

MINUTES

McLEAN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MCRPC) Meeting

WEDNESDAY, March 4, 2026, 4:00 P.M.

115 E Washington St, Bloomington, Illinois

Room 404 and Virtual

Members Present:

Katie Ruder, Chairperson; Amy Roser, Vice-Chairperson; Anne Barrow; Ruth Burke; Bart Bittner; Carl Teichman; Mark Wylie; Jeffrey "Jay" Spader

Members Absent:

Ron Lesser; Carl Olson; Fred Grieder

Others Present:

MCRPC Staff – Raymond Lai; Thomas Valencia; Luke Talavera; Anthony Baumann; Jake Crevoiserat; Hirat Rahi; Katie McShane*

Others –Tricia Braid, Community Member; Tessa Ferraro, Town of Normal*

*Attended Virtually

1. Call To Order:

Ms. Ruder called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum.

2. Attendance:

See above

Ms. Ruder introduced new Commissioner, Jeffrey "Jay" Spader. Mr. Spader represents Bloomington-Normal Water Reclamation District. Mr. Spader introduced himself.

3. Public Comment:

None

4. Consent Agenda:

1. Minutes of the February 4, 2026, Commission meeting
2. Financial Reports
3. MCRPC Staff Report

Ms. Ruder called for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Wylie moved for approval. Mr. Bittner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

5. Regular Agenda:

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

None

7. Items for Information or Discussion:

a. Discussion – Update to the MCRPC Public Comment Policy

Ms. Ruder went over the current Public Comment Policy. Mr. Lai explained that the current policy was adopted in 2013. The Commission discussed topics such as requesting the public commenters address, time limits for individual speakers, the time limit for the public comment period as a whole, how long before the meeting a speaker can sign up, and speakers having to name which agenda item they are speaking about. Mr. Lai explained that our current policy follows closely with the three local municipalities' policies.

Ms. Barrow questioned if three minutes is enough time for speakers to provide a public comment. Mr. Lai advised that the other municipalities, including McLean County, have a 3-minute time limit for speakers and five minutes if representing a group. Ms. Roser advised that Open Meetings Act (OMA) allows individuals to voice their opinions but protects that the host organization still be allowed to conduct business at their meetings. Ms. Burke suggested allowing the Commission to extend the full comment period if there is an instance that more than 5 people come to provide comment.

Ms. Burke suggested allowing people to show up 5 minutes before the meeting and signing a sign-in sheet instead of 15 minutes before. Mr. Lai advised that the County allows speakers to sign in 15 minutes before the meeting. Mr. Spader asked if the County requires an address when signing up to provide public comment. Mr. Lai advised that it's important to know if the person requesting to provide public comment is within McLean County. Ms. Roser added that at Unit 5, it's important to ask for address because if a person doesn't behave according to the policy, then action can be taken to make sure that person not be able to attend future meetings due to behavior concerns. Mr. Wylie stated that at District 87 they had some issues where public speakers didn't live within the district and District 87 determined you can request an address, but you cannot require an address according to OMA. The Commission determined that this topic needed follow up discussion from legal counsel. Mr. Wylie and Mr. Teichman explained they believe our policy should mirror McLean County's current policy.

Ms. Burke asked if the County requires the public speaker to list which agenda item they wish to speak about. Mr. Lai advised he wasn't sure but would follow up on that topic. A discussion followed about what other municipalities in the area require regarding speakers being allowed to speak about topics not on the agenda.

Mr. Lai advised he would provide a draft updated Public Comment Policy for the April meeting for the Commission to review based on discussion at today's meeting. He advised he would get legal feedback on the draft as well.

b. Housing Coordinator – RISE Implementation grant update: (Raymond Lai)

Mr. Lai advised the RFP for the Housing Coordinator position is being finalized by staff, once staff finalize the RFP it will go to legal for review. After the RFP is approved by legal it will be posted. The posting will be available for 3-4 weeks for responses.

Ms. Roser asked if the grant would be extended due to the delays in publishing the RFP. Mr. Lai advised he's already had conversations with DCEO regarding an extension due to the delay in getting an executed contract. Ms. Burke asked if the extension would be a spending extension. Mr. Lai advised it would be a performance and spending extension and to continue to allow the Housing Coordinator to work. Mr. Teichman asked if the funds were still there. Mr. Lai replied yes, they are.

c. Regional Housing Initiatives update (Luke Talavera)

Mr. Talavera updated the commission on housing initiatives. Staff have attended and chaired the Housing Staff Committee Meeting and the Affordable and Supportive Housing (ASH) Committee Meeting. Staff also attended the Housing Coalition and Unhoused Taskforce Meetings. Staff attended the Affordable Housing Forum in Chicago that was hosted by the Illinois Housing Council. The Housing Dashboard is currently being updated, and staff will present those updates to the Committee next month. Staff completed the draft of the 2025 Area Medium Income (AMI) White Paper.

Mr. Talavera explained the Point-In-Time (PIT) count was done, there were 9 people unsheltered observed. They stated the reason, so few people were counted because of The Bridge. Results of the count will be completed in mid-April. The Salvation Army's Emergency Winter Shelter will close at the end of March for the season.

Mr. Bittner asked if there has been feedback on how The Bridge project is going. Mr. Talavera explained that so far it seems successful, the first round of residents are currently looking for jobs and interviewing.

Ms. Burke asked when calculating the number for Median Gross Rent, is that number for all rental units regardless of type of residence. Mr. Talavera explained the number comes the ACS data; he is unsure how that number is measured but can investigate it and provide an answer later.

d. Human Services Transportation Plan update (Jennifer Sicks)

On behalf of Ms. Sicks, Mr. Lai advised the next Joint Committees meeting will be March 16, 2026. Staff has started drafting the Committee bylaws and are working to combine the two committees into one committee for efficiency purposes. He explained that combining the two committees into one is acceptable by IDOT. Staff are also working on revisions to the adopted HSTP, updating information and removing some of the outdated information, such as rural providers that are no longer in service. He advised that out of the 5 Counties in the Region 6 area; Iroquois is the only one without a rural transit provider. McLean

County has Connect Go, Kankakee has SHOWBUS and Ford and Livingston have Futures Connections.

e. Veterans Parkway Corridor Plan update (Raymond Lai)

Mr. Lai explained the Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be meeting on Friday, March 13 for their next meeting. This meeting will be held at the Bloomington Public Library as a workshop with the consultants present. The consultants will work with the PSC to narrow the preliminary alternatives down to one preferred alternative.

Ms. Burke asked who all was on the PSC. Mr. Lai indicated examples of the organizations that have representation on the PSC. Ms. Burke asked if there were any citizens on the PSC. Mr. Lai explained that most of the members who represent an organization are also McLean County residents, thus wearing two hats. Ms. Roser added that there were surveys and public comment periods for citizens to be able to provide public comments.

f. Regional Comprehensive Plan update (Raymond Lai/Anthony Baumann)

Mr. Lai advised that County Administration has confirmed the timeline proposed by staff, essentially for the planning process to go on till summer of 2027. Mr. Baumann presented a PowerPoint presentation on "What is a Comprehensive Plan." Mr. Baumann advised now that the timeline is ready, and a PSC is getting put together, staff have been working on getting the website ready and a scope document is being drafted.

Ms. Ruder asked who the timeline had been shared with and whose approval was given. Mr. Lai answered that staff shared with the County Administrator who shared the document with the County Board Chair and the Chair of the Land Use and Transportation Committee. Mr. Teichman followed up by asking for clarification on whether other County Board members have seen the document. Mr. Baumann answered by confirming not all of them have seen it, but it has been shown at this public meeting so it's available now. Mr. Baumann advised staff will present at the next Land Use and Transportation Committee meeting in April.

Ms. Barrow asked about other involvement or updates with the PSC. Mr. Baumann advised Mr. Lai has a list of potential members that he is reaching out too. Mr. Lai explained that staff also relies on elected officials, the Commission members and others to help get the word out about updates to the Comprehensive Plan project. Ms. Burke asked if Commission members could send the timeline document out to County Board Members. Mr. Lai noted that staff will work with County Administrator to get the document out to members.

g. That Which May Arise

None

7. Adjournment:

Ms. Ruder called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Wylie moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Teichman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Katie McShane
Office Manager/Executive Assistant