

COMMITTEE REPORT

COMMITTEE: Development & Planning (D&P)

CHAIRPERSON: Diane Gallagher, Chairperson

DATE/TIME: April 25, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT:

☒ Diane Gallagher	☒ Steve Endress	☒ John Schultz
☒ Steve McIntyre left @ 7pm	☒ Bob Heuerman	
☒ LaDon Trost	☒ John Lang	

A quorum was established.

Other Board members: None.

Others: David Schmit, Kristina Tranel and Scott Toot.

1. Approval of Minutes –

- a) Review and approve minutes for the March 28, 2023 Development & Planning Committee meeting – **John Schultz made a motion to approve the minutes for the February 28, 2023 Development & Planning Committee meeting. Seconded by John Lang and motion passed following a voice vote resulting in all ayes.**

2. Citizens' Comments – None.

3. Unfinished Business

- a) **Discussion and possible action on renewable energy PA 102-1123 impact and possible local actions for regulation** – Kristina Tranel has the proposed text amendment on the plan commission agenda for them to review later this week in their meeting. Tranel is hoping at least a recommendation can be made to the County Board from the meeting. This is to make sure it's compliant with the setbacks that they've put in. We cannot be more restrictive than that. Tranel said she heard Senator Chesney had a meeting the other day and was speaking about the public act. Trost said that there's very little that they as a County Board can do.
- b) **Jo Daviess County Housing Study updates** – David Schmit had an update on the study that came out in January. There was a new tab created on the NWILED website. The next component is an informal citizen group or task force. Some of these individuals were already involved in the study. These are all people that are doing the work already. They already have the study that has been published and this group will make it so the study doesn't 'sit on the shelf and get dusty', according to Schmit. There will be meetings scheduled every couple of months. There has also been a local consultant hired to help out. This consultant was hired to go out and get on agendas within municipalities so he can share the results of the study and make it get some exposure. They're trying to drive it at the municipal level.

4. New Business

- a) **Upcoming action on meeting with MSA for Comprehensive Plan Update** – Gallagher said there was a Zoom meeting invite sent out for tomorrow by Tara Walters. In that meeting, the topics being discussed are committee membership, scheduling, agendas, project website, potential stakeholders, and compiling some existing plans. It's a full agenda. Tranel is excited to get started with it all. Gallagher said she'll be asking for input from Trost and Toot. She said a new Comprehensive Plan Update Committee needs to be established to work with MSA.
- b) **Review schedule of Comprehensive Plan process for public** – The committee reviewed the schedule for the Comprehensive Plan process. Tranel said the first month is the project

team meeting, and then once we have the Comprehensive Plan Committee, there will be a meeting set up for that. She said that basically, every month will have those two meetings. Month two will have the existing conditions and demographics update, vision statement and values review. Also the SWOT analysis, which stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. This is a common planning tool used to start developing goals. Month three, the existing conditions and demographics update would be completed, then they'll develop goals and objectives to be reviewed. Month four there will be public meetings and updating plan elements. Months five and six they will continue updating plan elements. Month seven will get into a draft plan document and developing an implementation plan. Month eight will be the 3rd public meeting and the draft plan of the document. Hopefully in month nine we can get to a final plan document design with a quality analysis.

c) **Educational look at workforce & employment issues in JDC – Merri Sevey, VP & HR Jo-Carroll Electric**

– Merri Sevey, VP of HR from Jo-Carroll Electric, was in attendance to answer questions from the committee. She started off speaking about Chestnut Mountain, where she used to work in HR. They need employees who can show up and who will want to work. The pandemic a couple of years ago did not help and it's been a challenge for them hiring and retaining employees. She believes you'll see that in almost any company. At Jo-Carroll, on the other hand, Sevey is having a difficult time finding technical employees. Anyone having to do with Engineering, IT, data, etc., is becoming almost impossible to hire. She said that even at the college level, it's really been a challenge to find potential employees. A lot of these prospective hires want to go to the big cities; it's a hard sell trying to get them to come and work in Jo Daviess County, unless they were born and raised here. Gallagher said that young people really are looking for social events, recreation and outdoor events. They're motivated by different things. She said that they don't seem to be as motivated by money like older people are. Gallagher asked Sevey if she has heard that from the younger generation. Sevey said the outdoor events are a perk, but that she disagrees because these younger people are very motivated by money. She said she has noticed that they want the dollar, and they do not care about the benefits one bit. She said at Jo-Carroll Energy, they have a pension. The younger generation doesn't care about a pension at all. Sevey said that right now, she hires people right out of high school or technical school, and they get them a paid apprenticeship to get them more schooling. She really likes to hire local if possible. The reasoning for that is that these employees will stay here, build homes, have their children attend the local schools and support the communities. Sevey talked about internships they have offered right now. There are a couple of lineman positions and a couple of broadband tech positions. She said they're starting these paid internships at \$20/hour. Jo-Carroll was awarded about \$20 million in broadband infrastructure grants. Part of the stipulation for the grant was that they had to hire an apprentice with that. They've been working with the CTE Academy and area schools to find apprentices. Sevey continued with another question that she received prior to the meeting, which was how the demographics have affected the area and the search for employees. She said that because of the aging population, it has been harder to find people. She also said that in this immediate area, bringing in younger families has been a problem; it is almost impossible to find daycare. There are daycare centers, but they are for ages 3 and up. Nobody takes birth to age 3. Sevey even went as far to say that she's had potential hires turn down jobs because they couldn't find childcare. Schmit informed Sevey that there is a program in Illinois called Birth to Five, and he could get her in touch with a contact there. McIntyre asked if there was something the County could do to encourage daycare centers to open up or even just operate here in Jo Daviess County. He proposed some ideas on what the County could do to help. There was some discussion on childcare in the County. Sevey read another on the list of questions she was given prior to the meeting which asked whether or not employees have given reasons as to why they've turned down or accepted positions from Jo-Carroll. She said a main reason for prospective employees that have been given a job offer is that they do not want to live or work in the State of Illinois. A lot of current employees live in Iowa or Wisconsin, over the State line. One reason some do live here, however, is that they love the schools and they love that it's safe. Another question Sevey was asked was if digital access makes a difference for recruitment, or offering work-from-home (WFH) options. She said absolutely, and that it's a game changer. Their building doesn't hold all the employees they

employ. 20% of the workforce WFH, especially since Covid. She said right now, they have some IT people that don't even live in the State. It makes a job much more attractive giving it that WFH option.

- d) **Discussion and possible action on a Resolution of Support for Illinois and Jo Daviess County Agriculture** – John Schultz said the Illinois Farm Bureau is having a campaign on trying to get as many Counties as possible in Illinois, pass a Resolution to support agriculture. McIntyre questioned why the County is doing this if it's already in our Comprehensive Plan. Schultz reiterated that this is just something to show that we support agriculture. He said that it's a feel-good way to show our support. Gallagher said it may even give the County some public exposure. She also stated that it doesn't interfere with the Comprehensive Plan. McIntyre said that he feels like they're getting ahead of themselves by doing this and that it can be part of the Comprehensive Plan. Schultz commented that he feels McIntyre is reading too much into this proclamation. **John Lang made a motion to support and forward to the County Board, Resolution of Support for Illinois and Jo Daviess County agriculture. Seconded by and motion carried following a voice vote resulting in all Ayes.**

5. Reports

a) Building & Zoning

- (i) Monthly Report – Kristina Tranel, Planning & Development Administrator, reported that in March, there were 31 total building permits issued with a total construction value of around \$1.7 million, compared to only 13 permits in March of 2022. Out of the 31 permits issued, there were 4 new homes, 3 accessory buildings, 2 additions, 7 alternative energy source permits, 2 telecommunications towers and 13 others. Planning & Development has been more actively issuing letters and notifying people of permit violations. More specifically, these would be for off-premises signs that would be advertising on people's properties. There is a zoning ordinance to not allow that. There will be a roundtable discussion at the Illinois Association of County Zoning Officials training, and it will be interesting to hear what other Counties have to say on everything happening lately.

b) Economic Development

- (i) NW Illinois Economic Development Monthly Report – David Schmit, NW Illinois Economic Development Executive Director, reported on a number of things that he provided in the packet. There is going to be a second Manufacturing & Trades Day this year; it's set to be in the fall, in lieu of the NWILED Annual Meeting and Schmit is hoping to gear this day more towards sophomores. The Trades Day they will have next spring he is hoping that graduating seniors will be going to. Two weeks ago they had their regional C-PACE meeting. Next month they will be hosting a Hispanic Business Networking Event in Galena. Schmit mentioned that he has accepted a panel invitation from IL Dept. of Commerce & Economic Opportunity for an IL Economic Development Week webinar on May 10th. The theme is "What Does Economic Development Mean to Me?" Schmit plans on discussing Manufacturing & Trades Day and to also touch on tourism. A few weeks ago was the NWILED Board of Directors meetings. They approved the next Genz Fund award to a Galena business, approved four 2023 John D Cooke Entrepreneurial Scholarship awards, and worked to solidify NWILED's approach to the JDC Workforce Housing Study. There was also some discussion over the scholarships for the area's graduating seniors this year.

c) Blackhawk Hills Regional Council –

- (i) Diane Gallagher reported there's a lot of changes coming. More to come in future meetings. Schmit said that Payette reached out to him last week and there is a grant getting put together for EV charging stations. Gallagher said this is very important for our communities to know about this.

6. Citizens' Comments – None.

7. Board Member Concerns – Bob Heuerman said he really enjoys these meetings. There was some talk of zoning. Microphones were not on for the entire conversation. Heuerman expressed his concern with his taxes rising.

8. Adjourn

The next regular Development & Planning Committee meeting will be Tuesday, May 23, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m. following a motion made by John Schultz and seconded by John Lang. Motion passed following a voice vote resulting in all ayes.