

## **IONIA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

August 20, 2008

5:30 p.m.

Meeting called to order at 5:50 p.m. by Chairman Paul Bowering who led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members present: Bowering, DePotty, Harwood, Pearson, Coe (at 5:50 p.m.) and Weisgerber (at 6:06 p.m.).

Members absent: Palmer, Yeomans, and Sandborn.

Others present: Dave Bee, Jeanne Vandersloot, Joe Daller, Mark Howe, and Barbara Trierweiler.

Prior to a quorum being in attendance, Chairman Bowering called on Joe Daller, Otisco Township Zoning Administrator, to present the proposed amendment to the Otisco Township Zoning Ordinance. If amended, a new and additional section will be added to the ordinance and will deal with outdoor free-standing wood burning furnaces. Mr. Daller reviewed the development history of the proposed ordinance amendment as well as highlighting its contents. Following the presentation, Mr. Daller answered various questions from commission members, which dealt mainly with the provision of requiring a smoke stack or chimney of not less than 20 feet from ground level.

Moved by Pearson, supported by Harwood, to return the document as reviewed with the noted comment concerning what may be an excessive stack height requirement, which, when considering the need to stabilize a stack of this height, could result in potential liability to the township. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote of the six members present.

Moved by Weisgerber, supported by DePotty, to approve the agenda, as well as the minutes of the May 12, 2008 meeting. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Bowering noted the meeting was called to review proposals which had been sought relative to preparing the county's master plan update. Proposals were received from the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) and Jeanne Vandersloot, zoning administrator for several Ionia County townships. Each was based on the county's request to include only updating tables, census figures and related language in the master plan. Copies of the proposals were previously provided to each member. As the proposal submitted by the WMRPC was based on preparing a 'supplementary information document,' Jeanne Vandersloot was given the opportunity to prepare an addendum to her original proposal. An additional memo, which outlined the considerations she gave to this methodology, was distributed.

Jeanne reviewed her original and supplemental proposal stating, in her opinion, as the current Ionia County Master Plan needs updating in most areas, it would be more

advantageous to update the existing document rather than creating a second or supplemental document. She also noted that while it appears the consulting firm created the original master plan document using Microsoft Word, the document available from the county's website is a PDF document. Conversion back to the Word format is possible; however, the converted document will not be 100% correct/readable without additional work. Jeanne reiterated her opinion stating it is important for the county to own the computer data files (text & maps) which relate to the master plan and maintain them in a format which can be easily updated in the future at the lowest possible cost.

Dave Bee, director of the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission, discussed his proposal which recommended as simple of a review as possible at this time and then in 2012-13 perform a more comprehensive review/update after the release of information obtained from the 2010 census. Dave indicated that any document produced by the WMRPC would be created in Word and would belong to the county.

Following the brief review of each proposal, Bowering referred to the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, which provides that a planning commission must make, approve and maintain a master plan; however, it is unclear as to when actual amendments to the plan need to occur. Therefore, even though in February 2007 there was a consensus of the commission to amend the master plan, perhaps it would be best to wait until data from the 2010 census is available then commence the procedure to amend the existing master plan or adopt a new master plan.

A lengthy discussion ensued on the issues relating to timing as well as ownership of the document.

Moved by DePotty, supported by Harwood, to delay the review and approval of an update to the Ionia County Master Plan until 2010 census figures are available. Discussion on the motion centered around what other information may be available at this time which could provide the basis for an update even though that information may not be census related, i.e., land divisions, etc. It may be wise to track and report this data while waiting for the 2010 census data to develop. DePotty and Harwood agreed to withdraw the motion.

Moved by DePotty, supported by Pearson, that the Ionia County Planning Commission review the current master plan and establish a schedule which, over the next four years, will provide for a complete review/update of the Ionia County Master Plan. Discussion ensued with County Administrator Mark Howe suggesting that perhaps as a first step the commission needs to determine what it would like to see in the final document and then also make a determination as to whether or not the plan can or should be kept as current as possible. Once these decisions are made, it will become clear on how to begin the process and in what yearly increments updates should occur. DePotty and Pearson agreed to withdraw the motion.

Moved by Pearson, supported by DePotty, to table the issue of the master plan update until the next meeting which is scheduled for Wednesday, September 17, 2008 at 5:30 p.m. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

As a text conversion of the existing master plan document is ultimately necessary, it was the consensus of the members present that by the next meeting they would like Jeanne Vandersloot to submit an estimate for converting the PDF document into a Microsoft Office Word document as well as making the necessary formatting alterations required as a result of the conversion.

Moved by Pearson, supported by DePotty, to adjourn the meeting (7:24 p.m.). Motion carried by voice vote.