

MINUTES

McLEAN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MCRPC) Meeting

WEDNESDAY, February 1, 2023, 4:00 P.M.

115 E. Washington St, Bloomington, Illinois

Room 404 and Virtual

Members Present:

John Burrill, Chairperson; Carl Teichman, Vice-Chairperson; Stan Gozur; Dr. Charles Irwin; Ron Lesser; Bart Bittner; Carl Olson*; Jim Fruin*; Jennifer Langley*

Members Absent:

Michael Pettorini; Tony Morstatter

Others Present:

MCRPC Staff – Raymond Lai; Jennifer Sicks; Greg Huss; Tania Barreto; Anthony Yamzon; Mark Adams; Francesca Lewis; Katie McShane*

Others – Jerry Stokes, County Highway Department; Tessa Ferraro, Town of Normal*

***Attended Virtually**

1. Call To Order:

Mr. Burrill called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum.

Mr. Burrill asked Mr. Teichman to say a few words about George Benjamin, who recently passed away. Mr. Benjamin was a long-time Commission Member from 2007-2015. He served as Vice-Chairperson from 2009-2012 and Chairperson from 2013-2015. Mr. Teichman led a moment of silence for Mr. Benjamin.

2. Attendance:

See above

3. Public Comment:

None

4. Consent Agenda:

A. Minutes of the January 4, 2023, Commission meeting

B. Financial Reports

C. MCRPC Staff Report

Mr. Burrill called for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Teichman moved for approval. Mr. Bittner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

5. Regular Agenda:

a. Items removed from the Consent Agenda (if any)

None

6. Items for Information or Discussion:

a. Presentation: County Highway Department

Mr. Lai introduced County Engineer, Jerry Stokes, to the Commission. Mr. Stokes presented a PowerPoint presentation on the County Highway Department, explaining the County's process for maintenance on bridges, signs, and roads. Mr. Stokes also presented a ratings map detailing surface ratings for County roads. [PowerPoint available at the office for review]

Q & A Followed the Presentation

- 1. Q: How have the Counties on either side of us responded to the fact that McLean County is working hard to finish the trails?**

A: Logan County has a bicycle plan, near Lincoln where they are expanding from there. Livingston County is set up differently, but the State is working on resurfacing some of Route 66 in the next few years and part of that project might include the bike trail from Cheona to Pontiac.

- 2. Q: How come the County is involved in the wind farm development since those are a private development?**

A: Wind Farm developers must go through County Zoning Board to apply for a Special Use Permit. One of the conditions of the Special Use Permit is to have a road use agreement, due to use by heavy load trucks. Sometimes the roads will be upgraded prior to the wind farm construction. This road work will then be reimbursed to the County by the wind farm developer.

- 3. Q: Do you receive public comments or recommendations based on the surface rating map that is available on the MCGIS website?**

A: Not too much. There is a 5-year plan, also available on the County's website, that explains which projects the County will be working on.

- 4. Q: Are you short in resources or have a wish list you'd like to accomplish?**

A: Would be nice to get the oil & chip roads up to hold 80,000 pounds to accommodate bigger trucks. There is limited funding even though there are a lot more activities in the rural areas, with solar and wind farm development and elevators expanding.

- 5. Q: Are roads upgrades a low or high priority?**

A: High priority.

6. Q: How does the Highway Department obtain funding? Do you create proposals for a standard that you want to maintain those roads at to get funding or are you told what funding is available and you do the best you can with what is available?

A: Funding is similar year to year, so the budget doesn't change much. Sometimes there are grant opportunities that can be applied for.

7. Q: Can you explain how the road posting mechanisms work?

A: By state statute the County and Townships are allowed to post their roads for 90 days. The County has an ordinance set up so they can post their roads from January 15 to April 15. During this time, they can limit the amount of weight on those roads because weather changes can easily affect the conditions of the road.

8. Q: Are there a lot of violators of the weight limits?

A: Maybe close to 25-50 tickets for disobeying a traffic control device, which goes against the truck driver's CDL.

9. Q: How many miles of gravel roads does our County have?

A: There are a few gravel township roads but not a lot, under 10 miles.

b. Regional Housing Initiative update (Tania Barreto)

Over \$6 million in COVID-19 related assistance has been provided by members of the Housing Assistance Coalition to County residence since May 2020, \$1 million of that was provided in 2022. MCRPC is participating in a Cold Weather sub-committee. Staff are currently updating the Housing Data Dashboard and the white paper: Preservation of Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program.

Information about two federal grant opportunities can be found on IDHA's website. These are to address lead-based paint and additional housing related hazards that can be awarded to State and Local Governments, and to Public Housing agencies.

c. Vision Zero/Go:Safe McLean County Action Plan Project update (Raymond Lai/Jennifer Sicks)

Staff just got word that MCRPC has been awarded the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Action Plan grant by USDOT. We are one of only six such grantees in the state of Illinois. SS4A is a federal version of the IDOT funded Go:Safe Action Plan, with additional criteria. Once completed this safety action plan will help with implementation of the Go:Safe plan. This grant has a lot of local partners who have made financial commitments as a local match such as IDOT, Connect Transit, BNEWARD, County, City, and Town.

SS4A adds to the two other transportation safety grants MCRPC has been awarded. Staff is working on the Bike & Pedestrian grant; with a recent meeting with local law

enforcement agencies. The purpose of this grant is for public education and safety, focusing on cyclists and pedestrians. Mr. Lai explained that staff is still finalizing the agreement with IDOT for the SPR transportation safety grant. IDOT is generously covering the non-federal match for this project with no local match required.

d. Broadband Breakthrough update (Raymond Lai/Greg Huss)

McLean County was one of 5 counties in Illinois that was awarded the Broadband Breakthrough program. This program is for technical assistance to create a plan for providing better broadband service with a focus on rural areas. Currently, County Administration leads our program. A committee has been put together that includes County, MCRPC staff, Rural Mayors Association, and others. Mr. Huss is assisting in creating a survey for all of McLean County residents. This survey will provide feedback but also include a speed test of their current broadband connection.

Dr. Irwin asked if the providers are already set up. Mr. Lai answered no. Dr Irwin then asked if this information will be used to prepare the contracts those providers get. Mr. Lai answered that the result of this 14-week process will be to create a plan for broadband infrastructure in our County with focus in the rural area.

e. That Which May Arise

Mr. Burrill congratulated Mr. Lai on his appointments to the Illinois High-Speed Railway Commission and the IL State Housing Task Force.

Mr. Lai introduced MCRPC new staff members, Mark Adams as a Community Planner and Francesca Lewis as an Assistant Planner. Mr. Adams and Mx. Lewis introduced themselves to the Commission.

7. Adjournment:

Mr. Burrill called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Teichman moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Bittner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 5:14 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Katie McShane
Office Manager/Executive Assistant*