

MINUTES
McLEAN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING

WEDNESDAY, February 5, 2020, 4:00 P.M.
GOVERNMENT CENTER, ROOM 402
115 EAST WASHINGTON STREET, BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS

Members Present:

Mary Kramp, Chair; Jim Fruin, Vice-Chair; Diana Hauman, Executive Committee Representative; Bart Bittner; John Burrill; Tania Leffler; Carl Teichman; Mark Wylie

Members Absent:

Carl Olson

Others Present:

McLean County Regional Planning Commission staff – Jordan Brown, Office Manager; Lauren Gibson; Raymond Lai, Executive Director; Community Planner; Timothy Riley, Assistant Planner; Jennifer Sicks, Senior Transportation Planner; Town of Normal – Mercy Davison, Town Planner; Hile Group – Julie Hile, Jonathan Seiden; Other – Michael Pettorini.

Call To Order:

Ms. Kramp called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum.

Public Comment:

None

Consent Agenda:

Ms. Kramp called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Ms. Hauman moved for approval. Mr. Teichman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Regular Agenda:

None

Items of Information or Discussion:

Introduction of Executive Director

Mr. Teichman introduced Raymond Lai, who was hired as Executive Director. He gave an overview of Mr. Lai's professional credentials, which included: His prior position as Director of Economic and Community Development in the City of Decatur; his various planning jobs in places including University City, Edwardsville, St. Louis, and Hong Kong; his undergraduate degree in Regional and Urban Planning from University of Saskatchewan; his Master's Degree in City and Regional Planning from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE); his American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) certification; and his membership in the American Planning Association (APA).

Mr. Lai stated that he looked forward to working with the members of the commission. He thanked MCRPC staff for helping him to get caught up during his first month on the job. Mr. Lai indicated that he plans spend the next few months meeting more members of the local community and gaining awareness of different projects that are happening in the area.

Vision Zero project presentation

Mr. Seiden of Hile Group, the consultant for the Vision Zero Action plan, gave an overview of their past work in the local community. He and Ms. Hile gave a list of reasons why the project is particularly relevant now, which included: That it fulfills Goal 3.1c in the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), that it addresses pedestrian safety while transit ridership is trending upward, that it presents an opportunity to get ahead of a possible future with autonomous vehicles on the streets, that it is a topic of urgency as two recent pedestrian fatalities have demonstrated, and that there is an increasing need to address challenges related to cell phone use and increasing ISU enrollment.

Mr. Seiden explained that they are aware that the Vision Zero Action Plan is not the only local effort to promote transportation safety, that they wish to support existing efforts, and that their goal is to help form a consistent regional plan for transportation safety. He indicated that the Vision Zero Action Plan will focus on two main efforts: Incorporation and prioritization of safety in infrastructure improvement plans and processes, and public education to promote safety culture.

Mr. Seiden outlined the work plan for the project, covering the rest of the current year. Hile Group will first create a project steering committee to drive the public engagement process. Mr. Seiden asked the Commissioners to recommend people to sit on that committee, which should be active from late March through May. Hile Group will then work on development of the plan and the public education campaign through the end of the year. They will then provide a report to the Commissioners and to MCRPC staff at the end of the year. As part of this process, Hile Group will work with Firebrand Cooperative to develop a "Vision Zero McLean County" brand for use in public outreach and in the public education campaign.

Ms. Kramp asked for a general overview of the Vision Zero program. Mr. Seiden explained that it is a national program based on the ideas that zero traffic fatalities is an achievable goal, that crashes are largely preventable, and there are systemic and public education strategies to achieve this goal.

Ms. Kramp inquired about funding for the project. Ms. Brown explained that there is a specific grant for the project.

Mr. Teichman asked whether the project would involve potential changes to zoning, particularly how it interacts with bike lanes and complete streets. Ms. Hile indicated that they will focus on reconciling existing plans.

Mr. Bittner asked about the geographic scope of the project. Mr. Seiden explained that while it is a regional project, it would initially focus on the urban area, with the possibility of incorporating interested rural communities later on.

Mr. Burrill questioned whether there would be any conflict between the different local planning organizations, or if there is an established hierarchy among them. Ms. Kramp said that MCRPC staff have worked with municipal planners on comprehensive plans in the past. Mr. Lai explained that there is no hierarchy and that the different organization have separate areas of responsibility. He stated that MCRPC's role is to take a broader, regional perspective and that there is a history of intergovernmental collaboration such as the weekly Intergovernmental Staff meetings. For this project, specifically, he said the role of MCRPC is to act as liaison between Hile Group, the Town of Normal, the City of Bloomington, and the County, and to promote collaboration between these groups.

Ms. Leffler commented that the Unit 5 School District would have a strong interest in the project. Mr. Seiden added that transportation safety is a topic which tends to build bridges between competing interest groups in communities. He also reiterated his request for recommended names for the project steering committee from the Commissioners.

Complete Count Committee (CCC) Update

Ms. Brown provided an update on the CCC on behalf of Alyssa Cooper, Community Planner for MCRPC. Update topics included: A timeline of Census operations beginning March 12, a "hard-to-count" tract in Bloomington which will receive additional response options, progress of the marketing campaign, and upcoming outreach events.

Mr. Lai announced that a part-time staff member was recently hired to help with Census operations. He stated that he and Alyssa Cooper had recently attended the McLean County Mayor's Forum and encouraged the mayors to help spread the message. Mr. Lai asked the Commissioners to help spread information about the Census through their own networks as well.

Housing Update

Ms. Gibson provided an update on the McLean County Regional Housing Initiative. Update topics included: Yearly report included in the packet, progress of the two Consolidated Plans, and the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing (AI).

That which may arise

Ms. Brown announced that the March meeting will take place in the same room (Room 402), but the April meeting should be held in the usual Room 404.

Ms. Brown announced that she will be leaving MCRPC and moving to Oklahoma. Ms. Kramp thanked Ms. Brown for all of her work with MCRPC and wished her luck in the future.

Adjournment:

Ms. Kramp called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Bittner moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Hauman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 4:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Timothy Riley
Assistant Planner