

MINUTES

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Thursday, December 21, 2006

2:00 p.m.

SEWRPC Office Building
Commissioners' Conference Room
W239 N1812 Rockwood Drive
Waukesha, Wisconsin

Present:

Excused:

Committee Members:

Thomas H. Buestrin, Chairman
William R. Drew, Vice-Chairman
Adelene Greene
Allen L. Morrison
Daniel S. Schmidt
Paul G. Vrakas
Gustav W. Wirth, Jr.

Richard A. Hansen
Linda J. Seemeyer
David L. Stroik

Absent:

Staff:

Philip C. Evenson
Loretta Watson

Executive Director
Executive Secretary

ROLL CALL

Chairman Buestrin called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum declared present. Mr. Evenson noted for the record that Commissioners Hansen, Seemeyer, and Stroik had asked to be excused.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 30, 2006, MEETING

On a motion by Mr. Drew, seconded by Mr. Schmidt, and carried unanimously, the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on November 30, 2006, were approved as published.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT, MR. VRAKAS REPORTING

(Meeting of December 21, 2006)

Mr. Vrakas reported that the Administrative Committee, at its meeting held just before the Executive Committee meeting, had taken the following actions:

1. Reviewed and approved the Commission disbursements for two financial reporting periods: Year 2006 Nos. 24 and 25, extending over the period November 13, 2006, to December 10, 2006.

2. Received the Statement of Projected Revenues and Expenditures for the financial period ending December 10, 2006. With about 95 percent of the year completed, the projections indicate a year end surplus of about \$24,000. This does not include interest income and proceeds from the sale of materials, which are expected to total as much as \$180,000.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Wirth, seconded by Ms. Greene, and carried unanimously, the Administrative Committee report was approved.

REPORT ON CONTRACTS

Chairman Buestrin asked Mr. Evenson to review the proposed contracts and agreements, noting that the Committee members had received a table listing one contract prior to the meeting. Mr. Evenson then briefly reviewed the one contract reported on the table. He noted that this contract provides for the preparation of an Aquatic Plant Management Plan for Wandawaga Lake in the Town of Sugar Creek, Walworth County.

There being no discussion, on a motion by Mr. Schmidt, seconded by Mr. Vrakas, and carried unanimously, the report relative to the contract was accepted and placed on file (copy of report attached to Official Minutes).

GEO 29 REVIEW

Chairman Buestrin asked Mr. Evenson to report on the Federal grants and loans and direct Federal development projects submitted to the Commission for intergovernmental review pursuant to the requirements set forth in Gubernatorial Executive Order No. 29.

Mr. Evenson noted that a summary of the six project applications was provided to the Committee members with the agenda for the meeting. There were no conflicts, he said, with the project and the adopted regional plans.

Following a brief discussion, on a motion by Ms. Greene, seconded by Mr. Morrison, and carried unanimously, the following six applications were recommended to the grantor agencies for approval as being in conformance, or not in conflict, with adopted regional plans: one community action program (CAP-2173); and five conservation programs (CONSER-1005 through CONSER-1009)) (copy of table attached to Official Minutes).

CONSIDERATION OF CREATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE

Mr. Evenson recalled that at the July 27, 2006, meeting of the Executive Committee, he had indicated that the Commission staff and officials from the Federal Highway Administration had been engaged in ongoing discussions with a number of individuals who had commented at a public hearing held in 2004 relative to Federal oversight of the regional transportation planning process. Those comments focused in particular on the need to make greater efforts to involve low-income and minority groups and disabled individuals in the planning process. The outcome of those discussions, Mr. Evenson continued, is a proposal that would establish – on a two-year trial basis – an Environmental Justice Task Force. He then called the Committee's attention to a staff document that describes the purpose, structure, and function of the proposed Environmental Justice Task Force (copy of document attached to Official Minutes). He then reviewed with the members of the Committee the contents of that document focusing, in particular, on the basic purpose of "environmental justice" as defined by the Federal government; on the 15-member proposed Task Force and in particular the geographic distribution of representatives from throughout the Region; and on the specific functions of the Task Force in relation to the Commission's ongoing regional planning work program.

A discussion then ensued. In response to a question by Mr. Morrison, Mr. Evenson indicated that many of the Commission's advisory committees are structured to provide individuals who have some particular technical expertise or perspective relative to the particular problem or problems being addressed in the planning effort, with other committees comprised largely of elected officials. Consequently, it's hit or miss as to whether or not individuals that are appointed to those committees are members of the categories of population -- low income, minority, and disabled -- that are specifically identified in the Federal policies relative to environmental justice. The proposed structure of the Task Force would help ensure that members of these population categories are engaged in the Commission's planning processes and are offered a chance to provide direct input to the Commission as its planning efforts move forward. Mr. Morrison indicated that it would appear that the proposed Task Force would, then, be offered an opportunity to comment on substantive positions being taken by Commission technical advisory committees. Mr. Evenson concurred, noting that this was one way in which the outreach effort to these population classes would function. Ms. Greene noted that what is important here is the opportunity being given to people who may not otherwise have direct access to the Commission processes to provide input. If the members of the Task Force choose not to actively participate, she said, at least the Commission has made an honest and serious attempt to involve them. Mr. Buestrin indicated that from his perspective an average individual who is asked to serve on such a Task Force would want the commitment to have a limited life, perhaps no more than two years. In response, Mr. Evenson noted that others have made this observation and is one reason why the proposal is structured for an initial two-year trial period. In response to a question by Mr. Vrakas, Mr. Evenson noted that the Commission's Executive Committee will make the appointments of all fifteen members, including designating a chairman, and that if the Committee approves the proposal, the work of soliciting candidates for the Task Force would begin immediately.

At the conclusion of the discussion, on a motion by Mr. Vrakas, seconded by Mr. Drew, and carried unanimously, the establishment of an Environmental Justice Task Force as proposed in the document, was unanimously approved and the Commission staff directed to undertake the process to identify candidates for service on the Task Force, and to include in any final recommendations appropriate consideration for payment of travel expenses for those individuals who accept appointments to the Task Force.

WORK PROGRESS REPORTS

Mr. Evenson reported that he had no significant comments to make relative to progress on the overall work program other than it would appear that the long anticipated regional water supply plan would likely not be ready for Commission consideration until later in 2007. While it had been hoped that the new plan would be ready for Commission consideration by mid-year, the scope and complexity of the program make it likely that the project will not be finished until the end of the year.

Mr. Evenson also reported that the Milwaukee County study of the relationship between the County and the Commission likely will get underway shortly, the County Board of Milwaukee having approved the study at its December meeting. He noted that the final resolution concerning the study allows Commissioner and County Board Chairman Lee Holloway to appoint two individuals to the Committee. Mr. Evenson indicated that the Commission staff would respond to any requests for information relative to this study and that he would keep the Committee informed as the study moves forward.

Mr. Evenson also reported that the Commission staff continues to work with the three-county Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Transit Authority as they pursue their legislative charge to identify funding sources for both the proposed commuter rail service in Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha Counties and the county and local bus transit systems. At a meeting held earlier in the month, the seven-

member Authority Board put forth a tentative proposal for a three-county regional sales tax of up to 0.05 percent, or one nickel per \$100.00 of purchases, to support the commuter rail service, as well as a proposal that would allow each of the three counties to ask the Regional Transit Authority to impose a county sales tax of up to 0.45 percent, or 45 cents per \$100.00 of purchases to enable local transit costs to be removed from the property tax in Milwaukee County and in the Cities of Kenosha and Racine. Mr. Wirth commented that it makes no sense to use property taxes to support public transit services, with property taxes to be exclusively used for services that directly relate to property such as roads, police, fire, and emergency services. Mr. Vrakas observed that not all of the functions performed by fire departments can be directly traced to properties.

CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Evenson indicated that he had no correspondence or announcements to report. Mr. Buestrin announced that because the Commission was awaiting reappointment or appointment action relative to six Commissioner positions, he had decided to continue with the present Commission Committee assignments until at least the majority of those reappointment decisions had been made. A formal announcement to this effect and a schedule of Commission and Committee meetings will be sent to each Commissioner in the very near future.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m., on a motion by Mr. Wirth, seconded by Ms. Greene, and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Philip C. Evenson
Deputy Secretary

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Attachments