



Washtenaw County
Department of Planning & Environment

Planning Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 25, 2008

Members Present

Blackmore, Blistein, Callan, Dopkowski, Gartin, Gray, Grewal, Kelly, Lovejoy-Roe, Meyer, Solowczuk, Walz

Members Absent

Bobrin, Lewis, Smith, Williams

Staff Present

Denig, Kowalski, Milton-Pung

Guests Present

None

Call to Order and Roll Call

Grewal called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. Roll Call was taken and quorum was met.

Approval of Minutes

Solowczuk moved to approve the minutes from the January 28, 2008 meeting, Blackmore seconded and the motion carried.

Approval of Agenda

Solowczuk moved to approve the agenda with changes including moving the Historic District Study Committee Report to VIIIa., removing the "Draft Election Policy" and "Election of Officers," and adding "Subcommittees, PAB Liaisons and Nominations" as VIIIb., Blackmore seconded and the motion carried.

Public Comment – none

Report of the Chair

Grewal welcomed Mary Jo Callan, new PAB member and current Director of the joint Washtenaw County/City of Ann Arbor office of Community Development. She also noted that no Washtenaw Metro Alliance representative has yet been selected. Grewal noted that when she first became chair, she wanted to take the PAB in a more regional-based direction, and that this process has started through the changes that have been made to the membership section of the bylaws. The PAB began brainstorming charges and duties at last month's meeting, and Grewal noted that this is the next step to making changes. There was a question raised by Commissioner Smith about appointments, however, and therefore Grewal decided that this should be brought to the PAB meeting for a wider discussion.

Old Business – none

New Business

Historic District Committee Study Report – Conant Farm Preliminary Study Committee Report and Staff Report Attached

Melissa Milton-Pung discussed the process of creating a Historic District, and passed out a flow chart explaining the process from beginning to end. She noted that the process is largely citizen-driven, and that the enabling legislation is PA 169 – The Local Historic Districts Act. Generally, a group of volunteers forms a study committee that produces the report but, in this case, several members of the study committee could no longer serve for various reasons and thus a large portion of the work was done by a County intern. The Historic District Commission has already seen the draft report, and for the sixty days following PAB members can submit their comments. There will then be a public hearing, after which the study committee has up to one year to revise and finalize the report. Once the Board of Commissioners has ratified an ordinance specific to the site, oversight will fall to the Historic District Commission. The Conant Farm itself has two small, “vernacular” historic buildings, along with twelve other outbuildings. Owners of the property were involved in truck farming, and a building was moved from the Willow Run Bomber Plant to the property because there was already a structure from the same era on the site. Milton-Pung noted that the principal reason that the owners pursued historic designation was so that the open space would remain unchanged in perpetuity, and that they are also considering a conservation easement in addition to local historic designation.

Denig gave the PAB members two options: to receive and vote on the report without allowing for other comments, or to say that it would be on the agenda in March and allow for comments between the meetings – the Board agreed to provide comments and bring the report back to the next meeting.

Subcommittees, PAB Liaison Positions and Nominations

Denig noted that Commissioner Smith raised the question of whether the liaisons to other boards (Parks and Recreation, ALPAC and HDC) from the PAB should be appointed by the Planning Advisory Board or by the Board of Commissioners. When the Washtenaw County Metro Planning Commission was dissolved, the Planning Advisory Board was created to advise the BOC, not create policy, and therefore it is not clear whether the PAB has the authority to appoint its own representatives to other boards. Blackmore, chair of the nominating committee, also stated that because there is currently no succession policy set up, it is important to consider if there is a need to change the terms for outside agency and regional group members to three-year terms, rather than the one-year terms that are currently in place (excluding the at-large members). This would allow for a succession policy among the chair, first vice chair and second vice chair, rather than having to elect potentially new, inexperienced members as officers at the beginning of each year. Additionally, it is not clear from the bylaws whether ex-officio members may serve as officers, as well as the committees needing to be listed and described in the bylaws. Until this issue is resolved, current officers will continue to serve in their positions. Denig stated that the nominating committee will highlight the proposed changes to the bylaws and add new policies, and distribute it to PAB members along with the nomination slate.

After discussion, the consensus by PAB members was that the PAB should be able to make their own appointments; if this requires a BOC resolution or a change to the bylaws, they would support it. Several PAB members mentioned that there should be something in writing to affirm that the PAB has the authority to appoint its own liaisons. The nominating committee and staff will continue to look into this, and will bring this back next month along with a slate of officers and representatives.

Report of the Director of Planning Services – Patricia Denig

Denig noted that the County has been working to reduce their budget deficit, and said that because the proposal includes a 50% reduction in conference and travel expenditures, the Department of Planning and Environment can no longer offer to cover registration fees for trainings that PAB members may attend. Additionally, after discussion between Denig and Chair Grewal, it was decided that the department will continue to provide a light dinner to the PAB, as the meetings were moved from 7 p.m. to 6 p.m. a few years ago, and this was part of that original agreement. Denig also requested that members who receive checks for their per diem/mileage consider filling in the form for direct deposit; she also announced that Washtenaw County is hosting the next Citizen Planner session.

Other Items for Discussion

Public Policy News

Denig encouraged members to bring news they hear to upcoming meetings, but there was none to discuss at this meeting.

Regional Group and Outside Agency Updates

Walz updated the PAB on the Board of Public Works Multi Lakes project to expand a treatment facility; it will move forward once the weather gets warmer. Additionally, residents around a few lakes in the County have expressed interest in a lake management program after seeing the successful programs at Whitmore and North Lakes. Sylvan Township and the City of Chelsea are considering coordinating on the water treatment plant, and Dan Myers has been speaking with a developer about the development at Gotfredson Road in Salem Township.

Kelly stated that CAPT/DART is working with the County to get a joint planning grant through LIAA.

Meyer stated that Terri Blackmore gave a report on transportation at the last SSC meeting, and in the future the SSC hopes to address downtown Saline, Private wastewater Treatment, and TDR.

Denig passed along Bill Lewis' report that SWWCOG is prioritizing shared/joint services and M-52 improvement. The Manchester Community Joint Planning Commission (MCJPC) was formed in October 2007, and they are creating a plan at this time – thanks go out to mark Roby and Brett Lenart for all of the work they have done for this.

Blackmore noted that WATS has been informed that there is talk by MDOT about realigning M-52 and taking down a few structures to do so. An RFP has gone out to consultants for the North/South commuter rail, to determine whether to form an Authority. There is a Regional Transit Summit on March 3 and a Transit Town Hall on March 24.

Committee Reports – none

Public Comment – none

Adjourn

Solowczuk moved to adjourn at 7:58 p.m.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for March 24, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. in the **MSUE lower level Conference Room.**

DRAFT