

COMMITTEE REPORT

COMMITTEE: **Development & Planning (D&P)**

CHAIRPERSON: **Ron Mapes**

DATE/TIME: **June 24, 2008**

PRESENT:

Beth Baranski

Ron Mapes

Sally Toepfer

Merri Berlage

Marvin Schultz

Dorte Breckenridge

Ron Smith

Other Board members:

Others: Dan Reimer

Ron Mapes called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. Minutes

Ron Smith made a motion to approve the minutes of May 27, 2008. Dorte Breckenridge seconded and the motion passed. Beth Baranski abstained.

2. Citizens' Comments – none

3. Staff Reports –

- a) Economic Development – Pat Leitzen-Fye was absent; her report was included in the committee packet. Beth Baranski asked what decision was made by this committee regarding options for a new economic development program. Mapes and Marvin Schultz reported that Leitzen-Fye is organizing a forum for the Development and Planning and CEDS committees and possibly the Mayors to develop a plan of strategy within the next month. Programmatic costs must also be identified soon for the purpose of budget preparation. Mapes also reported that at the recent Mayors' meeting it was understood that the county should continue to take the lead on issues concerning economic development as it has been doing; there was a question as to whether this project should be managed on a full or part-time basis.

Sally Toepfer exhorted the committee to support the wind power turbines and highlighted the economic impact in terms of new jobs, the good things about the Mega Dairy and opportunities for partnering with tourism in Nora and Warren. Regarding the Mayor's meeting, Toepfer asked for feedback on the topic of how the municipalities get grant proposals and the 2008 potential projects list that had a deadline of June 12th. See Other Business, below, for the answer to her inquiries.

- b) Building and Zoning - Linda Delvaux was absent; her reports were included in the committee packet. Smith stated that he liked the information made available in the monthly activity reports provided by Delvaux. Baranski asked about the status of the Zoning Rewrite committee. After some discussion, Schultz stated that a summary document showing changes/revisions will be made available. Smith suggested that a draft of the summary document be given to the D&P committee ahead of time. It was made clear that an outside source will review the Rewrite changes.

4. Unfinished Business

- a) Greenways & Trails – Baranski reported that there have been three very productive workshop sessions so far. Three hundred responses of the one thousand surveys mailed have been received. A two week extension has been given for the electronic version of the surveys; the deadline will be July 18, 2008. A narrative, that is frequently updated, has been added to the website.

5. New Business - none

6. Other Business

- a) Schultz attended the RC&D County Board Chair meeting where the CEDS Annual Report was presented. Though not on today's agenda, he asked for the D&P committee's permission to put on the upcoming County Board agenda a recommendation to accept a resolution to adopt the 2007-2008 Annual Report of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the six-county region. Schultz explained that the potential projects list (which are projects that any of the communities want to undertake) need to be included in the annual report in order to be considered for grant funding. Information on this annual report is available at www.blackhawkhills.com.

Annual county fees to Blackhawk Hills RC&D and Blackhawk Hills Economic Development District (EDD) will remain the same in FY2009. Regarding grant software, Schultz recommends that one county person be identified as a contact to channel questions; Baranski or Leitzen-Fye are potential candidates for this. As part of the RC&D's outreach program, Schultz will propose that the Mayors invite RC&D representatives to an upcoming Mayor's meeting or to have a joint meeting of the Mayors and the County Board members for the purpose of learning what economic development tools are available.

7. Citizens' Comments - none

8. Board Member Concerns

- a) Smith reported that the Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA) voted to present to the LRA Board a proposal to conduct a six-month search for a marketing consultant to help identify how to address economic development at the LRA. He also reported that he attended a water main project bid opening; it will be awarded this coming Thursday. One of the LRA tenants will put out a press release this Thursday regarding a \$1 million grant approved by the federal government. The funds will be divided among the three institutions involved: Packard Engineering will receive 40% of the grant, Inovations 40% and NUI 20%. The grant dollars will be used for a project spearheaded by Inovations involving nitrogen for farm use (it also involves the use of water, electrodes and wind power). Also discussed was the issue of road conditions in the LRA area and who would be responsible for maintaining the roads. This is an ongoing discussion between the LRA, Carroll and Jo Daviess counties. The LRA will undertake a study to help formulate building management decisions; they are currently performing a study on the cost of providing water and maintaining the treatment facility. The LRA is already taking cost-cutting steps by moving from their existing building to the welcome center; this move will eliminate heating, and light expenses. Smith commented on the importance of aggressive marketing (making personal

contacts, possibly even state-wide; this is where the marketing consultant will be a valuable asset). Schultz commented on the wind farms (operated by foreign companies) in Stephenson and Lee Counties; the RC&D and the EDD have done additional research and learned that the Rockford foreign trade zone, the LRA foreign trade zone and one other foreign trade zone extend to a 65 mile radius which covers almost all of the six-county region. Discussion centered on other issues such as: the environmental condition of the LRA land; measures to take for land sold - to safeguard that the purchasers' use of the land aligns with economic development guidelines and not for personal use; a ruling on the water main project bid stipulated that the contract did not have to adhere to the prevailing wage due to the source of LRA funding; assigning addresses to parcels.

Next regular meeting: July 22, 2008 at 7:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:06 pm following a motion made by Baranski and seconded by Smith.