize the behavior of this group such as living on state land. Schulmeister stated that getting people to the table is a step in the right direction. She added that a variety of housing is needed. She stated that it will take a while for these people to get income. Schulmeister added that she is working on a legal way that the camp could exist. Comm. Irwin stated that this discussion needs to take place with the Board and it makes a strong case to dig deeper into the budget.

Comm. Sizemore asked if doctors and dentists are supplied. Schulmeister reported that work is done with the WHP. She stated that the Shelter Association has a clinic on site. She stated that there is not a great resource for dental care. She added that the program at Community Dental and the one at Hope Dental could stand to be expanded.

Comm. Ping stated that this is a wonderful collaboration and added that she urges continued work.

Proposed revised SESC Ordinance and fee schedule – *Water Resources Commissioner Janis Bobrin*

Janis Bobrin, Katie Lee, and Dennis Wojcik presented the proposed revised SESC Ordinance and fee schedule (on file in County Clerk's office).

Comm. Sizemore asked if there is a scale used when setting fees for residential and commercial. Bobrin reported that the actual number of hours was tracked and stated that this is reflected in cost. Comm. Sizemore asked how the comparison is with other communities. Bobrin reported that this was not checked. She stated that it could be provided. Comm. Sizemore stated that he wants to make sure that people are told up front what is required.

Comm. Smith asked if he sees a contrast in rural versus urban. Lee reported that each site is different. She added that the same consistency is seen across the board. Comm. Smith asked why some plan requirements are being deleted. Lee reported that the previous ordinance had a different set of requirements than the State.

Comm. Prater stated that the fees are the same on areas twice as large. Wojcik reported that the cost is virtually the same when looking at a half acre site versus a 1.1 acre site. He added that additional fees will be charged if there are additional services. Bobrin reported that these extra fees would be included with the schedule. Comm. Prater stated that he feels that the customer needs to be informed.

Comm. Schwartz asked if the jurisdiction is for the entire County. Bobrin reported that it is not and added that the complete list is in the presentation.

Comm. Sizemore asked how fees compare to other communities charge. Bobrin stated that she will provide the information.

Comm. Ping asked if there will be an increase in revenue seen from the fees. Bobrin reported that this will depend on the level of activity.

Natural Areas Preservation Program Presentation – *Parks and Recreation Director Robert Tetens*

Bob Tetens and Tom Freeman provided the Natural Areas Preservation Program presentation (on file in County Clerk's office).

Comm. Smith stated that the places in the photos provided are incredible. Freeman reported that August 4, 2010 is the last opportunity to place the proposal on the November ballot.

Comm. Judge reported that this program makes her very proud. She added that the community loves this program. Comm. Judge asked if work has been done with the Sheriff's Department to do work with people on probation. Freeman reported that they have worked with the probation department on this. Comm. Judge stated that she would like to see pamphlets like this at the airport.

Comm. Prater asked what process is going to be used in the course of purchasing the property. Freeman reported that promotion is done through newspapers and newsletters. He added that the property owners that want property considered contact Parks and Recreation. Comm. Prater stated that the property owner needs to be aware in order to be able to notify Parks and Recreation of their interest in the program. Freeman reported that an appraisal is done by an appraiser and no negotiation is done with the property owner. He added that the property owner can see the appraisal.

Comm. Sizemore stated that in some cases the property owner donates a portion of the selling price back to Parks and Recreation.

Comm. Ping asked if the cost per household could be presented. Freeman reported that it is \$25 per year for a household with a taxable value of \$100,000.

County Administrator's Report

Jason Fee distributed a report on the County Jail and the 14-A1 District Court (on file in County Clerk's office).

Comm. Sizemore stated that MDOT is looking at doing some work on Washtenaw. He stated that acquiring the gas station on the corner at a decent price may be a great way to clean up the property.

Comm. Judge stated that a meeting will take place on the building being demolished with the Pittsfield Historical Society.

Items for Current/Future Discussion

Comm. Sizemore stated that he would like to take a look at residency requirements for County employees. He added that he would like to take a look at professional services.

Comm. Prater stated that professional services are used on a reoccurring basis. He added that he would like to look at all of these things. Verna McDaniel reported that it is in her plan to look at when an RFP can be issued.

Pending

None

Citizen Participation

None

Commissioners Follow-up to Citizen Participation

None

Adjournment

Comm. Sizemore seconded by Comm. Smith moved that the meeting be adjourned until August 5th, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Jessica Ping, Chair

Lawrence Kestenbaum, Clerk/Register

By: Jason Brooks, Deputy Clerk

APPROVED: August 4, 2010