

ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2009, THE VERSAILLES-MIDWAY-WOODFORD COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION HELD A WORKSESSION AT 5:30 P.M. TO DISCUSS THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Mr. Boggs questioned if any of the members have anything they wish to discuss from the last meeting they had? Mr. Boggs introduced Michael Duckworth to speak to the Planning Commission.

Mr. Duckworth introduced members of the EDA: Gene Hornback, Malcolm Endicott, J.C. Moraja, Smith Mitchell, Jack Kain (came in a few minutes later).

Mr. Duckworth stated that they have had a long rich history in the community and have had a chance to bring some industry to the community. Mr. Duckworth apologized for not getting the letter out sooner, but thought everyone has it now. They will be sending this on to each of the legislative bodies. Mr. Duckworth stated that he, Malcolm and Gene are a subcommittee working on their thoughts and ideas regarding the Comprehensive Plan and the other members do make comments as well. They believe that this is a very important process and is very important to the EDA and they want to be involved. The last couple of years over 700 manufacturing jobs have been lost in the community and that amounts to a loss of \$471,000 just in payroll per week. Those are numbers that are known regarding the manufacturing sector. Everyone must work together to try and attract other industry to the community. It is very important to note that in 2007 there was a company that had 767 employees and that company now does not have that many employees. One of the top employees in our community now is the School Board who has 700 full and part-time employees with a 19.6 million dollar annual payroll. Data that is not included is for Midway College, KCTCS, Montessori, and St. Leo School. Woodford County Government has 155 employees and several of the farms have large employment. There are dozens of small companies that have 10-35 employees. Mr. Duckworth stated that the EDA knows the section of the Comprehensive Plan called, "People, Jobs, and Housing", due to the fact that they have worked on the Midway Station Property for several years trying to bring industry to that area. Mr. Duckworth stated that they have a good feeling about what works as far as industrial and commercial and feel that they have some good input on what can be in the future. Kentucky was 9<sup>th</sup> in the nation last year with 442 projects, but of course none of those were in Woodford County. Since 2006 there have been no new companies locate here, but there have been 8 companies who have expanded with 66 new jobs. The EDA's hope is to begin attracting new businesses to our community but we need to make sure that the current Comprehensive Plan and Ordinances support the efforts. The economy is starting to turn around a bit and when we do come out of that we need to be ready for it. Mr. Duckworth did some research to use as examples with one being Conoco Phillips who purchased a 432 acre tract in Louisville, Colorado. They invested \$456 million dollars in that community and will hire 1500 people by 2013. Louisville, Colorado was selected as America's "Best Place to Live" in 2009. The population is similar to Versailles and they are a bit north of Denver so there are a lot of comparisons there. The next example is Apple who are locating in Maiden, North Carolina and purchasing 183 acres to build a high tech data center with 500 employees to service iTunes and iPhones. This will generate about 3000 construction jobs in that area. Mr. Duckworth stated that the question for EDA is how long it would have taken to get through the process in Woodford County? With some experience they can say it is a very lengthy process. That is not all the Planning Commission's role because the government and the EDA are all involved in that as well. Streamlining the system needs to be looked at so that these jobs can be done. When anything comes up in this community there has to be traffic studies, geological studies, etc. before anything can get done. Mr. Duckworth stated that when he first became Chairman of the EDA he was approached by someone who thought it would be nice to check with Cabela's to see if they would like to locate on the Midway Station property. Mr. Duckworth stated that he tried to call them and they first direct you to their website. The minimum package to locate in a community is 25 acres of land plus five years of payroll and property tax abatement. If you cannot meet those criteria up front they won't talk to you. Most large companies are looking for an incentive package. When the distribution center for Osram came in the

county government put together an incentive package for them to locate here. Cabela's is looking to locate in Kentucky. Hotels, restaurants, and other tourist businesses follow them to many locations. Mr. Duckworth stated that even though he is not a hunter or fisherman, Cabela's is a nice place to visit because there are so many things to do there. Mr. Duckworth stated that future growth as far as industry is not going to be manufacturing like we have seen in the past, but more high technology. Mr. Duckworth encouraged the Planning Commission members to go the LBAR website. There are some things that are important to know and one is that nearly 46.4% of people feel we are going in the right direction and 40.3% feel that we are going in the wrong direction. 43.9% feel that economic development was their top issue of concern, followed by 24.4% education and 10.7% drug/substance abuse. The three issues of least concern was 6.5% environment, 4.3% preserve history, and 1.7% water supply. Economic development was the top issue in all ten counties. The next question was what activity or business your community needs more of: 22.3 % sports and recreation, 21.7% grocery stores, 14.3% restaurants. The answers to the greatest transportation problem – 29.3% road repair, 24.5% public transportation, 17.8% traffic congestion. Nearly 62% said they leave Woodford County at least twice a week for health care, food, and daily use items. The 2007 Zogby Poll on rural communities survey results of 3000 surveyed, was 61% stated increasing government regulations are deteriorating land owners rights, 51% stated that land use restrictions create problems with land owners, 50% stated that environmental restrictions deteriorate land owners rights, and 81% stated that the amount of taxes paid does not equal the amount of services provided by the government.

According to the Progressive Farmer, Barren County, Kentucky was selected as the 2007 Best Rural County in America. One thing that stood out on their website was this quote from their Assistant Superintendent, Bill Walters, "It's amazing how people...all types of people from all walks of life cooperate with each other to get things done here." Barren County has three industrial parks that are full of tenants and a fourth one under construction. The survey was based on a balance of industry, healthcare, education, home prices, land prices, air quality, and crime rate. Presently in Woodford County and the six surrounding counties, there are 897 farms for sale and that is the highest level since they have been keeping records. Since 2005 the population of Woodford County has grown 3.19%. Versailles has only added 25 persons per year and the City of Midway has actually lost population. Woodford County has the highest housing cost and in 2007 the average cost for a home was \$200,323.00. The entire State is going through this type of situation. Mr. Duckworth stated that he has sit with many dialoging over the years about planning and zoning, but is wondering if they are going in the right direction. Mr. Duckworth stated that he has two children in college and he would love to see them come back to Versailles someday. Mr. Duckworth stated that he works with lots of kids in the Woodford Leadership of Tomorrow and lots of things they comment on is wanting to come back to our town, but lots of things keep them from coming back. The housing costs are high and there is not much opportunity here. All the night life and entertainment is out of town and we are missing out on all those dollars. Every time a teenager or a 20 and 30 something leaves, those are dollars leaving our town. That is what was good about the tobacco dollars because the money was earned here and it was spent here. Teenagers have a lot of expendable income these days and that money is leaving our town. Our town is a small town with rules for a town much larger. The question becomes do we have too many rules? Mr. Duckworth stated that after sitting through over three years of what they went through in Midway, he would answer yes. Mr. Duckworth stated that he sat through the Dover, Kohl studies and it appears that has been used against development. Mr. Duckworth stated that Mr. Anderson who will be doing the development in Midway wanted the EDA to go through the process with him because he did not feel comfortable going through it alone. He is one of the larger developers in central Kentucky right now. This is a very high risk game that has very large running cost on the land and on interest. Those are the two largest items. The longer that land sits the more it cost and that raises the lot cost when they resell them. Mr. Duckworth referred to a Bluegrass Add study that was done in 1979 and there were some comments regarding it never being fully implemented. Mr. Duckworth stated that he questions if the things they are doing today have ever been fully implemented, such as the traffic study, because only a few bits of that has been done.

Mr. Duckworth stated that he feels that this community is at a crisis level. In other towns you do see empty stores and lots, but he questioned if they have been empty as long as they have been in this community. Mr. Duckworth felt this needs to be worked on and not put off any further. Mr. Duckworth stated that the EDA are spending time going through the Comprehensive Plan and have been spending most of their time on the Goals and Objectives that are located in the front of the book. Mr. Duckworth stated that they want to work with the Planning Commission and the legislative bodies and felt that perhaps in the past they have all worked against each other. Mr. Duckworth stated that the EDA feels strongly that some of the things that are in the book are keeping them from attracting business. They hope by December 1<sup>st</sup> to close the deal on the Midway Station property and they will own zero acres. Before they step into another venture, they feel that their time and efforts are best spent on the Comprehensive Plan and the guiding principals. It is a hard sell when they have over 200 pages of covenants and restrictions. It did not work.

Mr. Evans stated that he is uncertain what the EDA wants the Planning Commission to do. Mr. Duckworth stated that the revision is starting and they want to pour information and input into the process as it is allowed. Mr. Duckworth stated that they have already gone through the first part of it and made comments and marked up the document.

Mrs. Wilson stated that at this point they are going through the rest of the book first. The part in the front is called a working summary and is a summary of the entire book. Mr. Duckworth stated that they can go section by section with the Planning Commission if they would like. Mr. Duckworth stated that the EDA has decided that the next role as the EDA is to look at this document. A lot of time is taken going to these meetings. Mr. Duckworth stated that they want to make a real impact on this town and do not want to get hung up again. They have some suggestions and some are pretty bold and will take a lot of cooperation.

Mr. Hume, questioned if they have anything they have marked up that they can give the Planning Commission now? They need to see specifics in order to form some ideas. Is the problem the process, is it tax cut incentives that have not been given by the governments, or what? The Planning Commission would like to see some detail and would appreciate receiving that information. Mr. Duckworth stated that they will have something soon.

Mr. Endicott stated that the purpose of the work session is to discuss the Comprehensive Plan book. Mrs. Wilson stated that they were looking at only one chapter tonight, "People, Jobs, and Housing." Mr. Endicott stated that it is difficult in an hour to give specifics. The existing Comprehensive Plan is a very nice book that a lot of time and energy and effort were put into it. Out of State consultants were used for part of its preparation. Mrs. Wilson stated that they were not part of the Comprehensive Plan, but were a part of a prior study. Mr. Endicott stated that he has a document that was prepared by Farrell, Rutherford for Midway Station and there are similarities with the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Endicott stated that the document prepared for Midway Station was a total disaster. He indicated that he was not saying that the Comprehensive Plan is a total disaster, but when you start looking at it, you begin to wonder if KRS 100 intended for there to be such a document for a community of our size. It is very complex and it references in the back to the Appendix which refers to a document called "Town and Country." When the book was published they had not gotten to the Appendix so that was added in a disc form. When you look at that section there are names associated with that who were out of town consultants.

Mr. Boggs stated that because of the limited time before the regular meeting, if Mr. Endicott could be a bit more specific, since it seems clear that the opinion is that the book is too complicated. Mr. Endicott stated that he believes that "Town and Country" should be completely eliminated. When you do that, you have to go back and edit the rest of the book so that it is not an influence throughout the book. There are a list of opinions that he does not feel are shared by the majority of Woodford County. Mr. Boggs stated that he wants to hear the EDA comments and this section may need to be carried over for several

meetings. Mr. Boggs requested that they try to get some specifics to them by the next meeting so that they can study those. Mr. Endicott questioned if this process will be taking possibly up to 18 months? Mr. Boggs hoped that it would not, but Mrs. Wilson stated that it could be that long or longer. Mrs. Wilson stated that they did not legally have to start the process until March, but they wanted to go ahead and get started. Mr. Endicott stated that it says you have to start it, but it does not say when you have to finish it.

Mr. Butler stated that if the Planning Commission were not to finish it in a timely manner, a Court could order them to. If it got to that point, there would probably be a court time frame and they could end up having to readopt what they had for the time being. It seems that the Planning Commission is trying to get out ahead of the curve.

Mr. Parrott stated that he wished to thank the EDA for participating and felt that they have a wide variety of expertise. He stated that he looks forward to hearing what else they have to say. The Comprehensive Plan is very complex and hardly anyone can understand it.

Mr. McClees stated that he also appreciates the EDA for their efforts and with the community getting involved they should be able to make accomplishments and be more realistic with more realistic land and housing costs.

Mr. Evans questioned how the Planning Commission is suppose to get people to lower the prices on their houses? Mr. McClees stated that they need to work toward that.

Mr. Duckworth stated that ten years ago when they did the research, it was about \$24,000.00 per acre on industrial cost. The interest has been much more than \$23,000.00 if you put it on a per acre basis. It is the time issue that they get into regarding getting through the process whether it is a fast food restaurant or a 150 employee plant. Mr. Duckworth stated that some of his banking customers, who also do planning and zoning business in other counties, say that some of the things they have to go through two or three meetings here they can get through in other counties in one meeting. Perhaps they can shorten up some of the processes because the interest's costs can be detrimental. The EDA is interested in bringing business whether it is fast food, factories, high tech industries, etc. If they can get through the process in a timely manner, they have more of a chance. It will be a while now before the economy turns around, but it will turn around and that is just the way the economy works. When it turns around they need to be ready for it.

Mr. Jack Kain commented that he has done some development in Woodford County and it has been very costly by the time it gets to the end. In some cases it has taken ten years. We are known as a community that developers need to stay away from. They are not interested in coming here. It probably started years ago when the horse farms did not want any high priced labor in Woodford County. To keep it low they did not want any development. In the last twenty five years they managed to bring in some industry and it helped. Those people like that people drive through our community and the destination is somewhere else. If we want future generations to come to this community and prosper we are going to have to relax some of these rules.

Mr. Evans stated that he just cannot see how the Planning Commission can change the price of anything. Mr. Hume stated that once they can get some detail as to what the developers find difficult about the process, that is what the Planning Commission can look at. We cannot control housing or land costs, but we can manage the process. The public wants the traffic studies, and landscaping and all those aesthetic things to make sure that they are at a comfortable level. Mr. Hume stated that he has worked in Planning and Zoning and Building in Fayette County for the last twenty years, and understands those concerns. If the problem is just a process then they can work through that. Those things are easily reviewed. If they

can get some hard facts about what they can do, they will certainly look into it. The Planning Commission cannot offer tax incentives and those types of things. Mr. Duckworth stated that is why they have sent the same letter to the governmental bodies. Mrs. Wilson stated that the Planning Commission cannot build those roads that are in the studies. Mr. Hume stated that if it is just the technical issues, the Planning Commission can work on those, but the applicants need to be prepared when they come before them as well. If they choose to pick the most restrictive zone and then end up unable to build it, that is not the Planning Commission's fault. Mr. Hume stated that he has a pretty good background in the technical aspects of this and those things can always be massaged to make the process easier, but preparedness by the applicant is a major issue. The Technical Review Committee does an excellent job in trying to get them through to the Planning Commission, but the applicant needs to be prepared.

Mr. Endicott stated that they are talking about the Comprehensive Plan and he is interested more in industry and commerce rather than housing developments and lot costs. They can assume hypothetical's regarding 150 acres here, wherever that may be, and the majority may be in favor with only a few against it. The way the policies and guidelines are written in this book it takes only a mediocre lawyer to pick out two or three of them and file a case against it.

Mr. Butler suggested that they start looking at the process and that can be on going separate from the Comprehensive Plan and it could happen right now. It would not be accomplished that efficiently in the Comprehensive Plan update. Mr. Butler stated that Mr. Endicott is correct that portions of the Comprehensive Plan are used in lawsuits. Mr. Butler stated that he has found that often there is a result that everyone wants, but people take the wrong way to get there. The Comprehensive Plan absolutely is important especially in terms of commercial development because if you can designate property and clear up some of the inconsistencies and make the criteria more clear, then people who come in and propose those things will have an easier time of it and the Planning Commission will have an easier time reviewing it, and he will have an easier time defending it. Now is the time to take care of this and look at acreage, and look at areas, and look at policies and everyone needs to agree to live by them. That could discourage some of the lawsuits. Woodford County is more litigious than just about anywhere else he has dealt with.

Mr. Endicott read the first goal in the Comprehensive Plan, "To understand and accommodate the various levels of commercial needs in the cities of the county." Mr. Endicott did not feel that we are doing that.

Mr. Boggs stated that last month they went through the Goals and Objectives and questioned if Mr. Duckworth had anything he wanted to comment on specifically? Mrs. Wilson stated that last month they went through the Goals and Objectives for Regional Coordination, not the whole plan. The Planning Commission has not looked at the Working Summary.

Mr. Endicott stated that is another thing that is confusing, there are Goals and Objectives in the front of the book and it makes you think they are for the whole book until you get into each chapter and there are more listed. Mrs. Wilson stated that there are not more listed, they are the same ones repeated from the front of the book.

Mr. Duckworth stated that they have some comments to pass on. Mrs. Wilson stated that if the Planning Commission members want to stop going through the book chapter by chapter and do the Goals and Objectives first, they can do that. There are Goals and Objectives in each chapter that is specific to that chapter and then they are all lumped together in the Working Summary. If the members want to back up and do the Goals and Objectives first they need to stop and back up and do it that way.

Mr. Duckworth stated that he likes Mr. Butler's idea about putting some things in place right away so that they as the EDA can go ahead after December 1<sup>st</sup> and look at some ideas for development. Mr. Duckworth stated that he is all about short meetings if they are even needed at all.

Mrs. Wilson stated that compared to how the meetings were several years ago, they are already more streamlined. The Planning Commission use to wait 90 days before taking action on a zone change and they hardly ever waived the by-laws and took action like they do today. It used to take many months.

Mr. Kain stated that the other thing that used to happen would be that the Chairman might look at his watch and say it is time to go home and you might have lawyers and expert witnesses that you have to pay again to come back the following month. Mrs. Wilson agreed that used to happen but it is not that way anymore. Generally the Planning Commission and Staff receive a lot of praise on how quickly we try and get through the process.

Mr. Duckworth stated that he understands that some of the things they might like to see are outside the power of the Planning Commission, but there have been so many things picked out of the Comprehensive Plan that has tied up things for months and years. That is not an acceptable way to do business in a community. If we are about trying to balance our community, we need to realize we are out of balance. We have plenty of residential lots and commercial lots and industrial land. We would not be able to accommodate if an Apple came here and needed 150 acres. Mrs. Wilson questioned why they could not have come to Midway Station? Mr. Duckworth stated that they were fighting a lot of other battles. Mrs. Wilson clarified that the restrictions that were put on the Midway Station were not put on them by the Planning Commission.

Mr. Boggs stated that what he has gotten out of everything that has been said is that the process needs to be speeded up. Mr. Duckworth stated that is certainly a part of it.

Mr. Butler stated that if the Comprehensive Plan is not clear there will be a lawsuit and it will be in Court for months.

Mr. Boggs thanked the EDA for coming.

Mrs. Wilson stated that the Planning Commission needs to decide if they want to do the Goals and Objectives first.

The members of the Committee decided that they would like to back up and review the Working Summary first that includes the Goals and Objectives.