

MINUTES

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Thursday, July 28, 2005

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
Robert A. Brooks (Alternate)
Daniel S. Schmidt
Linda J. Seemeyer
Paul G. Vrakas
Gustav W. Wirth, Jr.

Adelene Greene
Richard A. Hansen
Allen L. Morrison

Absent:

Staff:

Philip C. Evenson
Loretta Watson

Executive Director
Executive Secretary

ROLL CALL

Chairman Buestrin called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum declared present. Mr. Evenson noted for the record that Commissioners Greene, Hansen, and Morrison had asked to be excused. Mr. Buestrin noted that he had asked Mr. Brooks to attend the meeting as an alternate member of the Committee.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 30, 2005, MEETING

On a motion by Mr. Schmidt, seconded by Mr. Vrakas, and carried unanimously, the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on June 30, 2005, were approved as published.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT, MR. VRAKAS REPORTING

(Meeting of July 28, 2005)

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 2005 Nos. 13 and 14, extending over the period June 13, 2005, to July 10, 2005.
2. Reviewed the Statement of Projected Revenues and Expenditures for the financial reporting period ending July 10, 2005. With nearly 55 percent of the year completed, the projections indicated a year end surplus of about \$145,000.
3. Received a staff report on the Commission's historical decision-making regarding obtaining directors and officers liability insurance. The Committee directed the staff to work with the Commission's legal counsel and insurance agent in identifying potential areas of exposure and the costs that would be attendant to acquiring additional insurance directed at such areas of exposure, assuming that the Commission would self-insure for a substantial amount.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Wirth, seconded by Mr. Brooks, 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 the contracts and agreements prior to the meeting. Mr. Evenson then briefly reviewed the one contract reported on the table, noting that it represented the annual contract between the Commission and the Wisconsin Department of Administration for the conduct of technical and coordinative activities relative to the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Vrakas, seconded by Mr. Schmidt, 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 summaries of the 15 project applications were provided to the Committee members with the agenda for the meeting. There were no conflicts, he said, between any of the projects and the adopted regional plans. He called attention in particular to project CONSER-950, a proposed Federal grant that would aid the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the City of Milwaukee in conducting environmental assessments and clean up planning for the 30th Street Industrial Corridor. This is a necessary first step toward the potential redevelopment of that corridor.

Following a brief discussion, on a motion by Mr. Drew, seconded by Ms. Seemeyer, and carried unanimously, the following 15 applications were recommended to the grantor agencies for approval as being in conformance, or not in conflict, with adopted regional plans: two community action programs (CAP-2142 and CAP-2143); and 13 conservation programs (CONSER-947 through CONSER-959) (copy of table attached to Official Minutes).

STAFF REPORTS AND ATTENDANT ACTIONS

K-R-M Commuter Rail Study

Mr. Evenson reported that the intergovernmental Steering Committee for the K-R-M commuter rail study had selected the team of Earth Tech, Inc./HNTB as the consultant to accomplish advanced planning and environmental work for the study. Contract negotiations with that consultant team are now underway. The work will be accomplished over an approximately 12-18 month period. Mr. Evenson also reported that he and Commissioner Hansen had attended a meeting sponsored by the Greater Milwaukee Committee (GMC) relative to this subject, focusing in particular on the actions that need to be taken to permit the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) to admit the K-R-M commuter rail proposal into the preliminary engineering phase of the project development process. At the GMC-sponsored meeting, Mr. Peter A. Peyser, a Washington lobbyist retained by S.C. Johnson, essentially confirmed for the assembled group what the Commission staff has been saying all along relative to the difficulties that will be encountered in securing FTA approval of the K-R-M service. Mr. Peyser noted that the Federal government is aggressively managing major capital intensive projects nationally and has established criteria which tend to favor the highest density development areas in the nation with the most numbers of transit dependent people. Commuter rail projects, he said, tend not to be favored. Mr. Peyser also confirmed that it will be essential for the Chicago-based Metra organization to support the project and that the project be made as most cost effective as possible, given the established Federal criteria for that measurement. Having an agreed upon source of local funding to support the service will also be essential. Mr. Evenson noted that the Commission and the Steering Committee are charged with refining the K-R-M plan to make it as cost effective as possible, while a group being led by the GMC has taken on the responsibility for Metra relations and the identification of a local funding source and operating agency. The GMC group was successful, he noted, in the State Budget Bill signed this week in getting a three-county Regional Transit Authority (RTA) established. While much work and additional Legislative action lies ahead, the three-county Regional Transit Authority could be the operating agency for the envisioned commuter rail service.

A brief discussion ensued. In response to an inquiry by Mr. Wirth, Mr. Evenson said that light rail transit service would be impractical in the K-R-M corridor given the travel distances and densities involved and further given the existing traditional railroad infrastructure that is in place. In response to an inquiry by Mr. Vrakas, Mr. Evenson indicated that while the RTA that has recently been established pertains only to three counties, it certainly would be possible to think in terms of expansion of the RTA to other counties in future years if there were local support to do so.

Smart Growth

Mr. Evenson reported that Governor Jim Doyle had completed his veto activity relative to the new State Budget Bill and that he had effectively ensured the survival of the so-called "Smart Growth" planning requirements and the State funding attendant to meeting such requirements. Absent any override of those veto actions in the weeks ahead, Mr. Evenson continued, efforts will be underway shortly to work with the three remaining county-based planning partnerships in Southeastern Wisconsin – Kenosha, Racine, and Walworth Counties – to file for State grant funds that will be awarded in the spring of 2006. Work is also continuing on plan development for the Ozaukee and Washington County partnerships, with assistance being given also to Waukesha County as the County staff leads its partnerships. The Commission will likely have to supplement its staff over the next several years to carry out all of the envisioned work efforts.

Orthophotography Project

Mr. Evenson reported that final arrangements attendant to the Commission's 2005 orthophotography project had recently been completed. He recalled that major funding for the project had expected to come from the U.S. Department of Transportation through the use of project development funds made available to the Milwaukee Urbanized Area. Owing to an expenditure cap included in the 2003-2005 State Budget Bill, those funds could not be made available. To remedy this situation, he continued, the Commission applied for – and recently received – a Federal grant from the U.S. Geological Survey in the amount of \$200,000. That agency acts on behalf of the Federal Homeland Security Department in obtaining appropriate photography for all metropolitan areas in the nation. In addition, the Southeastern District Office of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation was able to make available \$200,000 in State funds as the State's contribution to the project. With this additional \$400,000 now secured, Mr. Evenson concluded, the project funding goal has been met and production will begin toward a year-end completion deadline.

Parking Lot Expansion

Mr. Evenson recalled that the Commission has for some time now been exploring how best to provide additional off-street parking at the Rockwood Drive building location. While the Commission presently has sufficient parking for its staff and tenant use, and while some visitor parking is normally available, it is difficult to accommodate all visitor parking when relatively large visitor groups and committee meeting events are scheduled. Moreover, the overflow parking arrangements now in place with the neighboring InvestorsBank must be considered short term in nature and subject to change at any time. Mr. Evenson also recalled that in connection with a potential parking lot expansion project, the Commission had applied for and received approval of State grant funds that could be used to help construct a stormwater treatment facility along the north side of an expanded parking lot. In addition, discussions had begun with Ridgeview LLC, the Commission's neighbor to the north, relative to acquiring additional lands so as to be able to meet City of Pewaukee "green space" development requirements.

Mr. Evenson then reported that the Commission staff reluctantly had come to the conclusion that the construction of the envisioned bioretention stormwater treatment facility cannot be functionally accommodated. As a practical matter, he said, snow plowing operations would be significantly hampered with such a facility in place at the envisioned location, with a result that significant additional cost and disruption would likely ensue on an on-going basis. He noted that even without the bioretention facility, runoff from the parking lot drains directly to a stormwater retention facility which does provide a measure of treatment prior to discharge of waters to the Fox River system. Accordingly, he said, the Commission staff is recommending that the Commission inform the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources that the grant offer by the Department will not be accepted.

Mr. Evenson then briefed the Committee members on two final parking lot expansion alternatives. He noted that under the present conditions, the Commission parking lot accommodates a total of 111 vehicles. Under alternative expansion plan A, the lot would be expanded and reconfigured to accommodate a total of 139 vehicles, representing an increase of 28 parking spaces. Under alternative expansion plan B, the lot would be expanded and reconfigured to accommodate a total of 149 vehicles, representing an increase of 38 parking spaces. In either case, Mr. Evenson concluded, the Commission would have to acquire about 0.5 acre of land from Ridgeview LLC. Recent discussions with the principals of that firm indicate a willingness to work with the Commission in this matter provided that the Commission's expansion plans are approved by the City of Pewaukee.

In an ensuing discussion, Mr. Wirth suggested that any project that would re-asphalt the parking lot be done with fly-ash material for the reason that such a surface stays black. In response to an inquiry by Mr. Vrakas, Mr. Evenson indicated that the parking lot expansion alternatives assume a typical space 8.5 feet wide, although 9.0 feet wide would be preferred. He indicated that the Commission would likely lose from eight to ten parking spaces if the lot would be re-stripped for the slightly wider spaces.

Following the discussion, on a motion by Mr. Wirth, seconded by Mr. Schmidt, and carried unanimously, the Executive Director was authorized: 1) to inform the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources that the Commission will not be accepting the grant offer made by the Department attendant to the construction of a stormwater treatment facility; 2) to pursue implementation of alternative expansion plan B; 3) to review the parking lot expansion plan with appropriate officials of the City of Pewaukee; 4) to complete negotiations with Interstate Partners relative to the acquisition of land necessary to meet the City of Pewaukee "green space" requirements; and 5) to enter into a contract with Ruckert & Mielke, Inc., to develop engineering plans for the project.

CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Evenson reported that by letter dated July 19, 2005, the Commission had been requested by the Executive Director of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) to consider undertaking a study of a potential regional biosolids disposal facility. Biosolids are a by-product of the municipal wastewater treatment process. He noted that the Commission had examined such waste disposal issues in the 1970's, and that the present request, in effect, seeks to update and extend the Commission's plan recommendations made at that time. With the approval of the Commission, he said, he would inform the MMSD that the Commission would be willing to undertake such an updating study, following its normal procedure of establishing an advisory committee and preparing a prospectus.

Following a brief discussion, it was moved by Mr. Drew, seconded by Ms. Seemeyer, and carried unanimously, to authorize the Executive Director to indicate to the MMSD that it would explore undertaking a regional biosolids disposal study.

Mr. Evenson announced that the Commission would be a co-sponsor of a Greater Chicago area conference entitled, "Working Together: Linking Watersheds Conference 2005." The conference will be held on September 7, 2005, at the Brookfield Zoo in the Chicago area. He then distributed a copy of the conference agenda for the perusal of the Committee members, noting that Michael Hahn, the Commission's Chief Environmental Engineer, would be presenting at the Conference.

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 Mr. Drew, and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Philip C. Evenson
Deputy Secretary

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Attachments