

**MONTCALM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES**

Monday, May 21, 2007, 7:00 p.m.
Third Floor Conference Room
County Administration Building

Members Present: Bruce Noll
John Johansen
S. Michael Scott
Pete Haines
Don Smucker

Members Absent: Phil Lund
Lonnie Smith
Franz Mogdis

Participating Members Present: Don Lehman, Michigan State University Montcalm Extension
Chris Hyzer, County Administrator/ Controller

Others Present: Lisa Lund, Recording Secretary

Call to Order

Vice-Chairman Don Smucker called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Vice-Chairman Don Smucker led the group in the Pledge.

Roll Call

Lisa Lund took roll call and announced a quorum present.

Public Comments

Vice-Chairman Smucker opened the floor for public comment.

Public comments were offered by some residents of Bushnell Township- Jim VanLatenhoup, Teresa Deacons, Linda and Matt Brooms. They expressed concerns about the increasing trend of "mobile home parks" being developed in their township and other unzoned Montcalm County townships. They inquired of the roles of the township, the Montcalm County Board of Commissioners, and the Montcalm County Planning Commission in addressing this issue.

Don Lehman informed the Planning Commission about the new county wetlands inventory map put out by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. This map should be included in the Fact Book.

All handouts noted are on file with the Recording Secretary.

Approval of Meeting Minutes (HANDOUT A).

Motioned by John Johansen to approve the April 16, 2007 meeting minutes. Seconded by S. Michael Scott. Motion carried.

Approval of the Agenda

Don Smucker requested that two items be added under new business: a Zoning Ordinance amendment request from Cato Township and correspondence item from Franz Mogdis to the Montcalm County Board of Commissioners.

Motioned by Pete Haines to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by John Johansen. Motion carried.

Reports

Land Use Educator: Don Smucker presented a written report as an update of his activities dated May, 2007 (HANDOUT B).

Recording Secretary: No report.

Carbon Credits: No report.

Old Business

General Plan Priorities Status Report

The priorities and updates are as follows. Meeting comments in italics.

<i>Priority Meeting Discussion Highlights</i>	<i>Action/ Next Steps Identified</i>
<p>1) Develop and implement communications/education plan for LUGs. 2) Develop and implement communications/ education plan for general public. The Planning Commission has secured land use educator funding. Don Smucker is hired and working in this role.</p> <p><i>Update provided under land use educator report.</i></p>	NA
<p>3) Prepare 5-10 Year Economic Development Plan. The Michigan Economic Development Corporation should be approving a grant (up to \$30,000 with equal local match grant required) this month. A contract with the County should follow soon after by the anticipated date of March 1, 2007. This priority is also on the County's Economic Development & Physical Resources Committee workplan. The purpose is to identify all the assets and resources of various communities throughout Montcalm County to determine where long-term economic development efforts should be focused. There is continued concern about the status of this grant due to State funding issues. Notice of Intent was submitted to the State within the past two weeks. When dollars are released, we should receive funding.</p> <p><i>John Johansen said that actions are in process and that we are definitely going to get the grant.</i></p>	NA

<p>4) Establish Conference & Visitors Bureau. Today, Franz Mogdis met with Mike Moyle from AmeriClnn and the Greenville Area Chamber of Commerce. A Conference and Visitors Bureau vote is being planned for February. If successful, it will provide \$50,000 annually in Montcalm County to promote tourism. A meeting will be held with stakeholders to educate them about the ballot vote and process. A vote should be conducted in late April/ early May. A meeting was held and a vote should occur in May.</p> <p><i>No change.</i></p>	NA
<p>5) Prepare Countywide Transportation Plan. The transportation committee will continue to meet in 2007. They decided not to seek a millage this year but they are looking toward August, 2008. A major focus this year will be on an education campaign to raise awareness about the need for and support of public transportation. The committee is still planning to bring in speakers from Benzie and Allegan counties to have them share their experiences. Dean Peterson and his supervisor from MDOT will be making a presentation to per the request of the Montcalm County Board of Commissioners at 2pm on April 23, 2007 to discuss their transportation concerns and questions.</p> <p><i>No change.</i></p>	NA
<p>6) Develop Agricultural Protection Plan. The Montcalm Land Use Coalition will be sponsoring Dr. Bruce Dale for a biofuel seminar. The March date is to be finalized. The seminar is scheduled for March 12 at MCC, Doser Building Room 303/305. Don Lehman had fliers to distribute. Fliers were mailed to the members of Conservation District and Farm Bureau. The event was held and about 60 people attended. Feedback was positive.</p> <p><i>No change.</i></p>	NA
<p>7) Establish Countywide Brownfield Authority. The Brownfield Authority ordinance and membership has been established. This Authority will enable us to take steps forward on property environmental assessment as well as resource procurement. The Brownfield Board has been appointed. The initial meeting will be scheduled. John Berchtold suggested the meeting be held at the County Administration building. The first meeting was held on March 16. Officers elected included George Bosanic, Chair; Paul Kluwe, Vice-Chair; and Wally Delamater, Secretary/ Treasurer. The next meeting is scheduled for April 13. A second meeting was held. The group approved by-laws and appointed Franz Mogdis as administrator for the Montcalm Brownfield Authority.</p> <p><i>The Rules of the Montcalm County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority have been approved and are being forwarded to the Board of Commissioners for approval. Currently discussing seeking grants.</i></p>	NA
<p>8) Update County Recreation Plan Including Funding Options. The County's Parks and Recreation Committee is currently involved in updating and revising the plan. An updated plan is beginning to be drafted. A site plan is being drafted for the utilization of Johnson Park.</p> <p><i>Dave Bee will begin devoting more time to the Recreation Plan development process. Franz Mogdis has developed a short term operational plan for the Johnson Rd. site and presented it to the Parks and Recreation Committee.</i></p>	NA
<p>9) Prepare County Capital Improvement Plan annually. The Planning Commission should begin to work with Local Units of Government to determine their plans for capital improvement planning. The Planning Commission asked Don Smucker that as he comes into contact with Local Units of Government, to ask if they currently have a capital improvement plan or do such planning. This will help the Planning Commission assess what is in place and already being done.</p>	NA

<p><i>No change.</i></p>	
<p>10) Update land use analysis with new fly over information. The Planning Commission should see if this is the type of project to take on to evaluate land use change using the old data of 1978 and most recent. Funds would need to be identified. Don Smucker suggested perhaps identifying priority geographic areas to focus resources. John Berchtold reported that we have a new server to store aerials and existing parcel lines on the Community Information System. LIAA is doing the prep work to get hard drive information converted for internet access; should be done by next meeting. Don Lehman will continue to follow up with his MSU contact and provide additional clarification toward attaining university resources for a project that develops overlays to determine land use changes over time. MSU presented Don Lehman with a couple options. Neither option was both cost- effective and value-added.</p> <p><i>No change.</i></p>	<p>NA</p>
<p>11) Establish county trail authority. Nothing currently is happening on this priority. It needs to be addressed as part of County recreation plan. Key issues are maintenance and operation. Franz Mogdis provided updates on sections of the trails; however, no progress has been made on creating a county trail authority. No change in the authority. Franz Mogdis did provide an update on the trail expansion per a recently awarded MDOT grant.</p> <p><i>No change.</i></p>	<p>NA</p>
<p>12) Identify and develop recreation and cultural opportunities for youth. This priority should be addressed as part of the County recreation plan.</p> <p><i>No change. This objective ties back to priority #8.</i></p>	<p>NA</p>
<p>13) Update Fact Book Annually. The Fact Book information will be at least a year old in February. Data, narrative, and maps are the biggest issues. The Planning Commission needs to determine what changes are needed and how those changes will be made. We need to ensure that data timeliness limitations are explained... "best available" and revision dates. Economic and education data may be things we can update. Noted that poverty rates are probably low but no better data is available. Don Smucker put together an overview of items by chapter that could be revised as well as those that do not. Franz Mogdis suggested coordinating efforts with CIS efforts. Pete Haines has submitted changes for the education section. Don has posted Pete Haines' submissions. Don Smucker also has an update from Montcalm Community College.</p> <p><i>No change.</i></p>	<p>Still waiting on Franz Mogdis for employment change information.</p>
<p>14) Develop PR program using Daily News. 15) Provide training and technical assistance to local governments. The Planning Commission needs to work with Land Use Educator on this to communicate to both the public and Local Units of Government. Phil Lund suggested an article highlighting Don Smucker's new role appointment. Still needs to be done. An article was submitted although it has not yet run in the paper.</p> <p><i>No change.</i></p>	
<p>16) Develop watershed management plans for each river watershed and major lake watersheds. There has not been any action yet on this priority. However, looking ahead, active participants should include the Montcalm County Drain Commissioner (as he is the local representative for all local lake boards); Michigan Lakes and Streams organization, Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS), and Timberland RC&D. We need to ensure streams are</p>	<p>Franz Mogdis will contact the Drain Commissioner to identify existing lake boards and work with drain commission office to incorporate into their</p>

addressed also. <i>No change.</i>	plans watershed management vs. just lake management.
--	--

New Business

P.A. 116 Farmland Application- Kenneth and Carrie Newell

Members referred to the application and related correspondence materials in their packet (HANDOUT C). These cover letter for this information is dated April 24, 2007.

Motioned by S. Michael Scott to respond to Shirley Sanders that the application was reviewed without negative comment. Seconded by Bruce Noll. Motion carried. Lisa Lund will send a written response to Shirley Sanders and cc: to the Newells and Conservation District.

Cato Township Zoning Ordinance Amendment

Don Smucker referenced the written materials pertaining to this item (HANDOUT D) and introduced the item. While the Planning Commission members did not have negative comment to the concept, there were concerns about the language which may be unclear and open to interpretation.

Motioned by Bruce Noll to have Don Smucker draft a letter of response summarizing the key points and concerns of the discussion.

Correspondence From Franz Mogdis to Montcalm County Board of Commissioners

John Johansen spoke to the letter which was in the meeting packet (HANDOUT E). The letter was written to request that issues that come before the Commissioners dealing with potential land use changes be referred to the Planning Commission for review and comment. This letter will be included in the Montcalm County Board of Commissioners' May 29 meeting packet.

Public Comments

Vice-Chairman Don Smucker again opened the floor for public comment.

The Planning Commission members discussed the concerns of the residents who came for the initial public comment period.

Motioned by S. Michael Scott for the Planning Commission to write a letter to Bushnell Township stating key points of the pubic comment period and the role of the township and Planning Commission in addressing zoning issues. Seconded by Bruce Noll. Motion carried.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Monday, June 18 at 7:00 pm in the third floor conference room at the County Administration Building, 211 W. Main, Stanton.

Adjournment

Motioned by Bruce Noll to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by John Johansen. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Lund, Recording Secretary