

Minutes
McLEAN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, January 29, 2018, 1:00 P.M.
Government Center – Room 404

Members Present:

Carl Teichman, Chair; Mary Kramp, Vice Chair; Jim Fruin; Pamela Reece; Bill Wasson; Tim Gleason

Members Absent:

None

Others Present:

McLean County Regional Planning Commission - Vasudha Gadhiraju, Executive Director; Jordan Brown, Office Manager; Alyssa Cooper, Community Planner; Lauren Gibson, Community Planner; City of Bloomington – Melissa Hon, Assistant to the City Manager (currently Director of Economic Development); Town of Normal – Teri Legner, Director of IT; McLean County – Craig Nelson, Director of IT.

Call to Order:

Mr. Teichman called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m. noting the presence of a quorum.

Public Comment:

None

Minutes:

Following a motion by Ms. Kramp and a second by Mr. Teichman, the minutes of the August 29, 2018, Executive Committee meeting were approved.

Items of Business:

Review of Executive Session minutes per OMA

Ms. Gadhiraju recommended keeping any minutes that contain personnel information closed.

Mr. Teichman called for a motion to approve the review of the executive session minutes per OMA. Ms. Kramp moved for approval. Mr. Fruin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Discussion Items:*Creating a formal MCRPC committee/structure to discuss Open Data*

Ms. Gadhiraju explained that getting reliable local data consistently proved to be a challenge while developing BN Vitals Dashboard. Now that the dashboard is published, she said it is essential to start working on local data issues. Ms. Cooper then presented the concept of open data, including the definition, benefits, and case studies. Ms. Gadhiraju advised that there are several technology options available for publishing data, including the State of Illinois' open data portal. She reiterated the importance of establishing an inter-governmental committee at the regional level to address open data issues in our community. She proposed a committee structure, similar to that of the McLean County GIS Consortium, a policy group that will contain agency heads or their proxies and a technical group. She suggested re-evaluating this committee in a year for its effectiveness.

Mr. Fruin inquired whether other organizations are collecting data now. Ms. Gadhiraju responded in affirmative and clarified that everyone is collecting data. Ms. Legner then explained that, as technology changes, so will the data collecting process. Mr. Nelson added that the policy group must establish clear goals, and all involved will need to find a standard solution as a group instead of individual agencies. Ms. Kramp questioned how Bloomington/Normal compared to similar cities in data collection. Ms. Gadhiraju responded that she does not know that yet. Ms. Kramp noted that access to data could be helpful for grants since that information is hard to get and can be time-consuming. Ms. Gadhiraju explained that there are data sets that are open to the public and data sets that are strictly for local governments to use. She then provided an example of the multiple housing inspection programs in the Bloomington/Normal area that redundantly inspect the same units and how that can be frustrating for the landlords.

Mr. Teichman inquired if there was any hesitation with moving forward and establishing such a committee. Ms. Reece responded that it makes sense, but her only hesitation was that "a net cannot be cast over an ocean without knowing where to start." Mr. Wasson added that it would need to be reliable and well maintained. He also agreed with Ms. Gadhiraju that the state's data portal would be a great option to utilize and gain a regional understanding if it was well maintained and reliable. Ms. Gadhiraju added that utilizing the state's data portal would be a great way to test and refine our practices.

Ms. Gadhiraju clarified that before the creation of this committee MCRPC staff will reach out to administrators to make sure that appropriate people are on this committee and formalize the structure and goals. Mr. Wasson suggested making sure that the city managers and county administrator are not a majority of the quorum so there are no future issues with the Open Meetings Act (OMA).

Following that conversation, Ms. Gadhiraju briefly showed the new BN Vitals dashboard and highlighted the changes from the previous version.

Regional Housing Initiatives update

Ms. Gadhiraju provided an overview of the regional housing initiatives. She then invited Ms. Gibson to present accomplishments from the past year. Ms. Gibson explained the nature of this work and highlighted 1) establishing two advisory groups (staff committee and affordable and supportive housing committee), 2) dedicated housing pages on MCRPC website, 3) published white papers, 4) approved Joint Citizen Participation Plan, and 5) housing dashboard, statistics, and maps. Ms. Gibson then identified items that are in progress, including the Joint Consolidated Plan, more white papers delving deeper into affordable housing issues and a Location Model currently in the works. Ms. Gadhiraju added that there are gaps in certain areas of affordable housing programming and redundancies in others. MCRPC staff is currently working towards creating a list of all of the programs to ensure efficient usage of limited resources.

Mr. Teichman called for questions. Mr. Gleason inquired where the City of Bloomington ranks as median income goes. Ms. Gadhiraju explained that McLean County is high in comparison to other Central Illinois communities. Mr. Gleason then asked if there is any additional criteria beyond income for income based housing and redevelopment (i.e. professions). Ms. Gadhiraju explained that HUD does not qualify by professions but programs can be tailored towards certain groups as part of CDBG. Ms. Gibson added that other communities have different incentives (i.e. subsidized housing, zoning, and other tax incentives) and/or inclusionary housing policies that are usually on a case-by-case basis on a local level.

Ms. Gadhiraju clarified that the Regional Housing Staff Committee will read any of the white papers before publication. She also noted that the affordable housing location model and other key aspects will be presented to the City Managers and the County Administrator prior to their publication. Ms. Reece commented that she enjoyed the Affordable Housing white paper and she looks forward to reading the

next one. Mr. Fruin inquired how the Affordable Housing white paper is being distributed. Ms. Gadhiraaju responded that it is available on the MCRPC website and partner agencies are distributing it through their list serves. Ms. Gibson added that there was a social media post about it as well. Mr. Wasson encouraged distribution to local developers.

That which may arise

Ms. Reece inquired if the new BN Vitals is available on the MCRPC website now. Ms. Gadhiraaju responded in affirmative. Ms. Reece noted that the municipalities should start pushing it out.

Ms. Reece announced that Innovation District discussions in the Town of Normal are about to begin.

Adjournment:

With no further action to be taken or business to discuss, Ms. Kramp moved the meeting adjourn. Mr. Fruin seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jordan Brown
Office Manager