

**DEKALB COUNTY  
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

**March 28, 2024  
6:00 p.m.**

**Lee Village Hall  
103 Lee Rd  
Lee, IL 60530**

**AGENDA**

- 1. Roll Call**
- 2. Approval of Agenda**
- 3. Approval of Minutes**
- 4. Public Comments**

*Any member of the public may address the Commission for up to 3 minutes on any topic of their choosing. There will be no yielding of time to other members of the public and agenda time for public comments is limited to 30 minutes in total.*

- 5. Presentation on Sustainable Development Practices and Natural / Ecological Initiatives**
- 6. Municipal Development Permits / Projects / Challenges / Champions**
- 7. Next Meeting Date**
- 8. Adjournment**

*Note: These minutes are not official until approved by the DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission at a subsequent meeting. Please refer to the meeting minutes when these minutes are approved to obtain any changes to these minutes.*

## **DEKALB COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**

(January 24, 2024)

The DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) held a meeting on January 24, 2024, at 6:00 pm, in the Genoa City Hall, in Genoa, Illinois. In attendance were Commission Members: Dan Olson, Alyssa Seguss, Frank Altmaier, Dan Chambers, Theresa Voitik, Todd Latham, David Simpson, John Sauter, and Suzanne Willis. Also, in attendance were: County Staff members: Derek Hiland and Marcellus Anderson; Nathan Schwartz, the DeKalb County Engineer; and, Mark Williams, Executive Director of the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation.

**Roll Call** – The meeting started at 6:04 pm. Ms. Aldis, Mr. Pritchard, Ms. Jergens, Ms. Morphey, Mr. Ecker, and Ms. Fahnestock were not in attendance. Ms. Willis arrived shortly after the meeting began.

### **Approval of Agenda**

*Mr. Latham moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Simpson, and the motion was carried unanimously.*

### **Approval of Minutes for the October 26, 2023 Meeting**

*Mr. Chambers moved to approve the minutes of October 26, 2023, seconded by Mr. Latham, and the motion was carried unanimously.*

### **Public Comments**

None

### **Introduction of Mark Williams**

Mr. Hiland introduced Mark Williams, the Executive Director of the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation. Mr. Williams noted that he became Director in late September / early October and gave a brief overview of his background.

### **Transportation Corridors, Alternative Transportation, and Roadway Safety**

Nathan Schwartz, the DeKalb County Engineer, introduced himself and gave a detail presentation regarding: his duties; his work with the townships and municipalities, and how they work together; the County's highway network; the transportation corridors within the County, and the purposes they serve; spring postings and the purposes they serve; and, how future projects are paid for and the goals they will serve.

Mr. Hiland inquired about the cost differences between a 70,000 lb. road and 80,000 lb. road, and Mr. Schwartz explained how the costs are figured out.

Mr. Schwartz then talked about his experiences building and maintaining bridges in the County, and the costs associated with these projects.

Mr. Schwartz talked about the importance of access points to the I-88 tollway and the various discussions about establishing additional access points near Malta, Cortland, or Maple Park. He also elaborated on the possibility and costs of creating more bypass roads to connect with these proposed roads.

Mr. Latham noted that the City of Sandwich had been talking about which of their streets should be designated for truck routes. He related some of those ongoing discussions and noted that knowing the County's plans would be helpful for those discussions. He talked about their discussions regarding establishing a bike corridor between Sandwich and the Sannauk Forest Preserve. Mr. Latham also noted that there was a bridge they were looking at, which will cost them about one million dollars to address. Mr. Schwartz commiserated with him and talked about his experiences with setting up truck routes. He talked about things to think about and various ways to address the issues. He then talked about "travel demand models", and the benefits of developing one; cautioning that such models can be expensive and can take a while to put together.

Mr. Latham asked about enforcing weight limits on trucks and figuring out which trucks are over that limit. Mr. Schwartz talked about the challenges in doing this and recommended that he talk with the Sheriff's Department, which has officers trained in addressing that issue.

Mr. Schwartz then talked about the general maintenance packets they developed for the County, and noted that his assistant would be willing to meet with communities to help them evaluate their roads to help develop a plan. Mr. Latham asked if they could meet with him to look at their plans, and Mr. Schwartz said he would.

Mr. Schwartz talked about the value of sidewalks and their maintenance. He then related a particularly positive community reaction they had building a small sidewalk connection near the YMCA located along the border between DeKalb and Sycamore. He also talked about the benefits of crack filing.

Mr. Schwartz gave a detailed description of roadway safety issues; in particular, intersection safety. He described some of the worst intersections and the efforts they have taken to try to address the issues at these locations. He also talked about why serious and fatal crashes are up.

Mr. Schwartz talked about getting streets and sidewalks up to ADA standards, noting that the State will have a consultant available regarding this issue. He noted that if communities want to work

*Note: These minutes are not official until approved by the DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission at a subsequent meeting. Please refer to the meeting minutes when these minutes are approved to obtain any changes to these minutes.*

on these ADA standards, the County would be happy to help them put together a plan, noting that communities could also potentially piggy-back on County projects.

Mr. Schwartz and the Commission then discussed the benefits and disadvantages of roundabouts, and the costs associated with them. Mr. Schwartz noted that there were currently four roundabouts in the County, three on the NIU campus and one at the intersection of Peace and Gurler Roads; adding that another one was being planned for the Plank Road near North Grove School in Sycamore.

Mr. Schwartz talked about “Active Transportation” (bikes and pedestrians). He noted that while the County did not have many such projects, but the various communities did. He related the efforts by Genoa and Kingston to work with the County Forest Preserve to establish a bike trail between them. He talked about the Cortland’s new bike trails and their efforts to establish a connection between them and DeKalb, along with how the County was helping to establish that connection. He talked about how Somonauk established a bike trail connecting to the Sannauk Forest Preserve. He talked about various challenges Sandwich faced in establishing a connection with Sannauk Forest Preserve and some possible solutions to those challenges. He also talked about how communities could connect a city park to a particular neighborhood.

Ms. Voitik asked about wildlife corridors. Mr. Schwartz noted that the IDNR was very big on these, and pointed out that there was an unofficial one along the Kishwaukee River. He did note however, that while they could make a difference, they were very expensive; and, while they have looked at them, they were cost prohibitive in the County.

Mr. Schwartz finished by informing the Commission that he would be around after the meeting to answer any further questions and could also be contacted at his office.

### **Update on County Wind and Solar Projects**

Mr. Hiland gave a synopsis of the status of current regulation of commercial solar projects within the County, highlighting the number of projects approved in the County, and the changes that had been and were still occurring in the State’s regulations. He finished by noting the recently introduced House Bill 2442, which would, if adopted, reverse most of the statewide changes adopted by the State in 2023 that significantly restricted the ways in which counties could regulate commercial solar projects.

Mr. Hiland brought to the commission members’ attention that at their seats was a handout regarding Senate Bill 2716, which was introduced in January 2024. He noted that Mr. Olson had brought it to his attention that the Illinois chapter of the American Planning Association (APA) had notified its members about the proposed legislation. He and Mr. Olson explained that the proposed bill would amend the Illinois Municipal Code to change local zoning decisions from legislative

*Note: These minutes are not official until approved by the DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission at a subsequent meeting. Please refer to the meeting minutes when these minutes are approved to obtain any changes to these minutes.*

actions (as has been the case) to administrative decisions, which are subject to a higher standard of review in court. Mr. Olson summarized that the courts currently give a lot of deference to municipalities in how they enact their zoning ordinances when judging cases brought before them, this bill would instead require the courts to be very strict in their review of how a municipality determined their decisions and in whether requirements were being met. All of which would remove a lot of the flexibility municipalities have in dealing with various zoning issues. He noted that the APA was asking municipalities to show their opposition to the proposed bill by contacting their state legislators.

### **County Annexation Policy**

Mr. Hiland talked about the County's annexation policy. He explained that if someone approaches the County with a zoning proposal for a project within a mile and a half of a municipal boundary, staff asks if they have had a conversation with that municipality about the project, noting that while the County is the decision maker, that municipality's needs and plans will play a key element in the County's review of the project. As such, the County takes the good planning approach of encouraging the developer to seek annexation into the municipality. He then gave some examples of how a municipality's objections can impact a proposed projects application for a map amendment or special use permit. He finished by talking about why annexation would benefit the municipality.

### **Annual Dues & Member Re-Appointments**

Mr. Hiland noted that notices had been sent out regarding the annual RPC membership dues, followed by letters asking the communities to send in their re-appointment requests for those members whose terms were expiring. He also noted that not all of the communities had designated alternates, who could attend the meeting if the primary member was unavailable, and asked that these communities consider appointing one.

### **2024 Agenda Items**

Mr. Hiland requested that the members to consider what topics they would like to see covered this year by the RPC, and to contact him with their ideas.

### **Municipal Development Permits / Projects / Challenges / Champions**

Mr. Latham (Sandwich) reported that they were currently looking at a different idea for a 55+ housing development.

Ms. Willis (DeKalb County) reported that the County had brought in an advisory firm to develop a plan to help the County Home break even. She noted that an oversight board was being  
*Note: These minutes are not official until approved by the DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission at a subsequent meeting. Please refer to the meeting minutes when these minutes are approved to obtain any changes to these minutes.*

established, which will consist of three members from the County Board, one member representing the residents of the County Home, and five community members. She also noted that a four-person committee had been created to review those applications when they came in for these positions. She noted that they hoped to be done with this within the next month.

Mr. Simpson (Shabbona) reported that the main project they were working on is a watermain replacement that would loop through most of the Village. He noted that their 501C3, “Building Shabbona Together”, was getting off the ground, with sub committees forming and taking actions, and highlighted the success the committees have had in garnering more community member involvement.

Ms. Seguss (Genoa) reported that Jan Melton, who was the Genoa Public Works Director and served as her alternate on the RPC, had retired and that Lucas Smith had come in as the new director. She noted that she would be forwarding a letter requesting his appointment him her new alternate. She reported that her Downtown Revitalization bid had finally been awarded, and that work would begin in the spring. Ms. Seguss reported that their Comprehensive and Strategic Plans had been adopted in early January 2024, and that, budget willing, they will be beginning a Unified development Ordinance update in the spring of 2024.

Mr. Olson (DeKalb) reported that C & H Plumbing would be relocating to a larger, non-contiguous site just outside of the City, but that, with the County’s encouragement, would be entering into an annexation agreement with the City that would require annexation into the City once it is contiguous and allows the City zoning control over development of the site. He noted that it also contained provisions about supplying utilities once they get extended closer to the property. He reported that the Council had approved the agreement earlier that week. He also elaborated on the benefits of a municipality entering into such agreements. Mr. Olson reported that they were looking to build a new fire station in the southwest quadrant of the City, near the Schnucks grocery store, and that it would be having a hearing on it in February 2024. He noted that the Council appeared to be supportive of it, and that it would help with the coverage area in the City. Mr. Olson reported that the new cannabis dispensary, Excelleaf, had opened downtown on December 1, 2023. He noted that another one had been approved and was slated to open in March of 2024.

Ms. Voitik (Lee) reported that their bid notices for the new water tower and well #3 had been published on Monday. She noted that they had their third meeting for the steering committee for Community and Economic Development, and that they had decided to start their Veterans Park by springtime. She noted that they did not have any plans, but that they had done a SWOT analysis. Ms. Voitik related that while their snow removal was good, that had an emergency situation, caused by blowing snow, which caused a delay in an ambulance from Shabbona reaching the Village.

*Note: These minutes are not official until approved by the DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission at a subsequent meeting. Please refer to the meeting minutes when these minutes are approved to obtain any changes to these minutes.*

DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission Minutes  
January 24, 2024

Mr. Altmaier (Kingston) reported that they had two houses under construction. He noted that the Village Board had approved a small 4-acre annexation along Annie Glidden Road, near Route 72. Mr. Altmaier reported that they had finished their water and sewer rate study and had a public meeting in December 2023 on the results. He particularly noted how good the Village Engineer had been at helping the attendees understand why a rate increase was needed. He also highlighted the importance of maintaining and keeping up these systems.

**Next Meeting Date**

The Commission's next meeting date will be March 28<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 pm, and will be hosted by the Village of Lee, at the Lee Fire Station.

**Adjournment**

*Ms. Seguss moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Latham, and the motion carried unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

---

Dan Olson  
Chair, DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission

Moa: moa  
P:\Zoning\Regional\Minutes\2024\01-24-24 RPC Minutes.docx

*Note: These minutes are not official until approved by the DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission at a subsequent meeting. Please refer to the meeting minutes when these minutes are approved to obtain any changes to these minutes.*