

Morgan County Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Meeting Notes

Date / Time: Thursday, July 24, 2008 @ 6:00 PM

Location: County Administration Building

Attendees: Adam Brewer, Eleza Durnal, Melanie Depoy, Kenny Hale, Mark Hensley, Dick Lambert, Charlene Pugh, Kenny VanSlyke
EGT: Scott Burgins, Cory Whitesell

Kenny gave an update on phase one of the county's comp plan, which was completed last year. He noted that they had steering committee and public meetings. People were concerned about saving the county's rural, natural heritage. Goals and objectives were also formulated during phase one.

Melanie noted that the goals and objectives from phase one were good and should be used as the basis for implementation in phase two planning.

Scott noted we will use the last plan as starting point, and then move forward by including current events such as flooding, I-69, parks and greenways, and the environment.

Reasons for planning

- Melanie noted that she believes in planning, and that it is essential
- Conditions of some roads are dangerous, including intersection sight distances and potholes
- Narrow roads near Brooklyn area
- Someone who wants to sell land to hold trash trucks
- Someone who wants to build a liquor store
- Drainage problems
- Farmers want to keep farms
- Preserve "Driving home through the country" – control urban sprawl

What could go wrong with this plan?

- Rocky history with planning in Morgan County. Kenny believes that most people want "common sense" zoning and protections – without being too restrictive.
- Need to more clearly define "common sense" planning and zoning.
- Need to make decisions – planning does not do any good if you don't move something forward – even if you don't please everybody.

- Don't try to do too much – pick a few priorities and focus on those so that things can get done.

Steering Committee Composition

- Do we need someone from the economic development group on the steering committee such as John Taylor? Kenny noted that they are on the 37/144 corridor plan. Kenny will speak to the economic development group about this.
- Do we need someone on the team to represent parks and recreation? Kenny will discuss this with representatives.
- Do we need utilities represented, such as Mark Smith, Norm or Tom Lux?
- We may want to bring in some additional persons at representative meetings for specialty issues.

Phase One/Phase Two Planning

Melanie expressed concern that the schedule does not seem to further the plan as Scott explained we would. Her goal is to get to phase two details. Scott will send table of contents that we are planning to fill. Cory asked what phase two expectations would be. Melanie will review the old plan to summarize those points.

Focus needs to be on how to better implement the goals in the project. Critical sub areas will be focused planning.

Phase two planning will focus on merging the goals of the various entities throughout the county. The group discussed getting the various plan commissions together to collaborate.

Mapping Exercise

Several committee members mentioned transportation issues, including elevated rail and mass transit. Others, though, said the trouble with transportation is people want their personal freedom.

Another objective was making corridors friendly for economic development. For example, getting sewer located and property rezoned in Harris Township would present a big opportunity.

Kenny said he wants to build up the assessed value of the county.

The group mentioned Stonebridge, the zoned, 720 acre, 1,200-unit subdivision, and how construction had been delayed because of the national housing crisis. There is a lot of housing available in other parts of the county.

The county needs to identify some sites for development because it doesn't have any land that is ready to build.

Question to revisit: Will higher gas prices make people look for jobs in the county, instead of driving to Indianapolis?

One member said the plan has to be proactive. For example, it should point out where housing should go, and then update zoning to create price points that attract types of up-scale housing. Morgan County could position itself to offer rural housing while still being close to Greenwood, Bloomington and Indianapolis.

There is some economic growth in Brown Township, and along the 37 and 144 corridors.

The group will spend some time considering what they like and don't like about growth in Johnson County and Monroe County.

Environmental Concerns

Pollution in the White River is a concern.

The county has increased its emergency planning since the spring floods. The Disaster Recovery Group is working on long-term solutions.

Next Steps

Scott asked if they want to skip the goals/objectives and fast forward to the key issues. The team discussed and agreed that we want to use those goals as the basis and prioritize them at the next committee meeting. We will also add other priorities and issues to this list (gas prices, flooding, etc.).

The group decided to have a steering committee meeting on August 21 instead of a public meeting to review and prioritize goals and objectives.

The steering committee said the big tent comments confirmed that the priorities set during phase one were still valid.

Criticism of phase one was that someone was not happy with the demographic work.