

COMMITTEE REPORT

COMMITTEE: Development & Planning (D&P)

CHAIRPERSON: Diane Gallagher, Chairperson

DATE/TIME: March 26, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT:

☒ Diane Gallagher

☒ Lynn Gallagher

☐ LaDon Trost

☒ Steve Endress

☐ Bob Heuerman

☒ John Lang

☒ John Schultz

A quorum was established.

Other Board members: None.

Others: Kristina Tranel, Scott Toot, Brandon Melton, Tara Walters, Nancy Breed, Michael Dittmar and Beth Baranski.

1. **Welcome new committee member Lynn Gallagher** – Diane Gallagher welcomed Lynn Gallagher to the Committee.
2. **Approval of Minutes** –
 - a) Review and approve minutes for the February 27, 2024 Development & Planning Committee meeting – Lang made a motion to approve the minutes for the February 27, 2024 Development & Planning Committee meeting. Seconded by Endress and motion passed following a voice vote resulting in all ayes.
3. **Citizens' Comments** – Nancy Breed, Chairperson of the Ad-Hoc Comprehensive Plan Committee, spoke. She is very interested in seeing this project all the way through to approval by the County Board. She thanked everyone. Michael Dittmar, Mayor of Elizabeth, mentioned that he has been to almost every single Comprehensive Plan meeting and he's eager to see it approved. Gerald Podraza of Galena introduced himself. At this time, Chairperson Gallagher moved to the one New Business item so Podraza could present on the Passenger Rail Service.
4. **Unfinished Business**
 - a) Comprehensive Plan Update – (website of PlanJoDaviess.com) receive public input and review suggested edits – Diane Gallagher said that there has been a tremendous amount of input on the Comprehensive Plan. The Committee had a lengthy discussion on the Plan. Brandon Melton, MSA, spoke. They connected with organizations throughout the County to get their input as well. They really wanted to emphasize that they have some viewpoints on how best to preserve agriculture, one of the goals that is defined in the Plan. There were also some significant comments from Beth Baranski. Anything else that didn't have comments, has not yet been reviewed by the Comprehensive Plan Committee. D. Gallagher read Melton's memo. Tara Walters, MSA, talked about the plan and some narratives that would possibly fit. Walters said that before final approval by the County Board, they will be needing to incorporate some of the agricultural census data from 2022. The draft plan currently has 2017 data in it. Many tables will potentially be updated. Diane Gallagher said the only downfall to data is that it is always changing. Walters continued to say that she received recommendations for the Housing chapter, and also recommendations from Jo Daviess Local Foods and the Galena Foundation that could go under the Community facilities chapter. She also mentioned that Beth Baranski suggested that it would be helpful to understand how much new construction has been happening in the Galena Territory and Apple Canyon Lake areas. There are two maps that will be included in the map appendix that outline all new home construction permits that were issued between 2006-2012, and again from 2013-2023. It will help understand what will happen in the future. In addition to new home construction, they received information from JCE-Coop. JCE provided information on all of the fiber that is built, under construction, fiber planned and the fiber that they are waiting on grant approval for. That information will be included in addition to the iFiber map in the appendix. Nancy Breed spoke. She said the committee as it was

commissioned, ended its service when they moved the draft plan forward to the Development & Planning committee for their review and public review as well. She said the committee members feel their work has been completed, however, she doesn't see an issue with asking them to potentially meet again. It needs to be decided who is going to look at those suggestions and edit recommendations and decide indeed that is to be put in the draft document that goes forward for approval. At some point you need to cut it off, so people aren't reviewing drafts every two weeks. You don't want five different versions that people are reviewing. Lang said he was amazed at Baranski's details. He feels that we need to realize that after the plan is adopted, the next step will be modifying our zoning to reflect this. We need to look at this very carefully. Especially the recommendations at the end of the study. It would be a good idea to pass this back to committee. Diane Gallagher agreed and said that we want to sure that we're reflecting the consensus of the residents in the County; and that is always difficult. There was some discussion on the previous plans that were adopted. Beth Baranski recalled that they are working through some of the same things as they were in the past. Diane Gallagher stated that they are a committee of the County Board and they need to feel comfortable recommending something to the Board. The committee collaborated on several topics, including the 40-acre rule. There have been many suggestions about how to manage that and what could be changed. Trost said he believes that right now, we are moving in the right direction. He also talked about the 40-acre rule. He said the Zoning Commission is working in the right direction and trying to get things like this resolved. This will be a great impact on our County. Peter Huschitt spoke. He feels if the Comprehensive Plan committee is going to re-group, he thinks they should take this forward again and see it through if there has been any additional information made available. Huschitt said that he doesn't know if the 40-acre rule is a good or bad thing. He does know that regardless, every single person who has gone to the County Board regarding the 40-acre rule, has had it granted. Are they preserving agriculture by approving all of these requests? The average parcel size with the Special Use is just around 10 acres. Is that a starting point? We have the 40-acre rule, but the average has been close to 10. If we want to protect production agriculture and we issue too many Special Uses for small parcels in the county, in Huschitt's opinion, that is going to cause some problems in our rural neighborhoods. He believes there needs to be more input and more studying done with this issue. Melton said there may be some disconnect here that needs to be mended. Breed asked if there was a list of people that had given input and if they could potentially be contacted. They may have to do a Public Notice for additional input. There was some discussion on future meetings.

- b) **Discussion and possible action on a Resolution Adopting the Jo Daviess County, Illinois Comprehensive Plan 2024 Update** – John Lang made a motion to postpone Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan to a future meeting after revisions have been made. Seconded by Trost and motion carried following a voice vote resulting in all Ayes.

5. New Business

- a) **Passenger Rail Service – Gerald Podraza** – Podraza is planning an April 30th meeting at the De Soto House. There will be four brief presentations, one of which involves the retired tour ambassador from the Chicago Burlington and Quincy train when it was still operational. There were multiple and numerous tours that the Chicago Burlington and Quincy had coming into Jo Daviess County. The second presenter is from Oregon, Illinois, from the Oregon People Museum. They are working on restoring a parlor car from the original Twin Cities Zephyr. Podraza is still waiting to hear back from someone at the Illinois Railway Museum. They have an active Twin Cities Zephyr there that they take out on tours. Podraza said he will be providing some information about some public policy issues related to the challenges. In addition, he attended the Blackhawk Regional Economic Development Council meeting yesterday. Next week he will be doing a presentation with their Executive Committee. He said it looks like DeKalb County will pass this resolution and Ogle County is in the process of reviewing a possible resolution as well. Carroll County has already passed a resolution, in addition to some local municipalities doing so. There were a couple items that came up regarding funding sources. There is Amtrak money that's available that's targeted for Amtrak operations only. The U.S. Department of Transportation has money that's available, and also Federal Railroad Administration money. That money is typically targeted for intercity rapid transit. The Elgin to Rockford route currently being worked on is

strictly Federal Railroad Administration. There are also funds available from the USDA. The funds that Podraza is looking to get through the Blackhawk Economic Development Council are what's called SPR Funds. Those are Federal funds as well. They are strictly for research and development money. That is where the feasibility study money comes from. Western Illinois University admission numbers are down tremendously. Podraza argued that out-of-state schools are poaching our kids to go to college somewhere other than Illinois. His argument is that if there was a passenger rail to help college students commute, it would keep money in our State. There is value in passenger rail. Podraza brought up many good examples.

6. Reports

a) Building & Zoning

- (i) Monthly Report – Kristina Tranel, Planning & Development Administrator, reported that in February, fourteen (14) building permits were issued with a total construction value of \$825,000, including two (2) new homes, a deck, three (3) new residential solar permits, accessory structures and others. The Building Code Board of Appeals meets Thursday, April 11 at 3 p.m. in Hanover, to go over updating the County Code. Our Code Enforcement Officer has also undergone some continuing education.

b) Economic Development

- (i) NW Illinois Economic Development Monthly Report – David Schmit, NW Illinois Economic Development Executive Director, was not in attendance. His report was included in the packet.

c) Blackhawk Hills Regional Council

- (i) Diane Gallagher gave an update on BHRC. The report was included in the packet.

d) LRA information from posted minutes – Diane Gallagher gave a report from the posted minutes on the County website.

- 7. Citizens' Comments** – Dittmar thanked Diane Gallagher for letting him speak. He also spoke about David Schmit and how well he does his job. He briefly mentioned guest accommodations. Baranski thanked the committee for extending the process and allowing time for development of the ideas.

- 8. Board Member Concerns** – Endress thanked Diane Gallagher for getting everything sent out early for them to review. Lynn Gallagher thanked her as well. Heitkamp said when he went over the 40-acre rule and the businesses not developing along the highway, were things that caught his eye and are the issues he has concerns with.

9. Adjourn

The next regular Development & Planning Committee meeting will be Tuesday, April 23rd at 5:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m. following a motion made by Lang and seconded by Schultz. Motion passed following a voice vote resulting in all Ayes.