

ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, 2009, THE VERSAILLES-MIDWAY-WOODFORD COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION HELD A WORKSESSION AT 5:30 P.M. TO DISCUSS THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE.

Mr. Boggs started the meeting and confirmed that Mrs. Wilson will set the agenda. Tonight the first 38 pages will be reviewed. Mr. Boggs asked the Committee members and the other Planning Commission members to give a quick overview of what they feel is important to concentrate on and what they would like to see accomplished. Mr. Boggs felt it would speed up the process. Mr. Boggs stated that he is an environmentalist first and a farmer second and had points of view on each subject. He was first and foremost concerned with water to the river. There is maybe one clean creek in the county that you can swim in, but the rest are not fit to swim in or go near. By fixing that problem it would create a lot of opportunities for a different kind of growth in the county that is more profitable than just building houses. He felt that there are areas in both the southern and northern sections of the County that need to be protected and there should be a minimum of 30 acres in those sections because they are in watershed areas. Landowners should not be penalized so it all needs to be worked out. The other issue is the problem in Woodford County, especially downtown, in getting businesses to locate here because there is the opinion that this is not a friendly community to do business in. Something needs to be done to make our community more attractive to businesses. There are too many empty store fronts. When you drive into Versailles from any direction it does not look like a prosperous community and there is no reason for that. We may or may not be able to do anything in the Comprehensive Plan, but it is a concern that needs to be addressed. Mr. Boggs stated that he has had discussions with Michael Duckworth with EDA and in the past there was some political dynamics that may have caused some conflicts that no longer exist.

Mr. Parrot did not feel that he was prepared today to get into specifics; however, he does feel that there is a discriminatory component that says that you have to meet a standard to live in Woodford County. He felt that Woodford County should be portrayed as a normal place to live a normal life.

Mr. Boggs agreed and stated that he was told that one of the biggest issues is there is no place for employees of businesses to live in Woodford County because there is no opportunity for medium priced houses with the lot costs of \$50,000.00.

Chairman Blankenship stated that he would like to point out something regarding the Comprehensive Plan committee. Chairman Blankenship stated that Mr. Wolf has resigned from the committee, but needs to be commended for all the work he did on the last Comprehensive Plan update. He put in a lot of time and effort. Chairman Blankenship stated that he appointed Mr. Hume to the committee but gave it some thought because it was unbalanced as far as legislative appointments, so he contacted Mr. Parrott to see if he would be interested in sitting on the committee as well. This makes it two from the city and county and one from Midway. Chairman Blankenship stated that he is only doing this for the life of this committee because when you have five members (a quorum) of every sub-committee you have to have a public meeting and advertise it. That has not been the way it has been done and now we don't really have the money to do that. Chairman Blankenship stated that he just wanted to let all Planning Commission members know what had transpired since the last meeting.

Mr. Wolf felt that there are things in the Comprehensive Plan that actually deters businesses from coming to Woodford County. He did not believe that businesses will come until things are changed. The County did not get the stockyard or other businesses in Versailles because of the new urban concept that is too complicated. Mr. Hume agreed with Mr. Wolf that the new urbanism was so restrictive that it turned people away. It made it extremely difficult for developers. Mr. Wolf felt that there were too many hoops to jump through.

Mr. McClees stated that one thing that stood out to him at the class put on by KACO, was that we need to be people friendly and be more lenient. There should be options for someone to choose from in order to accomplish their goals. He did not feel that you just tell people, "No you can't do that". Mr. McClees stated that he also agrees with Mr. Wolf's comments.

Mr. Wolf stated that we created a monster. He stated that he does not want to see the County get really big either, but there needs to be some development. We have an empty shopping center that has just been sitting there for years. Mr. Wolf stated that the Planning Commission is also a little bit to blame for Lowes not coming because it was turned down. Mrs. Wilson stated that Lowes did not come because of the downturn in the economy. Mr. Wolf stated that was two months after. Mr. Parrott questioned how much time elapsed from the time they applied to the time they were approved? Mrs. Wilson stated it was a fairly quick process.

Mrs. Wilson stated that one thing the Planning Commission needs to be reminded of is that New Urbanism is not the only way to do something. It has always been an option. Mr. Wolf stated that the shopping center was new urbanism. Mrs. Wilson stated that is correct, but they chose to do new urbanism. They also could have applied to change the zoning back to B-4 but they did not apply. Why they did not, we don't know. There was an incentive to do new urbanism by increasing the density. Waivers on setbacks and those types of things were given and they liked that because they could get a higher yield, but, if they want to develop the other way they can. Adena Woods is a new subdivision and they chose to develop the old way. Rose Ridge is another that chose the old way to develop. It is a choice and the task force wanted it to be a choice. The choice was never taken away and people forget that.

Mr. Wolf stated that they had meetings to get the new urbanism changed on the Rubloff and no one showed up. Mrs. Wilson stated that it took them forever to ask for the zone change. Mr. Wolf stated it took a long time to get it done. Mrs. Wilson stated that it was less than 6 months and that is pretty fast for a zone change. If the Planning Commission wants to remove the new urbanism that is something they can talk about. Part of that would be revoking those Subdivision Regulations as well. Mr. Wolf stated that the development out off of Falling Springs has not sold one house. Mr. Boggs felt that is due to the economy. Mrs. Wilson stated that the economy will have to be considered as well.

Mr. Wells stated that they are selling houses in Adena Woods and other places that developed the traditional way. Mr. Wells questioned if there are any other new urbanism developments other than Rubloff and the one out by the middle school? Mrs. Wilson stated that the industrial park in Midway is under new urbanism. The Elm Street development was approved that way, but has not been developed.

Mr. McClees stated that we are fine on residential, what the community needs is commercial business. Mr. Boggs agreed.

Mrs. Wilson stated that she handed out a letter from the EDA, who would like to meet with the Comprehensive Plan Committee and talk about those types of things. It needs to be decided when and how to meet with groups like that who would be kind of a sub-committee. Mr. Boggs questioned what the best way would be? Perhaps they could submit comments in writing and then come and make a short presentation. Mrs. Wilson stated that the next chapter is People, Jobs, and Houses and then the Economic Development. Economically there are a lot of differences than just four years ago and this is a twenty year plan. The EDA may have more information that they look at that we could consider and the committee has changed as well.

Chairman Blankenship questioned if they allow the EDA to come, which he felt they should, what if the hospital board, or school board also want to come and address the committee, does that open it up to a

public hearing or do they want to wait and have them come when there is a public hearing? Mr. Boggs stated that he does not know the legalities, but does want their input. Mr. Hume stated that these are all arms of the government and they could have them come to the committee meetings and then hold the public hearings. Mr. McClees stated that the public needs to be involved. Chairman Blankenship stated that they have to have public hearings and they will be involved.

Mrs. Wilson stated that during the last Comprehensive Plan update, each of those entities had committees and they sent a spokesperson from those to represent them. Mr. Wolf stated that he felt that Michael Duckworth would really do a good job. Mr. Wolf stated that they overdid it the last time and the process was anything but normal.

Mr. Boggs questioned if they should require that they send them what they are going to talk about a week ahead of time so that they can review it and be prepared? The meeting is only for an hour and they should be able to say what they want in fifteen minutes. Mr. McClees agreed. Mr. Parrott did not think they have ever required that before on zone change hearings or limited the time to speak. Mr. Boggs stated that these are not public meetings so it is different.

Mrs. Wilson explained that one of the things talked about at a training session a couple of weeks ago is that this is a judicial process, not a quasi-judicial process. In other words you are allowed to go out and talk to people and talk to the legislative officials and you do want the public involved in the process.

Mr. Hume questioned at what point they involve the public? Mrs. Wilson stated that they are required to have at least one public hearing on the process but they can have more. Mrs. Wilson felt that they need to review each chapter as a committee and then at the end compile a list of improvements to be made and then have a public hearing. The decision needs to be made if there needs to be a change in the Goals and Objectives, to the Urban Service Boundary, etc. That is a bit down the road because first everyone needs to understand what is in the Plan and what is or is not important. Also it needs to be determined what we can do without hiring a consultant. Do we need to update the statistical information or are we generally on the right course? Do we need to take out the new urban aspect of the plan or not? Those are things that we need feedback on. Mr. Wolf felt that the EDA is an organization that does a lot and can offer some good advice.

Mr. Parrott questioned if there are any obligations that limit them due to the Regional Coordination? Mrs. Wilson stated that there are not. Woodford County is one of the first communities to have a regional element in the plan. On the last page there is a summary and those things have been addressed in the last four years.

Mr. Boggs questioned if there is ever any joint effort from the different counties to discuss regional planning? Mrs. Wilson stated that there is a Regional Planning Counsel through the Bluegrass Add. They meet quarterly. Mrs. Wilson stated that she has attended those meetings and sometimes the Chairman or other members will attend those. Mrs. Wilson stated that she goes when there is something of interest to her and sometimes she will pass on the agenda to members to see if there is any interest. Recently the Lexington Board of Realtors tried to have a work shop to discuss regional issues, but it got cancelled. They did to a survey that is interesting regarding community issues. Mrs. Wilson handed out a copy of their survey to the members.

Mr. Wolf stated they spent \$200,000.00 on a traffic survey and never built one road. They can use that survey again in this plan. Mrs. Wilson stated that was a grant and the Planning Commission did not spend money on it.

Mrs. Wilson stated that there is an organization called the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), but she has not been to any meetings and did not think Woodford County is a part of it. Mr. Traugott stated that Fayette and Jessamine are the only two participating in it.

Mr. Boggs questioned if Mr. Evans has anything to add. Mr. Evans stated that he is happy with the Comprehensive Plan as it is.

Mr. Traugott stated that he would like them to solicit the land owners regarding the Urban Service Boundary and perhaps a bit beyond that. Mr. Traugott stated that he was told that was done a couple of Plans ago. Mrs. Wilson stated that when the Bluegrass Add assisted in writing the plan they did a process where they actually took applications from people stating if they wanted to be in or out of the Urban Service Boundary and why. In the last two Comprehensive Plans it was determined that we had enough land left in the Urban Service Boundary to accommodate the growth we needed based on the businesses and schools that we had and other formulas. The boundary did not change, although one year it shifted when they took out the land for the northwest connector and moved it out to the Backer property on US 60. When you solicit the land owners, you need to know how much land you need in the Urban Service Boundary. Then you talk to the City and find out where services are located, how many houses are projected and will the school system handle those. It is a big puzzle and you need to make sure it all fits. You can't just allow everyone who wants their farms in the Urban Service Boundary in because you could come up negative. You have to know that the infrastructure will support it. Mr. Traugott stated that it would be nice to know what the landowners are thinking and what their intentions are because twenty years is a long time.

Mr. Southworth clarified that water and sewer is not bound by this Urban Service Boundary. Their Urban Service Boundary is regulated by the State and they go all the way to Frankfort and past Sycamore into Fayette County. Mrs. Wilson agreed. Mr. Southworth stated that there is a difference in a utility service area and the Versailles Urban Service Boundary. Chairman Blankenship agreed that utilities are not controlled by Urban Service Boundaries. They are controlled by the Division of Water and the water district associations. Mrs. Wilson stated that some communities control their urban planning boundary based on that.

Mr. Hume stated that he believes that they need to be more careful with the rural properties. A lot of plans come in and it is not out of need, but just wanting to break up a farm. It should be an obligation to determine if there is a need. It is a very fine line between need and property rights, but a lot of the controversy comes from rural developments. He felt that they need to be more careful in approving every rural development that comes in. They also need to be more aware of traffic since they are creating these denser subdivisions. Perhaps they should require that more developers provide ingress and egress to those properties. Traffic is a huge issue that they are putting on the rural roads and some of the outskirt roads around town.

Mr. Wolf questioned if Mr. Hume has read the Wilbur Smith Study? It explains the traffic improvements that need to be made and none of them have been done and the City is suffering because of it. Mr. Hume agreed. Mr. Hume stated that he lives on High Street and it is like a drag strip and it is only going to get worse because of the very dense development in Wooldridge Gardens. Mr. Hume did not believe that people use the connector road to the Bluegrass Parkway the way it was thought they would. Mr. Wolf felt if just four miles of road were built it would take a lot of traffic out of downtown.

Mrs. Wilson stated that she is on a committee with the City where they are evaluating transportation in Versailles. It is called the Northwest Mobility Study. Hopefully, that will be finished in the next few months and will be great information to go in the Comprehensive Plan. They are already doing all the statistical analysis of what impact some of those activities would have, such as the Crossfield Drive

extension, the extension of Falling Springs Blvd, etc. It is not specific about exact location, but is general. They have taken traffic counts and studies and they are digesting all of that. There will be another public hearing in September. The last two hearings they have held have had poor attendance. Mr. Wolf stated that there were as many there against it as there was for it. Mrs. Wilson stated that there is a website for that study and you can review all the meeting minutes. What they find in that study could have a lot of impact on the Urban Service Boundary and the Comprehensive Plan. Mrs. Wilson stated that this brings up issues, such as requiring traffic impact studies, environmental impact studies, and how to make it easier for people. If you make development too hard, there will be none. These requirements also drive up the lot costs because the developers are going to pass that expense on to whoever buys the lots. There are many questions you have to try to answer to allow development and still protect the infrastructure. The question is how to make the process easier and still get quality development.

Mr. Hume stated that sometimes the public is very fickle and they want it all, but not at any cost. In the case of the traffic studies, those who want the roads the most are those whose land are most affected and the fact is it affects everyone in the County. Sometimes you have to take the heat and make those tough calls.

Mrs. Wilson stated some of the issues that have come up in the mobility study are that although there may be votes to put in traffic lights, or roads, or other things; because of State or Federal laws there could be some criteria that do not warrant it.

Mr. McClees stated that most all of his topics of concern have already been talked about and he felt some good points were coming out.

Mr. Boggs stated that from his point of view, he saw no reason to change anything in the Regional Coordination section. He questioned if everyone agreed?

Mrs. Wilson stated that some comments that she noted was that it was mentioned that the airport might move and that is obviously not going to happen with the expansion of the runways. The water issue with the Kentucky River is being addressed and does not seem to be a concern. Mr. Boggs stated that he has spoken with Mr. Withers and requested that he make a few comments on behalf of the South Woodford Water District. In Nonesuch at 5:00 p.m. you do not have water. The water tanks only hold about two day's supply of water. How much water do we really have? Mr. Southworth stated that water is not an issue. There may be an infrastructure issue, but there is no shortage of water and they good on water supply for the next twenty years. Mrs. Wilson stated that they buy the water from the City of Versailles. Mr. Southworth stated that they can send all the water they want, but they might not be able to handle it. They can draw 10 million gallons per day. Mrs. Wilson questioned if other communities are drawing from the same pool? Mr. Southworth stated that Lawrenceburg is, but they do not draw much. The update to the plant was completed in 2006 and only about 4 million gallons per day is being used. Chairman Blankenship stated that the State has limits on how much can be drawn depending on the flow of the river. Mr. Southworth stated that is true in especially dry weather conditions, but if that were the case everyone would be in the same boat. There may be restrictions, but they would not be without water. They also have a connection to Kentucky American Water and they can draw from there as needed, which they prefer not to do because they pay more than what they can sell it for. Mr. Southworth stated that with some simple upgrades that they planned for they can actually go up to 14 million gallons a day if they needed to. Chairman Blankenship stated that they do need Mr. Withers to come and speak to them regarding what size lines they have and the like.

Mr. Parrott felt that a good point has been raised regarding infrastructure. There are roads that need to be improved and widened, etc. There are those that complain about septic tanks, so there needs to be sewer lines extended and installed. There needs to be upgrades to water lines. Also there are times you will get

behind vehicles traveling 25 miles per hour on rural roads, so there should be some pull offs for them in order to let traffic go around them. There need to be some common sense things done and the expense does not need to be put on the backs of people who would have children who were raised in Woodford County that would like to stay here but cannot afford to. Mrs. Wilson questioned who will pay for that? Mr. Wells stated that it will come from the payroll taxes of industries that we bring in. A lot of people see Versailles as a bedroom community and a lot of what Mr. Parrott has mentioned is the reason why. Mr. Wells stated that one of the things he got out of the Regional Coordination section was the payroll taxes that Woodford County loses because of people going to work in Fayette, Jessamine and Franklin County. Mr. Parrott stated that he believes that the people who are living here are going to have to pay for it. If you move here or are living here already you are benefiting from the existing infrastructure that you did not necessarily pay for. You can't put all that on the backs of the developers and the people are going to have to pay their fair share. We all have to pay for the roads that we use and it is not fair to restrict a free market economy on land use. It puts people who have homes and the people who want homes up against each other.

Mr. Wolf stated that in his experience he has seen that there is always half the crowd that is against anything. Mr. Hume agreed that it is that way when it comes to a road. Mrs. Wilson stated that there theory is that if you build the road they will come and they do not want them to. Mr. Parrott stated that we have a population of 20,000 people and a handful of people show up to oppose everything, which is not a majority of the people.

Mrs. Wilson stated that this section talks about three opportunities regionally; one being promoting equine and the preservation of farms and natural resources and the 2010 Equestrian Games is doing just that. The Fiscal Court just passed the farm ordinance where people can put a conservation easement on their farm if they so choose. That was a seven year process. Fayette and Scott Counties also have that type of program. The next issue is opportunities for mobility and the City of Versailles study is going to go a long way in addressing that issue, even regionally because a lot of times the people using the roads are those just passing through from one county to another. Mrs. Wilson stated that the last one is the Kentucky River frontage and protecting the water quality. People who have creek properties that flow into the river could put conservation easements on them and they in return could get some tax benefits. Mrs. Wilson stated that after reading the section she did not think they had been doing too badly since they are only four years into a twenty year plan.

Mr. Boggs questioned what they will look at next month? Mrs. Wilson stated that it is People, Jobs, and Housing and it is a really big chapter. There are a lot of maps and charts and statistics. It could be split in half, but it is probably doable. They need to decide if they want anyone to come and talk, or if they want her to get some information she can. Mr. Boggs asked the committee members to raise their hands if they want someone from the EDA to come and speak. It was unanimous. Mrs. Wilson stated that she will contact Michael Duckworth to see if he is available.

Mr. Carl Ellis questioned if Lowes could have come to the shopping center without a zone change? Mrs. Wilson stated that because Rubloff chose to do new urbanism and it restricted the size of the buildings, they needed a zone change to lift those restrictions. Mr. Ellis just wanted it understood that no one forced new urbanism on Rubloff, it was their choice. When Rubloff first came to this community they started a zone change process and then stopped it in order to work with the people who wanted new urbanism. They then came before the Planning Commission and that is what they asked for and they were not forced to do that. Also, Rubloff has never done anything they ever said they were going to. If they had, there would have never been any discussion regarding Lowes at all. The other issue is that there are a lot of downtowns that would love to have some traffic. Mr. Ellis stated that he lives and works downtown and would like to see some type of planning to capture some of that traffic. Many towns are drying up

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because of no traffic. Other than traffic early in the morning or late afternoon, there are no traffic problems.

At this time the work session ended for the 6:30 p.m. scheduled Planning Commission meeting.