

MINUTES
CITY OF DUBUQUE LONG RANGE PLANNING ADVISORY COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION

5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, November 16, 2011

City Council Chamber, Historic Federal Building

Commissioners Present: Chairperson Jim Prochaska; Commissioners Alan Vincent, Richard Van Iten, John Pregler, Charles Winterwood, Chad Darter and Craig Beytien.

Commissioners Excused: None.

Staff Members Present: Laura Carstens, David Johnson and Aggie Tauke.

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Prochaska at 5:30 p.m.

CERTIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE: Staff presented an Affidavit of Compliance verifying that the meeting was being held in compliance with the Iowa Open Meetings Law.

MINUTES: Motion by Vincent, seconded by Darter, to approve the minutes of September 21, 2011 as submitted. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Vincent, Prochaska, Van Iten, Pregler, Darter, and Winterwood; Nay – None; Abstain - Beytien.

PUBLIC MEETING: Input on Dubuque Regional Comprehensive Plan: Chairperson Prochaska opened the public input session of the meeting. Dan Fox, ECIA Transportation Planner, presented the Dubuque County Regional Smart Plan and Land Use Chapter. He reviewed the background and progress to date. He reviewed the legislative requirements of the plan, noting the Smart Planning Principles and Elements. He discussed the public input process and issues addressed in the draft chapters of the Plan. Mr. Fox discussed in detail the draft Land Use Chapter. He explained what land use plans do and noted common land use issues. He reviewed goals and objectives of the land use chapter and stated they largely reflect the Smart Planning Principles.

Mr. Fox reviewed residential development forecasts and land needs. Commissioner Beytien questioned the approximate 18,000 additional people forecasted to live in Dubuque by the year 2040. Mr. Fox noted that population projections are an art form and not a science, and they oftentimes reflect assumptions. He explained the assumption in the Dubuque population projection is that recent City efforts, such as IBM and Millwork District, will turn the current flat population trend upward. Commissioner Beytien noted the school district's recent projection is lower than ECIA's.

Commissioner Van Iten discussed the vacant developable land map and noted smart land use planning would encourage and provide incentives for development in preferred areas that can potentially be developed. Commissioner Prochaska questioned if developers and contractors have been involved in the public input sessions for the communities participating in the regional Smart Plan. Mr. Fox noted a number of developers attended the Peosta public input session. Commissioner Beytien suggested approaching the Dubuque Homebuilders Association.

The Commissioner discussed the role of the Airport in both attracting and detracting potential development. Mr. Fox reviewed the level of service for roads throughout Dubuque anticipated for the year 2040. He noted the impact on future traffic volumes on the west end of Dubuque due to projected development. He explained the plan supports encouraging development in the downtown and urban areas in an effort to lower future costs for road improvements. Staff Member Carstens noted that infrastructure improvements and provision of other modes of transportation as well as attention to how roadways are designed also improves the level of service. She explained the Dubuque Smart Planning Consortium promotes compact and contiguous development. Mr. Fox reviewed the development criteria and the overlay analysis that was performed. He explained the overlay analysis ranked land suitability for development based on the development criteria.

The Commission reviewed the map of land suitability for development. Commissioner Beytien noted the Dubuque Community School District strategic plan is due early in January 2012, and a draft of the facilities plan is due in approximately one month. He noted money is available for infrastructure improvements and suggested the Consortium consider the planning efforts in the Dubuque Regional Smart Plan.

Mr. Fox invited the Commission and public to participate in a visioning process for Dubuque. He requested the Commission write down what they like best about Dubuque as well as the top three items they would like to see in the community. The Commission discussed their thoughts, noting they appreciated Dubuque's diversity and cultural efforts, beauty of the region, intergovernmental cooperation and partnerships, uniqueness, and location. The Commission discussed some of the things they would like to see accomplished in the community. Commissioner Beytien noted he would like to see a community recreation center with an aquatic park. Commissioner Pregler suggested more waterfront opportunities, activities, and availability. He noted the numerous opportunities to participate in festivals and events in the summer; however, there are very few opportunities for activities in the winter months. Commissioner Winterwood recommended more hike and bike trails as well as better access. Commissioner Van Iten would like to see traffic issues addressed and improved with special emphasis on Dubuque's major corridors and future roundabouts.

Jim Gonyier, 935 Oxford Street, shared his thoughts with the Commission and Mr. Fox. He stated his favorite thing about Dubuque is the small town feel as well as the historic character and bluffs. He reviewed the things he would like to see accomplished in the

community, noting promoting Dubuque hike/bike trails within the city as well as connecting those trails at a neighborhood level. He explained he would like to see existing speed limits enforced better, especially in the Hilltop Neighborhood along University Avenue. He noted he would also like regulations for development along the bluffs to assure proper scale and design before it's too late.

The Commission and Mr. Gonyier participated in the land use plan map exercise. They discussed the need to locate an additional fire station on the south end of town as well as other public facilities such as new schools and school redevelopment.

Chairperson Prochaska closed the public input session on the Dubuque Regional Comprehensive Plan.

ACTION ITEMS

Old Main Urban Revitalization Area Plan Amendment: Staff Member Tauke reviewed the Old Main Urban Revitalization Area Plan and benefits. She noted the amendment will reduce the required eligible percentage of residential area in a property from 100% to 75% in order to qualify for tax exemptions. She explained that currently the Old Main Urban Revitalization Plan requires 100% of the area of the building to be used for residential use to receive the property tax exemption for eligible improvements. She noted the Old Main Urban Revitalization Area is the only urban revitalization area in the city of Dubuque that requires 100% of the area to be dedicated to residential use rather than 75% as is required elsewhere. She noted amending the required area would encourage redevelopment in the Old Main Urban Revitalization Area. She reviewed the boundaries and noted they are largely the same as the Old Main Historic District. The Commission discussed that other property owners may benefit from the amendment as long as they have at least 75% of their interior dedicated to residential uses. She reviewed scenarios in which this could happen. She explained that the amendment to allow 75% of residential area will comply with state regulations, noting the state minimum is also 75%.

The Commission and staff reviewed the urban revitalization program and urban renewal program and their differences. The Commission questioned whether the long term benefits of these up-front incentives are tracked. Staff explained various City and County offices track the abatements and tax increments. Commissioner Van Iten noted the benefits of the Urban Renewal and Urban Revitalization Programs. He explained the importance of communicating to Dubuque residents the measurable impacts of the plans and the net gains from the tax abatements.

Motion by Winterwood, seconded by Darter, to recommend approval of the Old Main Urban Revitalization Plan Amendment, finding it is consistent with the City of Dubuque Comprehensive Plan. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Vincent, Prochaska, Van Iten, Pregler, Darter, Winterwood, and Beytien; Nay – None.

Smart Planning Consortium: Staff Member Carstens updated the Commission on the progress of the Dubuque Regional Smart Plan. The Commission discussed the housing goals and objectives of the regional plan.

The Commission recommended the consortium consider encouraging energy efficient building codes as a separate objective under Goal #1.

The Commission recommended radon abatement be added to the list of changing regulatory mandate examples for Objective 8.4. The Commission noted radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer next to smoking and radon is an issue within the Dubuque region.

The Commission requested clarification on Objective 1.1 regarding minimum housing quality standards. The Commission did not understand how the communities would ensure that rental housing would exceed housing standards and Code requirements. Staff Member Carstens noted that was a recommendation by the City of Dubuque Housing and Community Development Director David Harris. She explained that Mr. Harris believed the region should advocate to do more than simply meet the minimum standards; rather, they should exceed those standards. The Commission supported this objective, and requested that Mr. Harris provide specific recommendations on how communities, including Dubuque, can exceed minimum housing standards and codes.

The Commission recommended an additional objective under Goal #4 to provide financial planning for homeownership to ensure that low/moderate income households have the wherewithal to be successful.

The Commission noted a recent article in the Telegraph Herald which reported that local non-profit agencies are now beginning to require proof of residency prior to some services being provided. The Commission noted that much of the crime reported in Dubuque is from people without a local address. The Commission recommended Goal #6 include a provision that assistance programs require proof of Dubuque County residency.

The Commission recommended the consortium consider an additional objective under Goal #11 to work with public and private utilities to ensure that internet broadband is accessible.

The Commission noted that goals #9 and #10 as well as their supporting objectives could fit under Goal #12. The Commission recommended the Consortium consider consolidating Goals #9, #10 and #12.

The Commission noted that the state no longer licenses intermediate care facilities for the mentally retarded and there has been a general de-institutionalization for special needs populations. The Commission discussed the importance of providing opportunities for special needs populations as the services formerly provided by these

institutions are now being provided in residential neighborhoods. The Commission recommended an additional objective to Goal #6 which would remove regulatory barriers to housing for special needs populations.

The Commission recommended Objective 6.4 separate elderly persons from persons with disabilities, noting they are not one in the same. The Commission recommended Objective 6.4 be amended to remove the words, “for the elderly and”.

The Commission recommended the Consortium consider combining Objective 9.4 and 10.1, noting they essentially say the same thing.

Update of Dubuque’s 2008 Comprehensive Plan: Staff Member Carstens reviewed the status of the plan update. She noted that staff has met with the City Manager and has been discussing the format for the plan. She noted that staff and the City Manager are working together on how best to incorporate sustainability and the Sustainable Dubuque Plan into the City of Dubuque Comprehensive Plan. She reviewed community outreach efforts have been discussed with the City Manager, and that will appear on a future agenda.

LIAISON/SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Enterprise Zone Commission: No report.

ITEMS FROM PUBLIC: None.

ITEMS FROM COMMISSION:

Youth Indicator Report: The Commission noted that the 2011 Every Child/Every Promise Youth Indicator Report is available. The Commission suggested the report be considered during the update of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan.

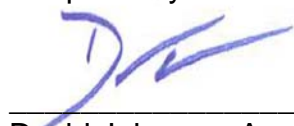
Hempstead/Senior Activity Complex Public Hearing: Commissioner Beytien invited the Long Range Planning Advisory Commission to participate in the Hempstead/Senior Activity Complex public hearing scheduled for November 28, 2011 at 5:30 p.m. at the Forum.

ITEMS FROM STAFF:

2012 Meeting Schedule: Staff Member Carstens noted the 2012 meeting schedule has been finalized and requested the Commission contact staff with any issues or conflicts.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



David Johnson, Assistant Planner

Adopted—February 15, 2012