

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

Monday, November 7, 2005, 1:30 p.m.  
Third Floor, Board of Commissioners Meeting Room  
Administrative Building

Members Present: Lonnie Smith  
Franz Mogdis  
John Johansen (already in the Commissioner's meeting)  
Bruce Noll  
Don Smucker  
S. Michael Scott

Members Absent: Pete Haines  
Phil Lund

Participating Members Present: Don Lehman, Michigan State University Montcalm Extension  
Randy Stearns, Road Commission for Montcalm County  
John Berchtold, Montcalm County Administrator/Controller  
(already in the Commissioner's meeting)  
Patrick Carr, Chairperson, County Board of Commissioners  
(already in the Commissioner's meeting)

Others Present: Lisa Lund, Recording Secretary  
Mark Wyckoff, Planning and Zoning Center, Inc.

**Call to Order**

At 1:30 p.m., Montcalm County Board of Commission Chairman Pat Carr announced the Planning Commission could take the floor and start its presentation. Planning Commission Chairperson Franz Mogdis introduced Mark Wyckoff for purposes of the presentation, stating the purpose of the combined meeting was to provide information and solicit feedback.

**County Commissioners Presentation**

All handouts noted are on file with the Recording Secretary.

Mark Wyckoff stated that the commissioners had received some materials in advance, including Memo (Handouts A) and Revised Outline (Handout B). Mark Wyckoff distributed a printed version of the presentation slides that he would be using for today's presentation (Handout C). Key presentation topics included project purpose, purpose and draft general plan outline, project products, planning process, fact book, demographics, economy, land and natural resources, land tax classes and residential build-out analysis, transportation, community facilities, role of the planning commission, the county board, and local governments, ten smart growth tenets, DRAFT key strategies map, and DRAFT future land use map.

Mark Wyckoff stressed the importance of using the land use plan as an educational and technical assistance tool for local units of government. He stated that many planning commissions spend much of their time on these activities. Mark Wyckoff noted that Montcalm County appears to be a leader in the State of Michigan in regard to the large number acres committed to farmland preservation through PA 116.

Mark Wyckoff then explained the next interactions of the Planning Commission and the County Board of Commissioners. When a draft Plan is developed, the Planning Commission will approach the County Board of Commissioners to get approval to forward the draft Plan to local units of government for feedback per legal requirements. When the Plan review requirements have been met, the Planning Commission will then approach the County Board of Commissioners to recommend adoption of the Plan.

Mark Wyckoff completed his presentation and then asked ten questions of the Board of Commissioners to request policy guidance:

*Question One: Do you have questions on the background information?*

Dan Petersen asked about the impact of the Plan on un-zoned areas. Mark Wyckoff responded that since the County doesn't have zoning, there would be no impact other than educational and technical assistance and advocating for compatible land use emphasis.

*Question Two: Are you comfortable with the direction of the project?*

Pat Carr asked if the Planning Commission had received an indication of who said they would be interested in using the plan as a tool. His concern was that after the large investment of resources, there may not be local support or use of the Plan once it is developed. He also asked if there was any way to verify prior to approval, fearing it may be too late by the time it is approved. Mark Wyckoff noted that in his experience, the action of local units of government choosing to follow the land use plan or use it as a tool had to do primarily with the support and follow up of education and technical assistance following the completion of the Plan. Franz Mogdis indicated that 10-12 townships have been fairly or actively involved and that number is a good start in getting buy in.

Dan Petersen said he liked the ten smart growth tenets because they seemed to align with state and federal directions, thereby creating potential opportunities at these levels. He also liked that the tenets seemed to promote intergovernmental cooperation.

S. Michael Scott added that he feels the plan is a good basis to start from in terms of planning and research.

*Question Three: Are you comfortable with the basic foundation of the draft Plan?*

No comments.

*Question Four: Are you comfortable with the draft Plan outline?*

No comments.

*Question Five: Are you still committed to Plan adoption, following the recommendation of the County Planning Commission?*

Pat Carr asked what the general level of participation was in the surveys. Mark Wyckoff replied that there was a range of responses, probably based on the staffing in local government offices. Franz Mogdis stated that variations in the responses may have been in part due to limited part-time or volunteer staff, monthly meetings, or delayed

decision- making about who should return information and what information should be submitted created. Franz Mogdis stated that all responses were eventually obtained.

Carl Paepke stated that the population is growing and noted that residences are being built in land that could be better used for different purposes. Carl Paepke asked to what extent will the plan be used to tell people the where to live. Mark Wyckoff responded that the plan will make suggestions about where residential areas should be located. Carl Paepke then asked about the growing conflict for land between agriculture and industry. Mark Wyckoff stated the plan would encourage non-agricultural businesses to be located where infrastructure is already in place and encourage agricultural businesses to locate in agricultural areas.

*Question Six: Are you comfortable with the use of the Plan in review and comment by the County Planning Commission on draft local plans and zoning decisions, PA 116 applications, and future County infrastructures decisions (such as parks and utilities)?*

No comments.

*Question Seven: Are you comfortable continued support to the County Planning Commission so they can implement the Plan once adopted? This will require future funds for education and technical assistance.*

No comments.

*Question Eight: What other concerns do you have at this time?*

Mark Wyckoff distributed copies of the Fact Book (Handout D). Dan Petersen noted there may be an error on one of the maps. Franz Mogdis asked the Commissioners to review the draft Fact Book and respond to him with changes within four weeks.

*Question Nine: Do you have any questions of the Planning Commission?*

No comments.

*Question Ten: Do you have any questions of the consultant?*

No comments.

This portion of the meeting ended at 2:25 p.m. and Planning Commission members went to the Conference Room to meet with Mark Wyckoff about other business.

Mark Wyckoff indicated we will probably want to do a more detailed presentation when the draft Plan is completed and that an Executive Summary will also be provided.

Mark Wyckoff distributed three different maps to get feedback on the level of detail and information desired for the future land use map (Handout E, F, and G). The group decided to use the map labeled "Strategies Map" (Handout G) as a more general piece. Mark Wyckoff asked that members return feedback specifically on employment and commercial centers and boundaries around the cities and towns within one week.

Franz Mogdis stated that the sensitive lands information was important to include and suggested this be done either on the quadrant maps or within the narrative.

Bruce Noll was concerned that the soil information was not included and this could have great impact on decision making. Members decided that the digitized soil information and application of that information would be a future strategy. Further, that language regarding the desire to get that information and use it for educational purposes would be included in the plan's narrative.

Mark Wyckoff stated that a draft Plan is scheduled to be completed by December 5, giving the Planning Commission two weeks to review it prior to the December 19 meeting.

Deadlines to remember:

- "Strategies Map" feedback on within one week.
- Fact Book comments to Franz within 4 weeks

The next meeting will be on Monday, December 19, at 7:00 p.m. at the Administration Building Conference Room.

Meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

---

Lisa Lund, Recording Secretary