

Minutes of the

MEETING OF THE LAND USE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thursday, September 18, 2014

Committee Members Present:

Jon Commers, Bill Neuendorf, Chip Halbach, Phillip Klein, Marvin Johnson, Mary Hershberger Thun, Aimie Mims, Kristina Smitten, Amy Ihlan, Tami Diehm, James McClean

Committee Members Absent:

Colleen Ratzlaff Labeau, Elizabeth Kautz, Andrew Hestness, Elizabeth Wefel, Kathi Hemken, Bill Droste

CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Commers called the regular meeting of the Council's Land Use Advisory Committee to order at 4:08 p.m. on Thursday, September 18, 2014.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Due to a lack of a quorum at the beginning of the meeting the agenda of the September 18, 2014, Meeting of the Land Use Advisory Committee was approved by consensus.

The approval of the minutes was delayed until a quorum became present.

INFORMATION

Local Planning Handbook Website Demonstration – Angela Torres, Local Planning Assistance

Torres gave a presentation of the online Local Planning Handbook currently being developed. She noted staff are looking for feedback on the overall picture, content, design, etc. She reviewed the contents on the 'landing page' and the contents of each of the following pages linked there:

- Planning Overview
- Plan Elements
- Community Pages
- Next Steps
- Community Highlights

Torres discussed the Land Use Resources located at the bottom of the page including planning examples, mapping, FAQs, best practices, forms and templates, and fact sheets.

Torres discussed the Individual Community Page and also the electronic submittal page. She discussed the checklist that will be individualized and available on the web site for each community.

Torres reviewed tabs within the web page that include: Maps/Tables; Policy; Process; Grants; and Other Resources.

Commers commented that this looks great and will be an intuitive tool. He asked what type of training is planned for city staff and consultants. Torres stated staff will be putting together training sessions for planners/consultants.

Mims asked if this will be compatible with smart phones and tablets. Torres stated that they haven't addressed mobile access yet.

Klein asked when it will be live. Torres stated that the hope is to have all of the pages populated when the System Statements roll out in September 2015.

Hershberger Thun asked when training/workshops begin. Torres stated that it will be about the same time as it goes live.

Barajas talked about experimental navigation that is being done now and focus groups that will be testing the website prior to it going live.

Torres discussed the Community Highlight Page that will showcase communities doing good work. She noted that there is a nomination form that will be available for providing highlights as well.

Commers asked if anyone has examples of topics that lots of cities may be interested in. Hershberger Thun discussed working with individual Watershed Districts.

Torres stated that staff welcomed input at anytime going forward.

Planning Assistance Fund – Lisa Barajas, Local Planning Assistance

Commers commented on the status of the Regional Policy Plans and noted they are currently out for public comment and noted when the public comment periods will end. He encouraged all committee members to submit comments.

Barajas discussed the Planning Assistance Fund. She noted that the program needs to be updated and brought back to the Community Development Committee including establishing a need and developing eligibility criteria.

Barajas reviewed the last planning grant cycle done with the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update process and reviewed the average costs.

Smitten asked if all communities requesting received funds, and did the costs include all hard and soft costs. Barajas stated that some provided only hard costs and some provided both hard and soft costs. She noted that not all communities were eligible for a grant.

Diehm asked about the eligibility criteria. Barajas reviewed the past eligibility criteria as outlined in the materials provided and discussed some of the communities, e.g. North Oaks, and how they were eligible.

Barajas discussed the number of communities that would be eligible now if we used the same criteria. She also discussed draft alternative eligibility using net tax capacity per capita, rather than total community net tax capacity shown on page 6 of the materials provided.

Barajas reviewed the questions included in the packet to promote discussion.

Halbach discussed current criteria including tax capacity and amount of forecasted household growth and stated he would like to somehow add equity and housing. He discussed communities that have low resources but have an assignment of planning for affordable housing. Barajas explained that the last planning cycle had an allocation of affordable housing.

Commers asked Halbach if he is asking to award those communities with high housing performance scores. Halbach stated that if you don't have a lot of money for your community but do have a high expectation for affordable housing, you would be eligible for assistance to help improve your housing score. Commers asked how you fund something that is not a foregone conclusion.

Barajas stated that all communities are given their allotment of expected affordable housing.

Smitten asked for clarification of the maps shown in the presentation. She asked if there's been discussion of level of technical assistance. Barajas stated that they haven't hashed that out yet.

Smitten asked about a reserve. Barajas stated that the Council has just over one million dollars. She stated that staff has proposed additional funds for 2015 and 2016 to bring us to two million dollars.

Smitten asked if estimates of costs have been done, noting that the electronic handbook will be a valuable tool. Barajas explained her concern with inflated numbers because communities know that grants will be available.

Klein asked about cost sharing with communities so that they have 'some skin in the game.' Barajas stated yes, that is the expectation. The Council does not fund 100%.

Halbach asked if there are other indicators that would increase the costs of planning. Commers discussed different issues communities will be facing. He feels some communities don't have a population to support a planner but would be looking for funds to hire a consultant.

Diehm discussed incentivizing communities to go the extra step with some of the optional planning items listed in the handbook.

Ihlan discussed if communities were going to be undergoing some unusual circumstances and also discussed some discretion to prioritize.

Smitten feels it should be an 'or' and not an 'and', however some cities have unique areas that have an opportunity to raise the bar.

Barajas stated that under state statute these funds are for meeting requirements of the Land Planning Act. She noted that in the past the Council has had an interest-free loan fund for incentivized planning. She stated that this Committee could request that the Council provide optional funds.

Halbach asked for more information on optional development. Barajas discussed elements that have gone beyond requirements.

Diehm stated that if a community budgets \$80K for their comprehensive plan update and received a grant of \$20K, this frees up \$20K from their budget to plan beyond requirements.

Barajas stated that the system is open for change. Commers agreed.

Commers asked are there counties that would benefit. Barajas stated that generally, that's been the Council's experience.

Smitten stated she sees the township collaborative as being an efficient use of resources and good land use planning.

Barajas reviewed the next steps. She will bring back criteria based on feedback heard and continue the conversation. She gave her thanks and appreciation for the feedback and comments.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

With a quorum now present, Commers called for approval of the minutes.

It was moved by Neuendorf, seconded by Klein to approve the minutes of the July 17, 2014, meeting of the Land Use Advisory Committee. **Motion carried.**

Next Meeting – November 20, 2014

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandi Dingle
Recording Secretary