

Washington County Comprehensive Plan

Steering Committee Notes: Meeting #5

Date/Time: August 2, 2010 @ 7:00pm

Location: Salem City Hall

Attendees: John Mishler, Terry McNeely, Tom Scifres, David Hoar, Scott Maudlin, Lane Freiburger, Kerry Lewis, Leslie Batt, Donnie Hacker, Travis Elliot, Brad Shelton, Ervin Day, Eric Rusby, James Day, Kelly Mollet, Laura Bishop,

Public: Ronald King, Rhonda Green (videotaping)

Consultants: Scott Burgins, Michael Krosschell

Project Update

- Posted online minutes from Steering Committee Meeting 4
- Held public meeting #1 on July 30
- Worked with Review Committee: Land Use
- Worked with Review Committee: Economic Development Chapter
- Worked with Review Committee: Housing Chapter

Scott started the meeting by saying that after tonight, all of the draft chapters have been completed and turned over to the review teams for editing.

The next meeting – which also will be in August, will focus on final reviews and the implementation plan. That plan will:

1. Identify problems
2. Prioritize those problems
3. Identify alternative solutions

Review Committee Reports

Review teams for the land use, economic development and housing chapters reported on their edits.

David Hoar talked about the state limits on putting additional restrictions on confined animal feeding operations. He also emphasized the need to protect the county's most fragile natural resources.

For the economic development chapter, new information will be added detailing how much money is earned by agricultural practices in Washington County.

Based upon the reviews, edits will be made to the land use and economic development chapters, which will then be emailed to committee members.

Review: Transportation, Natural Resources and Utilities Chapters

Michael presented highlights from these three chapters and then took comments.

The review committee was asked to identify parts of SR 60 where they would like to see a super 2, a spur or other improvements. Requesting these projects in a comp plan is an effective way to get INDOT's attention.

There was a request to make SR 60 four-lane all the way to the interstate. "It is the most traveled road we have - 8,000 cars a day – and there's no emergency lane," one committee member said. Other comments:

- East Washington and Campbellsburg are looking to expand water service.
- Wireless Internet connection is key to economic development. With it, the community can host low-impact businesses that don't need heavy infrastructure. "You will get more out of your dollar with that than with anything else," one committee member said.
- The Natural Resources Conservation Service can help with the county's erosion problems.
- Steep slope protection might be needed in some parts of the county.

When proposing any type of government regulation, the committee said the new rules should start off as fundamental and based upon common sense. Once the rules are in place, the community can decide if stricter regulations are needed.

People who want to develop should have a clear understanding of the system. For example:

1. Apply for any needed permits.
2. Review any zoning restrictions or applicable regulations.
3. Understand that there is an appeals process for the regulations.

A committee member said it is vital to complete and adopt the comprehensive plan because – without one - the county's few regulations can be legally challenged. Another warned that language such as "water quality" can trigger involvement from IDEM.

When reviewing petitions to develop property, perhaps the county should create a scoring system. There could be a checklist with questions such as, "Is land in a floodplain?," "Is land close to existing infrastructure?," and "Does the proposal match the development principles

detailed in the comprehensive plan?”

There might be different checklists for commercial, residential and agricultural development.

Review teams were assigned to the new chapters. They are:

- Transportation: John, Donnie and Leslie
- Utilities: David, Kerry and Lane
- Natural Resources: Brad, Scott and Shannon

What's Next

- Final steering committee meeting on Wednesday, Aug. 25 at 7 p.m. at Salem City Hall.
Review implementation plan & final edits.
- September 6 at 7 p.m. Plan Commission makes recommendation on comp plan.
- October: County commissioners review and adopt comp plan.