

ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2009, THE VERSAILLES-MIDWAY-WOODFORD COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION HELD A WORKSESSION AFTER THE REGULAR MEETING TO DISCUSS THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE.

Mr. Boggs began the session and called upon Mr. Endicott from the EDA to speak.

Mr. Endicott stated that the books the Planning Commission must follow are the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and the two Subdivision Regulations. The Comprehensive Plan is intended to give the Planning Commission direction and guidance regarding zone changes and other things. Once the zone change is complete, the other documents may be used to continue on with the development. Mr. Endicott stated that it was his understanding from the last meeting that the committee wanted a few ideas from the EDA regarding Chapter 1, but was then told by Mrs. Wilson that the Planning Commission had decided to discuss Goals and Objectives first. Mrs. Wilson stated that they wanted to discuss the goals and objectives for commercial and industrial. Mr. Endicott gave out a handout concerning Chapter 1. Mr. Endicott stated that it does not take a sentence and say it should be read a certain way. It only points to potential problems with words. The point is to try and make the Planning Commission aware that the Comprehensive Plan is the book that they go by and the question is if the Planning Commission realizes that. If the Planning Commission disagrees with something in the book, or if they are not going to go by it, then it should be removed. Mr. Endicott apologized for not getting the handout to them sooner. Mr. Endicott stated that Mrs. Wilson has given the Planning Commission a handout explaining how she feels the goals and objectives have been met. The accomplishments came from the public and he questioned if the Planning Commission helped to cause or complete any of the accomplishments?

Mrs. Wilson stated that every time they approve a zone change they accomplish the goals and objectives. Mr. Endicott stated that the way he reads the document it is incumbent on the Planning Commission to be knowledgeable of what the cities need and to assist in getting more of the accomplishments done. The Planning Commission should be knowledgeable of the commercial and industrial needs of the County and the Cities and be looking to the future to help achieve more accomplishments.

Mr. Boggs questioned what the pet peeve is out of all of these that need to be changed? Mr. Endicott stated that it is really not the goals and objectives that stand out to him, but some of the other things. When you talk about preservation and protection of the land, that is great, but the way it is written it is so broad and generalized that you really don't know what you are talking about. Chairman Hume stated that he thought that objectives were supposed to be very broad ideas. Mr. Endicott stated that it talks about food and fiber, but horses are not food and fiber.

Mr. Boggs stated that each time the EDA has been there the Planning Commission has asked for specifics and they still are not giving them those specifics. The question is what is it that the Planning Commission can do to make it more attractive for people to come to Woodford County to do business? As of yet, nothing has been said that helps. Mr. Endicott stated that they are just in Chapter 1. Mr. Boggs stated that the Planning Commission wants to see business grow in Woodford County. What is it that the Planning Commission can do to help? The Planning Commission did not write the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Endicott stated that the Planning Commission approved it. Mr. Boggs stated that is correct, they read it and approved it. Mr. Endicott stated to rewrite the Comprehensive Plan with specific terms would take 500 to 1000 man hours and the EDA is not going to do that. Mr. Boggs stated that his question is if the Planning Commission is doing anything wrong that is making it hard for the EDA to do business in Woodford County and if they are, what is it? Mr. Endicott stated that he really cannot say anything specific regarding this particular chapter. Mr. Boggs stated that every time something goes wrong the Planning Commission gets blamed because of our rules and regulations. If that is the case, what are those things that are causing the problems? Mr. Endicott stated that the entire Plan would have to be rewritten to address all of those. Mr. Boggs did not agree.

Mr. Hume questioned what is in the document that is keeping people from coming to Woodford County and opening up a business? Mr. Endicott stated that they will work on it again if given the chance. Mr. Hume stated that there must be something on their minds that they keep pointing to that would bring business to Woodford County. We have talked about other counties giving land to people. The Planning Commission does not have the power to do that. There was mention that big tax incentives have been given and the Planning Commission does not have the power to do that either and those things have nothing to do with the Comprehensive Plan. Surely, there is something they have discussed that the Planning Commission could do to help bring business to Woodford County. Mr. Hume stated that he does not know a lot about the EDA, but he does know a lot about planning and zoning.

Mr. Endicott stated that they want the Planning Commission to know what is in the Comprehensive Plan. He questioned if any of the members have read the Plan and knows what it says. Mrs. Wilson stated that is why they were trying to go through it chapter by chapter so that they could understand it. Mr. Endicott stated that now they are looking at the Goals and Objectives and he is not suggesting any changes to the Goals and Objectives. All he is asking is that the members look at them and question if that is what they are doing as a Planning Commission.

Mr. Parrott felt that they are putting Mr. Endicott on the spot and the Planning Commission does not seem to be doing a very good job in answering the questions themselves. If you go to the Goals and Objectives, such as in #1, there is nothing that is measurable. There needs to be some measurable criteria in there that says what the needs are. Do they need to be able to maintain a certain unemployment level? Are they meeting tax base needs? That is something that needs to be included in the Comprehensive Plan so that they can assess whether or not the goals are being met. Mr. Parrott stated that Mr. Duckworth did offer a suggestion and that was to remove all the constraints that are proposed on commercial and industrial development and just follow the State restrictions.

Mr. Wells stated that tonight they are supposed to talk about the Goals and Objectives of commercial and industrial development. Mr. Wells stated that there are places in and outside of Woodford County and Versailles that we do not want our community to look like. If we look at all the Goals and Objectives, yes we do want buffer zones to separate residential from commercial, etc.; however, in looking at the Goals and Objectives they appear to be very restrictive. Mr. Wells stated that he wants to be more competitive with other communities. Measurable standards are good as Mr. Parrott stated, but he is mainly looking at the Goals and Objectives that appear to be too restrictive. Mr. Wells stated that he had hoped that tonight they would be able to begin constructing some language that would be helpful. We should be promoting commercial and industrial development, but that does not mean developing every square foot of green space. Mr. Wells stated that when factories or other types of businesses are looking to locate somewhere, he wants them to be looking at Versailles along with those other communities.

Mr. Wolf stated that Mr. Duckworth told them that the Anderson Properties in Midway have had a hard time getting their approvals. Mr. Wolf stated that he would like for Mr. Duckworth to tell them what they need to remove that is causing that problem. Mr. Wolf stated that he spoke to a representative of Home Depot who told him that they would not consider locating in Versailles because of all of our regulations. Mr. Wolf stated that Mr. Duckworth knows what those are that need to be removed.

Mr. Evans questioned if he is saying that they should just allow anyone and everyone to come in? Mr. Wolf stated that he is not saying that at all. Mr. Wolf stated that his question was why did Mr. Anderson have such a hard time and what can they do to prevent that?

Mr. McClees stated that he has visited a lot of different towns. An incentive package needs to be offered by the EDA, Woodford Fiscal Court, Planning Commission, City of Versailles, etc. to these businesses in

order to get them to locate here. If we don't do something like that, no one will want to locate here and we will just be dead.

Mr. Boggs questioned if Mr. Endicott understands what the Planning Commission is trying to ask of them? Mr. Endicott stated that he does. Mr. Boggs questioned if he would come back next month with some more specifics.

Mr. Hume stated that he would like to see the committee meet by themselves and set an agenda to go through a certain number of pages per meeting. They need to look at the language and see if they need to put some measure in it. Mr. Hume stated that he does not want to shut out the EDA, but felt that they need to work as a committee first. They have some feedback to go on, so the Planning Commission needs to look at it and see if they can make some progress. This is the third meeting and they have made no progress thus far. He felt that they need to act as a committee first, then they will be ready to open it to the public. If they keep allowing certain groups to come, someone is going to feel left out.

Mr. Boggs called upon Mrs. Marjorie Evans to make some comments. Mrs. Evans stated that there have been several efforts made by some groups in the community to discuss some of the issues. Mr. Bart Miller had three meetings where all groups could come and very few people showed up. They did not have building owners, no one from the Planning Commission, and no one from the EDA, etc. Mrs. Evans stated that it was pretty frustrating. Mrs. Evans stated that they were trying to figure out how to help bring business and tourism to the community. Mrs. Evans stated that if everyone does not work together, then they will not have a city anymore. It might be a good idea for the Planning Commission to work as a committee, but the public needs to have some input at some time. Mrs. Evans stated that this is the citizen's community and the Planning Commission members are appointed. Mrs. Evans stated that she lives downtown and does a lot of volunteering. Mrs. Evans stated that she can see glimmers of the downtown and the Lexington Road corridor coming back. Things are beginning to turn around and it will take the community working as a whole and not as factions in order to get things done. Mrs. Evans stated that she feels the nature of the problem is not the Comprehensive Plan, but perhaps the Subdivision Regulations and the Zoning Ordinance and those kinds of things. The 2010 Games are coming up and Versailles does not look very good. The Rubloff property and the property next to the old Middle School all got to a point and then things stopped. It does not look good at all. If you are coming in as a perspective person looking to put in a factory somewhere, you look at Versailles and wonder what is going on here? There are signs that are falling down and skewed. People do not like to see those kinds of things and they don't like to see abandoned buildings and run down property. These things need to be addressed somehow. Mrs. Evans stated that she wonders what all these tourists are going to think that come here for the 2010 Equestrian Games. Mrs. Evans stated that people are upset with downtown traffic but there are some simple things that can be done. Mrs. Evans stated that her first suggestion is that parents should put their kids on the school bus rather than driving their kids to school. Mrs. Evans stated that she wrote a letter to the Transportation Cabinet and they did take some of her advice by putting up the left turn arrows at Rose Hill and Morgan Streets. There are so many simple things that can be done and she provided Mr. Boggs a copy of what she sent to the Transportation Cabinet. Mrs. Evans stated that she laughed about the idea of a round-about at Elm Street and Broadway because people in Kentucky do not know what the word "merge" means. People are passing on the right hand side on South Main Street in the bike path and the center lane going down Lexington Street. Mrs. Evans stated that mainly her thoughts are everyone needs to work together.

Mrs. Joan Crowe a resident of 130 Morgan Street stated that she is very much interested in downtown development and promotion. Mrs. Crowe stated that she has lived on a farm for about 40 years until she moved into town about seven years ago. Mrs. Crowe stated that she is a concerned citizen and is not someone speaking having a financial interest. Mrs. Crowe stated that although she no longer owns a farm she is very interested in the preservation of farmland and the vitality of the downtown. Mrs. Crowe stated

that she did attend the meetings that Mrs. Evans referred to and out of that came the idea of individuals being able to think of some way to approach the City to get some funding. Mrs. Crowe stated that Mrs. Evans has done that and has brought some things downtown and brought them to life. She spearheaded the "arts in the park" and the money was returned to the City council from that to be used for something else. Mrs. Evans spearheaded the Fall Festival downtown as well and it was very successful. She is a wonderful person and is enhancing the quality of life in Versailles. Mrs. Crowe stated that the Planning Commission has to look at so many details; it is very easy to forget how unique Versailles and Woodford County are. We have a wonderful quality of life and this is what a lot of businesses look for. The Bluegrass Area was put on one of the most endangered spots in the world. We throw the word "unique" around a lot but the meaning of that is "only one". Part of the area is the landscapes with the nicely kept board fences that are primarily maintained by the horse farms and they are a big commercial part of the county. This is an area that is very desirable for tourist and they tend to come to places that have character and are different from everywhere else. We do not want to look like anywhere else in the world and that means having a sense of place. We do have a sense of place here and the Comprehensive Plan enhances that. What has been worked on has defined what people want. Several years ago there were hours and hours of work done by many people in the County. Out of that came the basis for the Comprehensive Plan and it has been a very good document and it should be strengthened. Right now we are in a recession and it makes it easy to want to change things to help people who need something done to make it easier to make money. Mrs. Crowe encouraged the Planning Commission to not change the Comprehensive Plan a whole lot, until we see what is going to happen after the recession. The Comprehensive Plan cannot cure the recession and right now less is more. Staying the course makes it clear to businesses that they will not be pulled one way or another. Mrs. Crowe stated that from the traffic study there was a recommendation that signage be put up directing the truck traffic to the Bluegrass Parkway and then on to I-27 in Lawrenceburg. That was supposed to take about 15 to 20 trucks out of downtown per day. That is such a simple and inexpensive thing to do.

Mr. Hank Graddy stated that if there are going to be opportunities for public comments he would like to submit some next month. The Goals and Objectives are adopted by the Legislative Bodies and not just the Planning Commission. Mr. Graddy stated that he has been involved with Comprehensive Plan updates for 30 years either as a citizen or as an attorney for the Woodford Coalition. The Goals and Objectives are strikingly similar to those adopted in 1997 and very similar to those prior to that. Mr. Graddy suggested that they may want to give tentative approval to what is there and send that on to the Legislative Bodies for their critique. Mr. Graddy did not believe that Mr. Endicott and Mr. Duckworth are concerned about the Goals and Objectives, but are concerned about the rest of the book. It seems that too much time is being spent on things that are not very controversial. Everyone wants to protect prime farmland, bring industry in, have a mixed use residential, protect tourism opportunity, etc. Mr. Graddy suggested that since the Goals and Objectives have been here for many years and are probably good to go.

Mr. Parrott stated that they probably need to have a public hearing next month. He did not feel it was good to have certain groups come and not everyone.

Mr. Boggs stated that in December they will have only the committee meet and it would be January before they would allow anyone from the public. We are struggling to figure out how to get this done and are trying new ways and now we are going to try another way; but we will hear the public.

Mr. Hume stated that the Comprehensive Plan is just a guideline and the technical things are the Subdivision Regulations and the Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Hume stated that it has been his experience that the Goals and Objectives are just lofty feels good ideas. In the Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Ordinance you have the actual things, such as streets and landscaping and all the requirements for development.

Mr. Graddy stated that the Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Ordinance are requirements and the Comprehensive Plan is a plan. If there is a zone change, it is suppose to conform to the Plan. It appears that the barriers that the EDA are concerned about are in the Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Endicott stated that they are also throughout the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Hume stated that he deals with zoning all the time and knows that sometimes the regulations can be over complicated. Mrs. Wilson stated that she thinks it goes back to the initial process and that goes back to the Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. Boggs stated that Mr. Hume challenged them to re-read the documents and he did, but could not find where the Zoning Ordinance goes along with the Goals and Objectives. He questioned how they know what they are doing? Mr. Hume stated that if they need to go through and tweak a word here or there, then they can do that, but they need to get to where the real problems are.

Mrs. Wilson stated that she has been monthly writing the Mayor's and the Judge that we are meeting and requested feedback from them in writing; but at this point there has been none. Mr. Southworth does come from the City of Versailles.

Mr. Boggs stated that next month the committee only will meet. Mr. Boggs stated that it has been suggested that perhaps they should not meet at 5:30 p.m. before the meeting, which limits them to only one hour. Mr. Boggs stated that he feels if they cannot do it in an hour they should just quit. Mr. Boggs questioned how the members feel about that? Perhaps they could meet also after the Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Boggs stated that he would like them to try and complete the Goals and Objectives and get them ready to submit to whoever they need to. Mrs. Wilson stated that they have to come up with the language they want and if they make any changes at all then they need to hold a public hearing and make the recommendation to the three legislative bodies. Mr. Boggs stated that he does not see anything jumping out as far as the Goals and Objectives.

Mr. Traugott questioned if there has ever been a lawsuit based on the interpretation of the Goals and Objectives? Mrs. Wilson stated that there have been, but they are usually where the Planning Commission may use certain objectives and the opposition may use other objectives or vise versa. Those are the basis for decisions being made. The next section behind the Goals and Objectives are Policies and Guidelines and that is where she believes the EDA and the City have questions. You can use those also to support or deny a zone change. They are more detailed and can require that the applicant do a lot more things. Mr. Southworth stated that those were not approved by the legislative bodies. Mrs. Wilson stated that is correct and they do not have to be approved by the legislative bodies.

Mr. Boggs stated that in December they will meet at 5:30 p.m. before the Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Boggs adjourned at 8:15 p.m.