

Portage County Comprehensive Plan Urban Area Steering Committee

August 31, 2005 at 4:30pm

Conference Rooms 1 & 2
County Courthouse Annex
Stevens Point, WI

Meeting Minutes

Committee members present: Gary Wescott (Committee Chair), Lois Feldman, John Garnder, Elmer Fournier, Gordon Renfert, Jeanne Dodge, Mike Bronk, John Holdridge, Dan Mahoney, Richard Holden, Dan Schlutter, George Meeks, Don Jochman

Committee members not present: Tim Karcheski, Wallace Zywicki, Ed Rutta, Larry Fritsch, Al Walkush

Portage County Planning & Zoning staff members present: Director Chuck Kell, Sarah Wallace and Jeff Schuler

Others in attendance: Cindy Davis

1.) 4:30.m. – Meeting called to order by Chair Gary Wescott

Mayor welcomed all of the new members and introduced them to the committee.

2.) Approval of the August-27-03 Urban Area Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Minutes

Dan Schlutter (V. of Plover) made a motion to approve the August 27, 2003 minutes, as presented. Seconded by Elmer Fournier (V. of Park Ridge) and passed unanimously by voice vote.

3.) Nomination and Approval of Urban Area Steering Committee Vice-Chair.

Chair Wescott (C. Stevens Point) made a motion to nominate Dan Schlutter (V. Plover) as Vice-Chair. Seconded by Jeanne Dodge (T. of Stockton) and passed unanimously by voice vote. No other discussion.

4.) Planning Process outline for Completion of the Urban Area Comprehensive Plan

Chair Wescott spoke about State legislation requiring local unit tax levy increases to be tied to NEW construction, in order to have any increase in the local tax levy. This “growth requirement” fundamentally changes how communities, including Stevens Point, approach planning for their future. This must be considered as we proceed. Wescott also feels that it is important that this group continues to meet, in whatever form, to discuss sewer service, transportation and other area topics, and that it is imperative that these

municipalities around the table continue to work together and plan together. He continued that Plover and Point have “moved on” from the Crossroads Commons debate, and have recently formalized an agreement (signed by both Board/Council) that established Cty Rd HH as the sewer service dividing line between them.

Schlutter also added that the Village of Plover and the Town of Plover have a municipal agreement between them.

Chair Wescott discussed the aggressive schedule that we need to complete by the beginning of December. Portage County Planner Jeff Schuler discussed that by the end of today’s meeting we need to have everyone on the same page on how we are going to approach the task, what the task is and understand how often we need to meet and what we are going to have at the end. To start that discussion, the Urban Area plan has evolved into a general guiding tool. As part of this process we are going to identify things that need to be carried out beyond this plan. As of today Plover, Park Ridge, and Whiting have adopted plans and the City is working toward wrapping up theirs. The Towns of Stockton and Hull are continuing their work and the Town of Plover has forwarded a recommended plan to the Town Board for public hearing and action.

At this point, Schuler continued, this group needs to look at what has been done by the local plan and identify those larger issues that involve more than one community. This group will discuss land use, and from that discussion will suggest a new line to the Sewer Service Committee for the update of that Plan. Wescott commented that many of the Sewer Service Committee members sit at this table too.

The deadline for the Comprehensive plan was discussed by the committee, and the feeling is that it is an achievable task. Chair Wescott then asked about requesting a deadline extension and what happens if we do not meet the deadline in December. Schuler stated that our grant contract was for 4 years (June 2001 –June 2005), which ended this past June. We applied for and received a 6 month extension till the beginning of December (2005). If we do not complete the plans by the deadline, we basically will have defaulted on our contract. Chuck Kell discussed that we have funding left at the state due to those communities that have not finished their plan and that we have already lost significant funding from those communities that “dropped out”. Kell is not sure if the State would grant us another extension. John Holdridge (T. Hull) asked how many extensions we have received (1 - 6 month extension) and that he agrees with the Chair that we have shown significant progress. Holdridge stated that at the local level they have stuff going on, “day to day operations to run”, and that sometimes those deadlines need to be extended. Chair Wescott agreed that there were many issues on everyone’s plate. George Meeks (V. Whiting) countered that, as a junior high teacher, he found that if you extended any deadline, the student would simply put off the work until the new deadline. He felt that local governments do the same thing. He continued that there have always been “immediate” issues in place, and that the future would be no different; do the work now and get it done. Chair Wescott asked if staff has explored the opportunity of another extension. Kell stated that we need to try and get all of the plans finished before the deadline and the if it takes a few months longer to work some things out, hold hearings to

get the adoptions, etc we may be eligible for an extension. Holdridge made the comment that the danger of these plans is that they are just going to sit on the shelf. He hopes that as we go through the planning process that we resolve real issues.

Chair Wescott asked if it was the consensus that we continue to work very hard to complete the plan by the deadline but have on the back burner that we may need an extension. Kell stated that he would be willing to request another extension from the State and that if we had signed requests from municipalities in favor of that request that it might help.

Schuler, wanted to make sure that everyone was on the same page and comfortable on how we are talking about the chapters. Kell, our feeling is that we want to focus on issues in the Urban Area, and issues that affect multiple communities in the area.

5.) Discussion and Possible Action on individual Elements of the Portage County Urban Area (UA) Comprehensive Plan

Schuler gave a general introduction to the Issues and Opportunities chapter and asked if there were any questions. Jeanne Dodge (T. Stockton) and John Holdridge (T. Hull) expressed concern that Chapter 1 didn't include information on the surrounding Towns; where would the "Urban Area line" be drawn? Schuler responded that, because incorporated plans could only really most specifically plan for land within their boundaries, we would focus information in Chapters 1 and 2 on incorporated municipalities. Staff was also considering using the Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ) map from the UA Transportation Plan (separate project) as an initial boundary for discussion, but that this would come out as a part of the Transportation discussion. We might be premature talking about it here. The group must attempt to take up subjects in their time, and not jump too far ahead. Lois Feldman suggested that the reference to the UA being "approx. 30 miles south of Wausau via I-39" should be stricken. The group agreed. Jeanne Dodge (T. Stockton) said she had come across some statements in the Village of Plover and Stevens Point plan text that gave her pause, specifically the passages that referred to anticipated annexation of Town land. She felt that this subject should be handled carefully, as Towns were, by right and necessity, protective of their land and resources. Dan Mahoney (V. Plover) stated that this is the type of issue that this group should be focusing on – that annexation is a sensitive and important subject for both Towns and Village/City, and formal procedures for joint talks between municipalities should be recommended by this plan for implementation. No other comments were made on pages 4 thru 29 (Sec. 1.1 thru 1.4).

The committee discussed what information and how much information from each local plan needs to be addressed in the Urban Area Plan. Some of the topics of discussion that should be discussed within this plan are: transportation projects, major urban growth, parks for those growth areas, economic development – future county involvement in economic development. Chair Wescott added, Sewer Service, Transportation, impacts from the state legislature, and storm water management,. Holdridge added sustainability of water and the water table. Dan Mahoney reaffirmed that this urban committee be

retained as the place to discuss these issues. Gardner added that the concentration of low and moderate income people in the City may be an issue to discuss.

These are the type of topics that this group needs to discuss over the next couple of months.

The next point of discussion was population projections. Staff had distributed a copy of County municipal projections through 2025, the 2005 Wisconsin DOA municipal estimates (released 8-10-05), and a summary of adopted/proposed Urban Area City/Village pop projections. Schuler pointed out that the Village and City plans used projections out to 2020, and that we will need to go out to 2025 for this plan. Portage County P&Z has historically done projections based on a variety of trend lengths using DOA County totals. For their individual plans, Plover had used the Planning & Zoning projection, Whiting and Park Ridge had projected population based on the cyclical nature of their resident's life span (over time older resident side and new families will move into their finite housing stock). Stevens Point came up with their own methodology to closely mirror Plover's growth. There was an extended discussion of how to project (P&Z vs. DOA vs. other), and it was consensus that DOA estimates should be used in most circumstances in the future. Plover will stick with the 2025 DOA projection; Whiting will use their previously adopted 2020 population of 1,864 as their 2025 projection; Park Ridge will need to be contacted to see if they wish to do the same. Stevens Point (per the Mayor's direction) will forward a copy of the Stevens Point methodology and 2025 projection within 10 days (by September 12th).

There was some confusion within the Committee over how they were supposed to discuss the chapters – population projections weren't exactly "broad brushes". Schuler stated that the projections must eventually be accepted by DOA (and DNR for the Sewer Service Area Plan). Several things in subsequent chapters (from households to land use) would be tied to population – reinforcing the importance of being comfortable with the totals. Dan Mahoney (V. Plover) suggested that Section 1.5 could be filled in utilizing information from tonight's discussion, and brought back for review at the next meeting (this includes households and employment). He also suggested the transposition of Sections 1.6 and 1.7, ending the chapter with Conclusions/Issues. Portage County staff should take the issues/conclusions listed in the Village/City plans and boil them down to a bulleted list for the Urban Area Committee to review and discuss. This would best help them complete their task. The group concurred. Dan Mahoney then suggested that the same would be true for most chapters; the background text for Chapter 2 was fine, and the individual community plan info could be boiled and bulleted. The group concurred.

6.) Future Meeting Dates

September 28, 2005 at 4:00pm in Conference rooms 1 & 2

7.) New Business

For the next meeting the committee will review those changes to Chapters 1 and 2 and finish those discussions. Then move on to the initial discussions of Chapters 3 and 4.

8.) Adjourn

Adjourn: 6:25 pm

Submitted by: Sarah Wallace, Associate Planner, Portage County Planning & Zoning