

MINUTES
SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
PLANNING AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, November 10, 2020

1:30 p.m.

Meeting Occurred Virtually via Video and Telephone Conference

Present:

Excused:

Commissioners:

Daniel S. Schmidt, Chairman
Jose Delgado, Vice-Chairman
Steve Bostrom
Donna Brown-Martin
Charles L. Colman
Michael A. Crowley
Robert W. Pitts
Adam Tindall-Schlicht
Jeffrey D. Schleif
Peggy L. Shumway
David L. Stroik

Mary Knipper
James A. Ladwig
Theodore Lipscomb, Sr.
Aloysius Nelson

Staff:

Kevin J. Muhs	Executive Director
Benjamin R. McKay	Deputy Director
Elizabeth A. Larsen	Director of Administration

ROLL CALL

Chairman Schmidt called the Planning and Research Committee meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared present. Chairman Schmidt indicated for the record that Commissioners Knipper, Ladwig, Lipscomb, and Nelson had asked to be excused.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 4, 2020, MEETING

Chairman Schmidt asked if there were any changes or additions to the August 4, 2020, meeting minutes. Mr. Schleif indicated that a correction to the motion to adjourn needed to be made.

On a motion by Mr. Colman, seconded by Mr. Stroik, and carried unanimously, the minutes of the August 4, 2020, Planning and Research Committee Meeting were approved as amended.

Planning and Research Committee Meeting
November 10, 2020

DISCUSSION OF REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Chairman Schmidt asked Mr. McKay to review with the Committee the Regional Food System Plan presentation.

Mr. McKay began his discussion by reviewing the Commission's guidelines for the formation of an Advisory Committee. He stated that the Commission's Executive Committee must approve the formation of an Advisory Committee, and as part of that approval, may direct that the Planning and Research Committee consider and advise the Executive Committee on the makeup of the proposed Advisory Committee. The make-up of the Regional Food System Plan Advisory Committee then goes back to the Executive Committee for final approval.

Mr. McKay then reviewed the presentation. During the presentation the following comments and questions were made:

1. Mr. Colman commented on the Plan's central question, "How do we better connect food producers, distributors, and consumers in the Region to ensure greater access to healthy and fresh food for all?" He then asked if this question could change based on the make-up and input of the Advisory Committee. Mr. McKay responded that this and other elements of the plan could change during the planning process based on input from the Advisory Committee.
2. Mr. Delgado inquired if this plan will identify problems with access to healthy fresh food, whether access to healthy fresh food was a substantial problem in the Region, and what other issues this plan will address. Mr. Delgado further commented that this plan does not seem to be focused on the food supply system. Mr. McKay responded that the plan will present data regarding access to healthy and fresh food. He noted that areas referred to as "food deserts," where residents lack access to grocery stores that sell healthy fresh food, have been identified by the USDA. Mr. McKay then explained that the plan is envisioned to have several facets, including food access, economic and health disparities, viability of local farms within the Region, and potential impacts of agriculture on sensitive natural resources. He explained that Commission staff will need to work to ensure the plan stays focused, and ideally the plan should create better connections between the assets of the rural areas of the Region and urban population centers.
3. Mr. Schleif commented that Extension Washington County has an Agriculture Educator and a Nutrition Coordinator and noted that these positions are common among UW-Extension offices. Mr. Schleif added that these educators would be appropriate for the Advisory Committee.
4. Mr. Colman commented that the University of Wisconsin-Madison has a large food management group and their technical level of expertise would be helpful.
5. In response to an inquiry by Mr. Delgado, Mr. McKay stated that the Commission has contracted with Lead for America for a Fellow who is working with the Commission staff to prepare the plan.
6. In response to an additional inquiry by Mr. Delgado, Mr. Muhs stated that this is expected to be a two-year effort that will include the cost of the Fellow for two years and ongoing staffing costs that are in the capacity of the current Commission staff. Mr. Muhs then stated he would provide Mr. Delgado with an estimate of Commission staff hours and cost related to the plan. Mr. Delgado then commented that purpose of the plan needs to be better articulated moving forward.
7. Ms. Brown-Martin commented that she sat in on the Commission's Environmental Justice Task Force October 7, 2020, meeting where the proposed Advisory Committee was discussed and

Planning and Research Committee Meeting
November 10, 2020

positive input was received on the concept of this plan, and noted that Milwaukee County is interested in this plan as there is a need in the County to identify solutions for County residents that do not have access to groceries or fresh food.

8. Mr. Bostrom commented that Kenosha County can support \$200 million in grocery sales annually but sells closer to \$300 million in groceries due to Illinois residents purchasing food in the County. A large variety of grocery options exist in the County, however, east of 39th Avenue there is not one full-service grocery store, and this area is where 40 percent of the County's population resides. Because of this, he stated he is interested in forming the Committee and the plan results.
9. Mr. Colman stated that in Walworth County, where there are many lower income people, the problem is more widespread than people expect for the County given the perception generated by the high-wealth areas of the County.

Mr. Stroik reminded the Committee that they are to act on the make-up of the Advisory Committee meeting at today's meeting. Mr. McKay then described the Advisory Committee make-up by discussing each member grouping. During this discussion the following comments and questions were made:

1. In response to an inquiry by Mr. Schleif, Mr. McKay stated that Commission staff will ask each County Executive or Administrator for their recommendations for representatives.
2. Mr. Bostrom commented that the City of Kenosha has a City Development department and Kenosha County has a UW-Extension office.
3. Mr. Bostrom stated that under the Community Organizations grouping, he would like to ensure there is representation from across the Region. Mr. Colman stated that he would like to see rural area representation on this Committee. Mr. Muhs noted that a number of potential members that would represent more rural areas of the Region are listed under the Farmers/Farm Organizations, Distribution, and Conservancy Organization/Agency groupings.
4. Mr. Schleif stated that the Cedar Creek Farmers group in Washington and Ozaukee Counties would be a good fit under the Farmers/Farm Organizations grouping.
5. Mr. Stroik stated that it is good that food waste has been identified as an issue that should have representation on the Committee.
6. Mr. Colman acknowledged concerns regarding the potential size of the Committee but noted that participation over the planning process may fluctuate depending on the issues addressed at a particular meeting.
7. Mr. Delgado reiterated previous comments that the UW-Extension is a good resource and has access to the resources of the full UW system.

There being no further questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Tindall-Schlicht, the roster for the Regional Food System Plan as discussed, was approved to move forward to the Executive Committee for final approval.

NEXT MEETING

Mr. Muhs stated the 2021 meeting dates will be set in December.

Planning and Research Committee Meeting
November 10, 2020

CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Muhs stated there was no correspondence but announced that the Racine County Executive, Jonathan Delagrave, was appointed to the Commission for a six-year term starting in September 2020, and Walworth County Supervisor Brian E. Holt was appointed to fill the remainder of former Commissioner Nancy Russell's term through 2024.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on a motion by Mr. Pitts, seconded by Mr. Crowley, and carried unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Muhs
Deputy Secretary

KJM/BRM/EAL
#255643