



**Washtenaw County
Office of Strategic Planning**

**Planning Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
Monday, July 27, 2009**

Members Present

Blackmore, Bobrin, Blistein, Dopkowski, Godek, Gray, Kelly, Lewis, Nystrom, Schwartz, Smith, Walz

Members Absent

Bergman (excused), Callan (excused), Pratt (excused), Solowczuk

Staff Present

Brinkman, Denig, Lenart, Milton-Pung, VanDerworp

Guests Present

Kathy Giszczak, Augusta Township; William Tobler, Augusta Township; Bob Schultz, Brookside Farm

Call to Order and Roll Call

Lewis called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum present.

Approval of Minutes

Blackmore moved to approve the minutes from the June 22, 2009 meeting, Kelly seconded and the motion carried.

Approval of Agenda

Blackmore moved that the agenda be approved as presented, Godek seconded and the motion carried.

Public Comment – none

Report of the Chair – none

(Blistein arrives.)

Old Business – none

New Business

City of Ann Arbor – Allen Creek Pioneer High School Storm Water Detention System Drain Project, Office of Water Resources Commissioner’s Full Faith and Credit Review

The staff report was provided in the packet and available to the general public detailing the project. Board members inquired about the area impacted, and the portion of the watershed that this project impacted. While it was not known the total acreage of the watershed, Water Resources Commissioner Bobrin estimated that this project would impact 10% of the watershed. The Commissioner also summarized that 40% of the project expense would be funded through forgivable loan provisions, with the balance being repaid by City of Ann Arbor stormwater assessment mechanisms already in place.

Gray moved (support Kelly) to recommend support of the County's Full Faith and Credit for construction of a detention system on the Pioneer High School Property as presented. The motion carried unanimously after clarification of the funding arrangement.

P.A. 116 Farmland Agreement Applications, Augusta Township 116-PAB-866-2009

Brinkman summarized the staff report. The staff recommendation is to support the PA 116 and additionally to recommend that Augusta Township revisit the master plan designation for this property soon to more accurately reflect the use of the property.

Kelly moved (support: Blackmore) moved to approve the staff report as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Planning Functions/Planning Advisory Board/Budget Discussion

At their July 27th Meeting, the PAB discussed the Joint Memo to the PAB and BOC regarding the update on Planning Services. The purpose of the discussion was to provide an update on the pending budget issues and receive PAB comments on the focus Planning should have if a minimal level of planning services is retained.

PAB members reflected positively on the tremendous effort it took to coordinate cooperative planning discussion across 28 units of local government, and the value it has brought to civic agencies through the creation of the Comprehensive Plan in 2004 and the implementation of 121 out of 188 plan recommendations between 2004 and 2009.

PAB members received an overview of cuts to Planning Services, (the elimination of 9 FTEs and reduction of more than two dozen programs/services), and recognized the difficult task of prioritizing the County budget.

Given the elimination of staff positions and reduced ability to provide service, the PAB strongly agreed that planning services should focus on regionalism, economic development, research/development, and Board special projects. These core purposes are critical in helping the County achieve sustained economic growth and recapture lost tax base.

The discussion concluded that economic growth will not be restarted or sustained without some level planning services (i.e., identifying stakeholders, bringing action groups together, taking a long term view and providing project management). The Regional Success and Eastern Leaders initiatives for economic development, talent and quality of living are good examples of the need to have a long term plan for the economy. Without these initiatives, the road to recovery will be longer and the local economic recovery less robust.

Regionalism and cooperative efforts are needed more than ever in the context of reduced resources. The Manchester Community Joint Regional Plan is nearing completion, and has already sparked interest from other communities desiring the same form of inter-local shared services with the ability for significant cost savings. Saline Sustainability Circle wants to explore an urban service boundary, Planning recently assisted the Chelsea and Dexter (CAPT/DART) group to start a discussion on fire services, and CAPT/DART has recently requested assistance to develop an Access Plan. While planning is discretionary, the services provided by planning strengthen the County's ability to reduce the cost of providing mandated services such as the technical assistance provided to the WMA and CAPT/DART for provision of joint fire service and infill development initiatives.

Planning provides a valuable service to many other department initiatives such as Public Health Walkable Communities, Federally-mandated historic clearance for WALLY Line, mapping WATS non-motorized connections, and US Census data accuracy is needed to ensure we receive all the state and federal funding we are entitled to.

Furthermore, many reviews benefit from an “outside” agency review to enable the BOC to view the request in light of regional and environmental goals such as open space preservation (PA 116, Natural Areas Preservation Program), Full Faith and Credit pledges, local Master Plan reviews in alignment with the Comprehensive Plan, and transportation studies.

Some level of planning should be retained to help strengthen the county’s economic condition and the provision of mandated services in the long run. The PAB recognizes that everyone has to sacrifice during a budget crisis, but experience in other counties has shown that those governments that completely eliminate Planning take several years to realize the importance of the function, reinstate these services and recover economically.

Motion made by T. Blackmore (support P. Kelly) that the PAB urge the BOC to maintain a minimum level of planning services critical to support County efforts for economic development, population retention and recruitment, and community planning services, and that Chair William Lewis be directed to sign a letter on behalf of the Planning Advisory Board that recommends the retention of planning services at no level below that identified in the staff memorandum dated July 14, 2009. The letter shall communicate the importance of County Planning to economic development, retention and attraction of people, companies and investment, and the growth of tax base to support mandated services through the cultivation of high quality of life and sustainable land use. The motion carried unanimously with Commissioners Smith and Schwartz abstaining.

Motion made by P. Kelly (support C. Gray) to recommend that the Planning Advisory Board By-Laws be amended to reflect that no compensation for travel and per diem shall be provided to Planning Advisory Board members to prioritize funds for planning functions over individual board member compensation, and that language regarding mileage and per diem reimbursement be struck from the By-Laws. The motion carried unanimously with Commissioners Smith and Schwartz abstaining.

Report of the Director of Community Planning

Patricia Denig updated everyone that she has transferred to ETCS and expressed appreciation for her time with the PAB. The PAB wished Ms. Denig good luck in her new position.

Other Items for Discussion

Regional Group and Outside Agency Updates

Kelly reported that CAPT/DART has been working on both opportunities for shared fire services, as well as a project with a LIAA grant to look at regional opportunities. CAPT/DART is now exploring the possibility of a grant application to draft an Access Plan for the region.

Dopkowski reported that MORE is on summer recess.

Godek reported that the SSC group is exploring the possibility of developing an Urban Service District around the City of Saline to appropriately guide development.

Lenart reported that the WMA group has not met and that the County is exploring moving the staffing of this group to another participating jurisdiction.

Lewis reported that the July SWWCOG meeting was cancelled.

Lewis and Brinkman reported that ALPAC recently met and the Legacy Land Conservancy was introduced to the group.

Walz had nothing to report from the Board of Public Works.

Gray reported that the U.S.S. Washtenaw artifacts are still making progress toward display at 200 N. Main in Ann Arbor. Gray also circulated a copy of the latest Historic District Commission brochure.

VanDerworp reported that the annual Chamber of Commerce Impact meeting will be focused on the Ann Arbor Region Success Project this year.

Public Policy News

None.

Committee Reports – none

Public Comment – none

Adjourn

Godek moved (support: Schwartz) to adjourn at 7:45 p.m. and the motion carried unanimously.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for August 24, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. in the **Annex Large Conference Room**.

Minutes adopted by Planning Advisory Board on 8/24/09.