

**MONTCALM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
M I N U T E S**

Monday, June 14, 2004, 7:00 p.m.  
Third Floor Conference Room  
Administrative Building

Members Present: Franz Mogdis  
John Johansen  
Bruce Noll  
David Raney  
Lonnie Smith  
Don Smucker

Members Absent: Phil Lund

Participating Members Present: Don Lehman  
Jason Kimbrough

Others Present: Alvin Rush; Lisa Lund, Recording Secretary

**Call to Order**

Chairman Mogdis called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Mogdis led the group in the Pledge.

**Roll Call**

Lisa Lund took roll call and announced a quorum present.

**Public Comments**

Chairman Mogdis opened the floor for public comment. John Johansen wanted to acknowledge Franz Mogdis for the work he did in putting together the Requests for Qualifications. John believed we received good plans back because of the excellent RFQ which enabled bidders to know what we were looking for. John then stated that a check was received and has been turned in for \$400, which was a scholarship for Citizen Planner from Farm Bureau. The course was for two people at \$175 a piece. John Johansen noted that the County Commissioners approved the hazardous mitigation plan today. The plan is required to receive FEMA funds and also required for the terrorism and so forth. We are the first county in Michigan submit this plan. Jerry McCoy and West Michigan Regional Planning Commission put it together.

David Raney asked that we observe a moment of silence in honor of President Reagan's passing and this was done.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the May 10, 2004 meeting were reviewed. Motioned by Bruce Noll to approve the minutes, seconded by Lonnie Smith. Motion carried.

## **Approval of the Agenda**

The agenda was reviewed. John Johansen added the Michigan State University Extension grant under Old Business and added reverse zoning under New Business. Motioned by John Johansen to accept agenda with those amendments, seconded by Bruce Noll. Motion Carried.

## **Reports**

### Newaygo Comprehensive Master Plan Steering Committee

David Raney had made a contact last month to this committee and they said they would contact him at the appropriate time and he has not heard back yet. His impression is that there is no hurry. If David hears nothing by July 1 he will contact them again.

### Coalition of Greater Greenville

John Johansen reported that Phil Lund was only able to hear about ¾ of Jay Peters' Strategic Alliance of West Michigan presentation at the Coalition of Greater Greenville meeting. John said he was impressed with the presentation, which was updated with new facts and direction. John is thinking about places for Jay to present, especially to townships. John suggested that the Montcalm Township Association's November meeting may be good choice, or perhaps to bring him back to Land Use Coalition as it is worth it to see the update. Franz Mogdis stated that there is a coalition which is providing regional employment needs to the State and that Montcalm and Ionia have been added to a 12 county region; the targeted regional employment need they are focusing on is health care. John asked people to think about presentation location options and get back with him. Bruce Noll commented stated he thought Montcalm Township Association would be most logical. Franz further suggested that the invitation list be expanded beyond Montcalm Township Association members and John said it would be extended to some persons already.

## **Old Business**

### 2004-2005 Budget Request

A draft budget was included with the meeting packet. Franz Mogdis met with Ed Sell to develop a budget and one was drafted minus the consultant fee. Ed had indicated to Franz that he was going to put in \$35,000. Ed told Franz that he would need to present before the finance committee in August; John Johansen informed Franz that the budget proposal would need to be completed long before that meeting. Planning Commission members were encouraged to turn in per diems to determine actual expenditures. John said the key issue for determining a 2005 budget is that it is difficult to budget the first year out without history. John suggested that the 2004 budget be duplicated for 2005 but insert \$ for consultant. Motioned by Don Smucker to approve recommending a 2005 budget identical to 2004 except for consultant line item not yet determined, totaling \$5,000. Seconded by Bruce Noll. Motion carried.

### Michigan State University Grant

This item is in follow up to a discussion at the May meeting regarding a grant proposal opportunity from Michigan State University. Don Lehman stated that he has an appointment Thursday to meet with someone from Michigan State University to discuss ideas for further development. Don Lehman drafted a grant proposal for Planning Commission members to review and this was distributed during the meeting. Don Lehman discussed the Land Use Coalition and the creation of the Planning Commission and now wanting to put together the land use plan and wanting community input. Don Lehman stated that if there is a possibility of determining which townships are interested in participating, it may strengthen the grant; Don Lehman then asked how he might find out if any are interested in participating. John Johansen's

initial thought was to target some townships to avoid clustering and asked how many would be desired. Don Lehman responded by saying he would know more after Thursday's meeting. John offered to help and then suggested that the help of members and Land Use Coalition should also make requests for this information. Don Smucker asked how many could be served through the grant and Don Lehman responded that the number to be involved might be determined by cost. Franz Mogdis stated that Winfield Township was involved with the Michigan Farmland Preservation Alliance project so the Planning Commission may not want to seek to involve them for the purposes of this grant. Don Lehman requested that Planning Commission members review the proposal and provide him additional comments.

Don Lehman concluded his comments by mentioning that the current Montcalm MSUE groundwater Americorps member will take position in Newaygo as land use planner as of July 1, 2004.

## **New Business**

### Digitized Soil Map

Franz Mogdis and John Johansen had approached Jason Kimbrough about presenting at this meeting on this topic. Jason said he spoke with William Fredrick about Geographic Information System (GIS) soil maps for Montcalm County. Jason reported that GIS data for the county is 70% complete and will be finished by September 30, 2004. When asked by members, Jason replied that this data is public and that a computer can take the information off the Internet. There is a website called soil-data-mart that can be accessed. Jason brought maps printed from the Internet, which were given to Lisa Lund for record. The first map showed the status of book soil surveys for each county and the date; Montcalm's was in 1960 being the oldest study in Michigan. A second map presented soil status of digitized soils reports. They will be using the old soil survey data to digitize maps. Jason further reported that once a MLRA team leader is selected, their task would be to recomputate the data. Jason stated that Montcalm should be done first given the old age of our report. Bruce Noll asked if the data would change from 1960 data if resurveyed now; Jason did not have a definite answer but he thought it would probably be able to better specify soils types. New soils data will follow topomap and lay the topomap over GIS data. David Raney received clarification that in fact digitizing of old soil maps would occur by September 30 and that the new soil data map timeline was not clear. John Johansen requested Jason to check every 60-90 days on the status of the two mapping processes on behalf of the Planning Commission. John commented that it would be nice to have the new data for the Planning Commissions planning process if possible.

### Reverse Zoning

John Johansen referenced an article on reverse zoning from the May issue of Planning and Zoning News. John asked if this topic this something that the Planning Commission should look at as we look toward the future. Members agreed it might be valuable to do so. John asked members keep their copy of the issue and read the article. John mentioned that Montcalm Township Association is always looking for speakers and it would be nice to get a speaker from someone who wrote that article if possible.

### Master Plan Consultant Proposals

Franz Mogdis sent out a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) dated May 28 to four planning organizations: Gove Associates, West Michigan Regional Planning Commission; Langworthy, Strader and LeBlanc; and Planning and Zoning Center Inc. Franz Mogdis put together a proposal comparison matrix for members to use. Franz stated that all four organizations have done work in Montcalm County and all of which are qualified and competent based on what they done in the past.

David Raney asked Planning Commission members to comment on a remark in Dave Bee's letter in which Dave Bee stated said he doesn't provide professional insurance. Franz said it is more of an issue for a private entity than a public entity but not a big issue for a public entity like West Michigan Regional Planning Commission.

Bruce Noll stated that when he read through the proposals, he wondered if it was significant that three of the four did not respond to individual questions; Planning and Zoning Inc. did. Franz stated the bottom line was that not answering the questions was not an acceptable practice and further that Planning and Zoning Inc. was the one organization that overall responded to the RFQ in the most comprehensive manner with specificity.

Franz stated that the Gove and Langworthy proposals were less expensive by about one-third but asked what the product would be. Franz continued that with the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission the difficulty is that we are part of that entity and they know the county but they don't have the in-house resources to provide the product that the others would.

Franz stated that he has worked with all of them but felt Planning and Zoning Inc. came back with the most quality product the Planning Commission would be looking for but were also the most expensive. He stated the Planning Commission needed to decide where they want to go with this process reminding members that all proposals are negotiable in regards to scope of work, areas to save money, spread payment over a period of time. Franz noted that the decision the Planning Commission makes about this will make or break the Planning Commission in terms of the product and what we are going to sell to the County Commissioners and the public.

Don Smucker asked in the case of Langworthy's proposals if it was customary to be that open ended in terms of responses but Franz responded by saying it was a lazy response. John Johansen discussed his rankings; he also was concerned about so many open-ended comments and added they would have hard time justifying money to pay for plan. John asked if there was room to negotiate for 36 months billing before we go to County Commissioners. Franz said we as a Planning Commission need to determine the product we can sell to the County Commission.

Bruce Noll said Planning and Zoning Center Inc. answered all the questions and David Raney added that they tailored their response to the RFQ we sent.

Franz commented that Gove is more engineering-oriented than planning-oriented and that Planning and Zoning Center Inc. is more recognized statewide for their work on planning and zoning issues.

Don Smucker stated what impressed him with the Planning and Zoning Center Inc. was seeking out public opinion and that a high level of community involvement would help to prevent the plan from being stuck on the shelf and not be used as an effective planning document.

Franz broke the cost estimated stating one came in at \$90,000; two proposals came in at \$60,000; and one proposal came in at \$30,000. Of the four, Planning and Zoning Center Inc. was the only proposal that had community involvement as a major focus.

Bruce asked how we would be able to sell it to the County Commissioners. David said it would be hard to sell the cost to County Commissioners as well as people during time of budget crisis and the rough economy we need to grapple with. Franz suggested discussing the best price with Planning and Zoning Center Inc. and then going to County Commissioners with a plan of the next three years. At the current cost projection, that would be \$30,000 each year with this high quality product. John stated that based on what he was hearing that Planning and Zoning Center Inc. would be chosen if price were not an object; John felt the next step is for the Chairperson Mogdis to contact Planning and Zoning Center Inc. without paring out the quality and attempt to spread expenses over the three years. John suggested that one of the ways to sell it to the County Commissioners is to tie this procedure to economic development saying that if we want economic development to occur in Montcalm County, then we need a very well thought out land use plan and we cannot separate the two. John would ask the Planning Commission Chairperson and members to be at the County Commissioner presentation. Franz additionally noted as a selling point that Montcalm County is moving into the forefront of planning and we don't have countywide planning or economic development function within county government; costs for those departments would exceed the cost of the study so \$90,000 is not a lot to pay relatively.

Don Smucker stated that Planning and Zoning Center Inc. recognizes that this is a first time exercise for the County and we have various township ordinances and if it is not handled right, it could be negatively impacted. Don Smucker feels they understand it is important to involve people in the planning process and get them on the same page and that they have that expertise.

John Johansen suggested that Franz Mogdis contact Planning and Zoning Inc. and at the July meeting put together presentation to the County Commissioners. John said he would think some more on how to approach the County Commission. Motioned by Bruce Noll that the Planning Commission authorize Chairman Mogdis negotiate with Planning and Zoning Center Inc. to develop a draft contract that would be brought to the planning commission at its July meeting for discussion and approval. Seconded by John Johansen. David asked if the other organizations that responded to the RFQ would be contacted now or after we reach resolution with Planning and Zoning Center Inc. Franz thought he would send a letter thanking them and that at this time we are negotiating with an organization. Bruce asked for clarification about the use of the word "approval" in the motion and it was clarified that the word "approval" meant approval within this group to make a recommendation to the County Commissioners. Don Lehman commented on the discrepancies between the dollars and encouraged the group to consider the thoroughness of the proposal responses. John stated that the organization Jerry Adams organization was with is produces more canned responses than taking time to adapt. Planning and Zoning Center Inc. said they were going to provide digitized maps as product of their proposal. John added that we need to coordinate current digitized map efforts so as to not duplicate efforts. Don Smucker asked if there was any baggage left over from Land Information Access Association and John responded

that their mapping obligation was never really fulfilled. Don Smucker asked if existing maps from the Land Information access Association would impact the project cost and they may. Motion carried.

Members agreed that it would be a desirable goal to get a three-year fiscal spread for the project costs and to have the project start date of October 1, 2004. The three-year fiscal spread doesn't mean that project activities are spread over three years; in fact, the Planning and Zoning Center Inc. indicated a 24-month timeline for the project.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 12, 2004, at 7:00 p.m.

Motioned by Bruce Noll to adjourn, seconded by Don Smucker. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Lisa Lund, Recording Secretary