

## **MINUTES**

### **CITY OF DUBUQUE LONG RANGE PLANNING ADVISORY COMMISSION REGULAR SESSION**

5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, August 15, 2012

City Council Chamber, Historic Federal Building

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

**Commissioners Excused:** Commissioner Charles Winterwood.

**Staff Members Present:** Laura Carstens and David Johnson.

**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 Beytien, seconded by Vincent, to approve the minutes of February 15, 2012, as submitted. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Vincent, Prochaska, Beytien, Van Iten, Pregler and Darter; Nay – None.

In response to a question about the minutes of February 15, 2012, Commissioner Beytien said he will present the Dubuque Community School District Facilities Plan to the Long Range Planning Advisory Commission at a future meeting.

### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**Dubuque County Regional Smart Plan Chapters:** Dan Fox, Transportation Planner with East Central Intergovernmental Association (ECIA) and Anna O'Shea, Dubuque County Zoning Administrator, provided the update to the Dubuque County Regional Smart Plan on Housing, Economic Development, Hazard Mitigation, and Infrastructure and Utilities Chapters.

Chairperson Prochaska opened the public hearing. Mr. Fox explained input on the chapters would be appreciated from the Long Range Planning Advisory Commission. Mr. Fox explained the purpose of the Dubuque County Regional Smart Plan and noted it will include the legislative Iowa Smart Planning Principles. He reviewed the Dubuque County Smart Plan Consortium and participants. He stated the final plan will be complete in November 2012. He provided a brief overview of the chapters completed to date, and discussed the remaining schedule for completion of the plan.

Mr. Fox first addressed the Housing Chapter of the Dubuque County Regional Smart Plan. He reviewed housing in Dubuque County. He explained Dubuque County is an affordable place to buy a home and has a high rate of ownership. He explained the Dubuque County housing market has remained relatively stable during the recession. Mr. Fox explained rental housing, housing affordability, transportation affordability and changing age of the population as issues affecting future homeownership in Dubuque County. He explained when people are spending more money on their housing, they spend less money on other things and consequently, housing can become an economic development issue. He stated more people are looking to rent than ever before. He noted Dubuque County has a 1.1% vacancy rate and 25% of its housing stock is for rentals. He explained the aging population will also affect the demand for housing. He noted the plan recommends a diverse range of housing options, reduced transportation costs by mixing land uses together, and plan for additional senior housing options in the future.

The Commission complimented the Consortium on the content of the Housing Chapter. Commissioner Beytien noted a spelling mistake on page 11, paragraph 2.

Mr. Fox next addressed the Economic Development Chapter. He explained one of the primary concerns of the chapter is jobs and employment. He reviewed the history of employment in Dubuque County. He explained unemployment statistics are also important considerations. He stated unemployment in Dubuque County is 4.7% whereas the United States has an 8.2% unemployment rate, and Iowa has a 5.2% unemployment rate.

Commissioners asked about finding a way of measuring employability as critical to understanding unemployment. They felt knowing limited ranges of employability helps in determining how to best address needs to get people into the work force, and also helps in identifying labor and training needs.

The Commission discussed the importance of addressing the underemployed as well. Mr. Fox noted there is work ongoing with employment and economic development agencies on these issues. He stated the Smart Planning Consortium will look into it further.

The Commission noted the federal government may have information on the inflow of labor and employability. The Commission recommended it be a goal or objective in the plan. The Commission noted employability and employment issues need to be monitored regularly through data collection and analysis, and then brought together for the community. The Commission stated the plan should reflect that need.

Mr. Fox reviewed the annual unemployment rates since 1990. He reviewed the strengths of economic development in Dubuque County, noting strong manufacturing roots, business services represents 27% of the work force and tourism has become a large contributor to the local economy. Mr. Fox also reviewed the challenges. He referenced the work force needs assessment developed by Iowa Workforce Development, and stated there will be a future shortage of skilled workers. Commissioner Beytien noted the Dubuque Community School District is not experiencing that shortage as indicated for educational services. Commissioners noted the plan speaks to training, but omits co-enrollment programs such

as nursing and welding. Commissioners suggested that the Consortium link this issue with the one previously discussed to determine training and employability needs and where to focus efforts.

Mr. Fox reviewed other economic development issues, such as the gender wage gap, effect of natural disasters, and lack of quality rental housing for workers. He reviewed the importance transportation infrastructure plays in economic development, and noted the Iowa Department of Transportation has identified an approximate \$215 million shortfall in annual maintenance needs.

Mr. Fox reviewed the economic development recommendations of the Dubuque County Regional Smart Plan. Commissioner Beytien recommended identifying the underlying assumptions behind the estimated job growth rate. The Commission also questioned the rail passenger figures. Staff Member Carstens noted the rail passenger figures were provided by the Amtrak Feasibility Study. The Commission and staff agreed on the importance of linking references to facts, figures, statistics and other documents to their source documents within the plan so readers find additional information on underlying assumptions, data, methodology, etc.

Mr. Fox next addressed the Hazard Mitigation Chapter. He reviewed the role of the Dubuque County Emergency Management Agency and referenced the County Emergency Management Plan. Mr. Fox reviewed the cycle of emergency management, which is mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. He reviewed the Dubuque County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan that is being finalized. He noted communities in Dubuque County ranked issues such as probability, vulnerability, and severity of hazards which are reflected in the chapter. Mr. Fox reviewed mitigation strategies such as improved building codes, investment in utilities infrastructure, and increased technology, such as GPS. He discussed flood mitigation strategies, such as limiting development in the flood plain, low impact development, elevating structures, and reinforcing utilities and infrastructure. He reviewed severe storm preparedness and mitigation, such as storm warning systems and weather radios. Mr. Fox discussed man-made mitigation and preparedness issues. He noted the importance of inspections and maintenance as well as the development of contingency plans.

The Commission questioned whether Goal #1 could be stated more simply, and discussed what the goal is intending to say. The Commission discussed the goal of being proactive rather than reactive. The Commission and staff noted a change in legislation that may assist in a more proactive approach to hazard mitigation. Ms. O'Shea noted comments will be forwarded to the Smart Planning Consortium.

Mr. Fox next discussed the Public Infrastructure and Utilities Chapter. He discussed the importance that infrastructure and utilities play in economic development within the region. He reviewed the water and waste water collection diagrams. The Commission asked for clarification on the City of Dubuque's waste water treatment plant's capacity for 204,000 people – is this the old or new plant? What is the estimate based on? Mr. Fox reviewed a map of energy providers throughout Dubuque County. Mr. Fox discussed solid waste

recycling and collection services. He reviewed telecommunication systems throughout Iowa and Dubuque County, and explained the Return on Infrastructure Investment Study. Mr. Fox reviewed the infrastructure and utilities recommendations in the plan.

The Commission expressed their appreciation for the good work of the Consortium on the Smart Plan. There were no public comments. The hearing was closed.

Mr. Fox distributed a Dubuque Priority Ranking Survey, which was filled out and returned by the Commission.

The Commission discussed the questions within the preference survey, and noted many of the issues to be ranked in the survey were generated by the Commission at a previous meeting. Commissioner Beytien noted recent financial and facilities collaboration between the City of Dubuque and the Dubuque Community School District.

#### **LIAISON/SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

Enterprise Zone Commission – Minutes July 19, July 5, June 21 & May 8, 2012: Commissioner Van Iten referenced the minutes enclosed with the Commission agenda packets, and provided the update.

**ITEMS FROM PUBLIC:** None.

**ITEMS FROM COMMISSION:** None.

#### **ITEMS FROM STAFF:**

Land Use Designations: Staff Member Carstens explained there are discrepancies in the land use designations used in the Dubuque County Regional Smart Plan, and those used in the City of Dubuque Plan. She explained the City of Dubuque Land Use classifications go into greater depth with regard to intensity and density. She explained the City of Dubuque has land use designations for Heavy Industrial and Light Industrial, whereas the Dubuque County Regional Smart Plan just uses industrial. She also explained that City of Dubuque segregates residential uses differently than the County.

The Commission discussed the discrepancies in classifications and supported the simplified and more consolidated land use designations used in the Dubuque County Regional Smart Plan as it better represents the region and provides consistency. The Commission noted the City of Dubuque Land Use map can be different. Staff recommended explaining the land use types for clarity.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Laura Carstens, Planning Services Manager

Adopted—September 19, 2012