

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING**

**URBANA PLAN COMMISSION**

**APPROVED**

**DATE:** January 21, 2010

**TIME:** 7:30 P.M.

**PLACE:** Urbana City Building – City Council Chambers  
400 South Vine Street  
Urbana, IL 61801

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jane Burris, Andrew Fell, Tyler Fitch, Ben Grosser, Lew Hopkins, Dannie Otto, Michael Pollock, Bernadine Stake

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Marilyn Upah-Bant

**STAFF PRESENT:** Robert Myers, Planning Manager; Lisa Karcher, Planner II; Teri Anzel, Planning Secretary

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Susan Chavarria, Robert William Marosh, Dave Monk, Susan Monte, Susan Taylor

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**1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

Chair Pollock called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m., the roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared present.

**2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

There were none.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Hopkins moved to approve the minutes of the December 10, 2009 regular meeting as presented. Ms. Stake seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

**4. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

There were none.

## **5. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were none.

## **6. OLD BUSINESS**

There was none.

## **7. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were none.

## **8. NEW BUSINESS**

### **Presentation by the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) staff on the draft Land Resource Management Plan**

Lisa Karcher, Planner II, provided a brief introduction. She explained the review process timeframe and how the proposed plan relates to the City of Urbana.

Susan Chavarria, Regional Planning Manager, and Susan Monte, Project Manager, presented the Land Resource Management Plan (LRMP) to the Plan Commission. They spoke about the following:

- 4 Stages for the LRMP Process
  - Stage 1 – Existing Conditions & Trends
  - Stage 2 – Policy Framework
  - Stage 3 – Future Land Use Map
  - Stage 4 – Implementation
- Unofficial Stage 5 - County Review & Approval
  - Public comment period from January 11<sup>th</sup> thru February 9<sup>th</sup>
  - Public Open House on January 26<sup>th</sup> at the Holiday Inn in Urbana
- Stage 1 – Existing Conditions & Trends
  - Baseline of information showing not only the conditions but population growth and infrastructure trends
  - Frame of Reference showing where we are at, where we are going to go and how things are going to change
- State 2 – Goals, Objectives & Policies
  - Local Land Resource Planning Act
  - Existing County Land Use Goals and Policies
  - Survey – Municipal and Township Reps
  - Interviews – Municipal Reps
  - Public Workshop
  - Public Participation
  - County/RPC Planning Staff
  - RPC Tech Committee

- Steering Committee
- Overlapping Planning Jurisdiction Map
- CUGA = Contiguous Urban Growth Areas Map
- Goal – defined as an ideal future condition to which the community aspires
- Objective – defined as a tangible, measurable outcome leading to the achievement of said goal
- Policy – defined as a statement of actions or requirements thought to be necessary to achieve those goals and objectives
- 10 Goal Themes
  - Goal 2 and Goal 5 are most relevant to the City of Urbana\
  - Goal 2 – The County will collaboratively formulate land use and development policy with other units of government in areas of overlapping land use planning jurisdiction
  - Goal 5 – The County will encourage urban development that is compact and contiguous to existing cities, villages, and existing unincorporated settlements
- Stage 3 – Future Land Use Map
  - Land Use Management Areas (LUMA) Map – maps the spatial extent of the policies
  - Future Land Use 2030 Map – visual guide to future planning. Combines LRMP elements to show a desired future
- Stage 4 – Implementation Strategy
  - Identify tasks the County can implement toward achievement of LRMP goals, objectives and policies
  - Prioritizes all tasks and assigns to a timeline
  - Determine responsible parties for each task
  - Identify potential
  - Action items organized by timeframe
- County Review and Approval
  - 30-day public comment period thru February 9<sup>th</sup>
  - January 26<sup>th</sup> Open House
  - March Environment and Land Use Committee (ELUC) Meeting
  - April County Board Meeting

Ms. Chavarria and Ms. Monte said that they would answer questions from the Plan Commission.

Mr. Grosser wondered why, in establishing the “contiguous urban growth areas” (CUGAs) they only considered sanitary sewer district plans for 5 to 10 years in the future given that the plan’s Future Land Use Map is for the year 2030. Ms. Chavarria explained that they worked with the Urbana-Champaign Sanitary District (UCSD). The planning service area is what it is, so County staff has no idea of UCSD’s resources in the future and how they might extend their service area. So they included everything that is presently in the existing service area. This is all they can work with at this point in time.

Ms. Stake inquired as to how County staff planned to determine whether a proposed land use would be economical. Ms. Chavarria answered that, in general, economic considerations were an underlying principal in Steering Committee discussions, but it was agreed upon by ELUC to not have economic development included as a set of goals. It was required to be considered as

part of the planning law. For example, the Steering Committee determined that farming is the “highest and best use” for areas of Champaign County classified as “best prime farmland.” This includes most of unincorporated Champaign County. County staff recommends preserving best prime farmland and prime farmland for the agricultural side of economic development and basically leave other economic uses up to the municipalities in terms of what they have planned and what their issues are.

Ms. Stake questioned why the proposed plan doesn’t address increasing use of trains. Ms. Chavarria responded that the County intends, and has thus created a policy and implementation task, to create a county-wide transportation plan. Consequently, County staff decided not to focus on transportation in the proposed LRMP. They do have policies that talk about promoting other modes of transportation besides automobiles. County staff wants to promote as many opportunities for pedestrians, bicycles, etc. in terms of a general policy, but they want to leave it up to a county-wide transportation plan and also existing transportation plans such as the CUUATS 2035, which the City of Urbana recently agreed upon, to talk about widening roads in urban areas and to figure out the nuances of what exactly they want to promote in the future. Ms. Monte pointed out that the proposed LRMP does have one policy that addresses railroads (*Policy 7.2.2*).

Mr. Hopkins referred to the following policies:

- *Policy 5.1.5 – “The County will encourage urban development to explicitly recognize and provide for the right of agricultural activities to continue on adjacent land”*
- *Policy 5.2.3 – “The County will: a) require that proposed new urban development results in no more than minimal disturbance to areas with significant natural environmental quality; and b) encourage, when possible, other jurisdictions to require that proposed new urban development results in no more than minimal disturbance to areas with significant natural environmental quality”*
- *Policy 5.1.6 – “To reduce the occurrence of agricultural land use and non-agricultural land use nuisance conflicts, the County will encourage and, when deemed necessary, will require discretionary development to create a sufficient buffer between existing agricultural operations and the proposed urban development”*

He wondered if these policies required specific ordinance changes on the part of Champaign County. Ms. Chavarria mentioned that there are four different action items for Policy 5.1.5. They do involve reviewing, at the very minimum, the Zoning Ordinance to make sure that they are compliant.

Mr. Hopkins referred to a statement on Page 11 of the staff memo regarding annexation notification. He wondered what the difference is between how the City notifies and how the County notifies. Ms. Chavarria did not know the exact differences but she assumed that the County might take more geography into who they notify about an annexation.

Ms. Stake expressed concern about saving water in the Mahomet Aquifer. Ms. Monte addressed this issue by referring the Plan Commission to look at Goal 8 in the proposed LRMP. Champaign County will strive to ensure safe and adequate supplies of groundwater. Several of

the policies in the proposed LRMP pertain to ensuring that withdrawals from the Mahomet Aquifer and other aquifers do not exceed their capacity and to use new information as it becomes available to protect those aquifers.

Chair Pollock inquired as to how they know what the capacity of the aquifer is. Ms. Monte replied that this is why she mentioned that as new information becomes available, these policies are indicating that this information should be used. Chair Pollock recalled that studies were being discussed to be done to determine the actual capacity and the long-term viability of the Mahomet Aquifer. Does County staff know if this is ongoing? Ms. Monte answered that Champaign County encourages the continuing work of the consortium. The consortium is looking for financial resources at this time. Chair Pollock wondered if active economic support is part of the implementation plan of the proposed LRMP. Ms. Chavarria indicated that providing funding to further aquifer studies is not an explicit part of the plan's implementation.

Ms. Stake inquired as to who would be cleaning up the rivers. Ms. Monte explained that Champaign County already has certain policies and regulations in place. They plan to continue what they are already doing, plus Goal 8 of the proposed LRMP encourages stewardship and protection of the environment at the land owner level without imposing a lot of regulations. For discretionary developments (requiring special use permits, rezoning, etc.) in unincorporated Champaign County, the County would require that those developments minimize disturbance to important natural areas.

Ms. Stake asked if there is any way to start cleaning up the rivers. Ms. Chavarria responded that unless the County Board decides to make it a priority and devote time, resources, and funds, it will only be a policy looking to stay on top of what the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is saying and to monitor the conditions in the rivers. If it comes to a point where they think it is enough of a priority, then maybe they will take action in terms of what Ms. Stake is talking about.

Mr. Otto pointed out that the State of Illinois does not have extensive water laws that other states do. If there were a shift in rainfall patterns, the water could be sucked out of the aquifer. Would the County encourage the State of Illinois to allow stricter review of uses and dumping into the water? Ms. Monte recited the following policies from the proposed LRMP:

- *Policy 8.1.2 – “The County will encourage regional cooperation in protecting the quality and availability of groundwater from the Mahomet Aquifer”*
- *Policy 8.1.3 – “As feasible, the County will seek to ensure that withdrawals from the Mahomet Aquifer and other aquifers do not exceed the long-term sustainable yield of the aquifer including withdrawals under potential drought conditions, particularly for shallow aquifers”*

Mr. Otto wondered if there is an action plan related to these policies. Ms. Monte explained that the action plan is that *“as they become available, review Mahomet Aquifer consortium recommendations regarding measures to ensure that withdrawals from the Mahomet Aquifer and other aquifers do not exceed the long-term sustainable yield.”* Mr. Otto felt this to be very passive policy. He believes that they need to be more proactive and need to force state

legislature to pass water conservation laws. Ms. Stake wondered what the process is for getting more rules and regulations to save water resources. Who do we go to in order to get help? Ms. Monte replied that the State of Illinois might be the place to start because they limit what the county can do. Mr. Otto commented that there should be an action plan in the proposed LRMP so that it becomes a priority to get the state to address this issue.

Mr. Grosser asked if County staff is amendable to adding the notation that City staff wants about the possible I-74 interchange on the Future Land Use map. Ms. Karcher explained that City staff has reviewed the proposed LRMP closer and looked at the transportation goal. City staff recognizes that the goal is very broad in general. It does not specifically address existing transportation networks or proposed improvements. The draft plan would not have a comparable map to the City's Comprehensive Plan Mobility map, so City staff will no longer be recommending that LRMP maps identify possible I-74 interchange locations. County staff will be creating a Multi-Jurisdictional Transportation Plan, and it would seem more appropriate to have this notation included in it than to have it in the land use plan.

Mr. Grosser wondered if there is anything in the Land Use map that is in conflict with the possible interchange. Ms. Karcher said that part of the issue is that the County staff is basing it on a vision for the future. Without knowing where the interchange will be, County staff has not realized what kind of development they want there. Without knowing a specific location for the interchange, the County and the City would not be able to indicate associated future land uses on the map. The County's proposed LRMP is similar to the City's Comprehensive Plan in that as certain situations change the plan would change. So if an interchange would be constructed there and the County feels that it is an appropriate place for whatever kind of development (commercial or industrial), then they may choose to place it as an appropriate land use.

Mr. Grosser inquired as to whether there is anything in the proposed map that would prevent the a new I-74 interchange east of Urbana. Ms. Monte stated that there is a distinction made between urban rural types of uses, and it is driven by both the Comprehensive Land Use Plans adopted by the 12 municipalities and the availability of public sanitary sewer. If an interchange occurs and there is no public sanitary sewer to it, then the County would not be in a position, based upon the proposed LRMP, to promote any kind of commercial development in the area.

Ms. Stake asked what part of energy would be suggested for wind power. Ms. Chavarria replied that the County does promote the ability for wind towers to become a viable source of energy for Champaign County. There is a zoning ordinance now for wind energy created by wind farms. The proposed LRMP does not go into a whole lot of detail because the County Zoning Ordinance already addresses wind farms. Ms. Monte added that there is an objective in the proposed LRMP that encourages the development of renewable energy sources that are cited appropriately and compatible with existing land uses. In the case of wind turbine farms, as a land use they quite compatible existing agricultural land uses.

Ms. Stake wondered about the natural resources near High Cross Road and the possibility of an interchange. Ms. Chavarria mentioned that County staff refers to the City's Comprehensive Plan for this area. Because it is designated as rural residential area, the County has left this area

alone. Ms. Monte added that there is one part of the natural area beyond High Cross Road that is not serviced by public sanitary sewer, so it is designated as a separate type of area.

Ms. Stake inquired as to whether there was any language regarding wetlands. Ms. Chavarria responded that not many wetland areas are left. County staff is looking to protect those which remain. Ms. Stake commented that there was good information about parks and natural areas in the proposed LRMP.

Ms. Stake stated that we need to do something to prevent too much chemicals being used on farmland. Ms. Chavarria replied that there are some farmers that would disagree with the perspective that chemical use is bad. With proper balance they can be beneficial to the earth as well. We do have to leave some things up to the farmers. While we do promote healthy soil as part of the proposed LRMP, County staff is not trying to tell the farmers exactly how to run their fields either. Ms. Monte explained that under state law farming operations are exempt from zoning regulations. County staff can only encourage stewardship of our natural resources.

Mr. Grosser asked what the eastern boundary of the CUGA is for Urbana. Is it Cottonwood Road? Ms. Chavarria said yes.

Robert Myers, Planning Manager for the City of Urbana, asked for clarification of what the circled, yellow numbers mean on the Future Land Use Map 2030. Ms. Chavarria explained that the numbers represent the projection for rural residential housing units for 2030. Mr. Myers stated that he thought it was significant that the Future Land Use was based not just on future desired outcome but also market demand through economic and land use projections. Even though 95% of unincorporated areas in 2030 are shown as one use (agricultural), the projections seem to bear this out.

With no other questions for the presenters, Chair Pollock opened this agenda item to public input.

Dave Monk, 115 North Market Street in Champaign, handed out copies of “Report on the recent activities of Educational Resources in Environmental Science (ERES) and Heartland Pathways (HP).” He expressed his concerns for the following: 1) Educational Aspect of the proposed LRMP – sustainability, do not want too much industrial areas, and need more learning institutes; 2) Railroads – cannot replicate it with roadways, safety is greater on rails, and express line is likely to come to Champaign; and 3) Resources – we need to look at water, road and railways beyond ourselves because young people are going to have fewer resources than their parents.

With no further audience participation, Chair Pollock closed the public input portion. He then asked for any further Plan Commission discussion or recommendations. There were no comments.

Ms. Karcher mentioned that there will be a presentation to the City Council and summarized Plan Commissioners’ main points for her report to the Council.

**9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

There was none.

**10. STAFF REPORT**

Mr. Myers reported on the following:

- ✚ 2209 East Perkins Road Annexation: The annexation agreement was approved by the City Council, and a petition to annex the property is now being processed.

**11. STUDY SESSION**

There was none.

**12. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Robert Myers, AICP  
Secretary, Urbana Plan Commission