

Members Present

Mr. Vickery, Mr. Stauffenberg, Ms. Bernard, Ms. McBride, Mr. Washington, Mr. Flett, Mr. Tripp, Mr. Tholen, Mr. James, Ms. Polk, and Mr. Hess

Members Absent

Mr. Olthoff, Mr. Nixon, and Mr. Pagast

In Attendance

- **Board Members**

Mr. Bossert, Mr. Arseneau, and Mr. Dodge

- **Department Heads**

- **Media**

Dimitrios Kalantzis

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by the Vice-Chairman, Mr. Vickery, at 9:00 a.m. Quorum present.

2. Public Comment

3. Approval of Minutes – April 27, 2011

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Washington and seconded by Mr. Stauffenberg. Motion carried.

4. Zoning

- **ZBA Case #11-01; a request for a Variance to Section 121-281 (c) (Accessory Structures), on a parcel generally situated in Section 30 of Ganer Township. The petitioner is Municipal Trust & savings Bank Trust No. 2257, Paul T. Routson, property owner and applicant. (Referred Back to County Board)**

Mr. Van Mill stated that this case went to the county board and was referred back to committee for further consideration. At this time, they have not gotten the information from the applicant that they would like in order to take action today so they are requesting that this be held over for a month. They would entertain a motion to table until the June meeting.

Mr. Stauffenberg made a motion to table until the June meeting and Mr. Tripp seconded it. Motion carried with a voice vote.

5. Floodplain

- **Rockville Floodplain Map Change**

Mr. Pallissard stated that he is here to inform the committee of a floodplain project that is going on up in Rockville Township regarding Fork Creek. Fork Creek has two branches that pass through Kankakee County up in its far northwest corner. Late in 2009, Will County obtained a federal grant to study Fork Creek and Jordan Creek floodplains. Kankakee County does not have any of Jordan Creek in its jurisdiction and only a small part of Fork Creek – approximately five miles. The United States Army Corp of Engineers was contracted to develop a new flood insurance study for both of those floodplains. Today Fork Creek's special flood hazard designation for Kankakee County is a Zone A. What does that mean? Zone A is a floodplain that has never been studied and no base flood elevations have ever been calculated. The Army Corps proposed special flood hazard area designation will be a Zone A. They have cross sections and flood profiles and BFE's will be calculated. Army Corp sent them the flood insurance study which was

the first their office had heard anything about it. The first thing they did was contact Will County. Will County was well aware of it and they have been involved with it and have been reviewing it. They felt very comfortable with the BFE calculations that were coming out of it and they would be accepting it. They then took the army corp's shape files and Mr. Skimerhorn overlaid them onto our current floodplain map. (Mr. Pallissard showed this on the big screens.) Their staff reviewed the map and did some site inspections. Sixteen properties out there had structures near the special flood hazard areas and were identified by their staff. With those properties there were no single family dwellings in the new map area. Five of those properties had the structures that were in our existing maps removed, which is a good thing. Mr. Bossert and he took a trip and met with Rockville township officials and discussed the project with them. They provided the maps to them to take a look at and they had no objections to what they saw. Benefits from this project are better data for the county and the flood hazard area is smaller in many areas. Another benefit is the potential cost savings to the property owners for future development. They don't have to go out and pay an engineer to calculate a BFE any longer. The study is being done by an outside agency so the property owners are not going to have to bear that cost themselves. Lastly, the potential flood insurance relief due to the structures being removed from the special flood mapped area will help those property owners.

Mr. Pallissard stated that the Army Corp of Engineers is asking them to sign off on a letter of map change. That is something his office does typically on a smaller project; such as, a home. Typically, they make sure it meets their ordinance and make sure that they don't negatively impact any of the property owners.

Mr. Van Mill stated that in their initial review of it there were some properties that they questioned and they did work with the Army Corp to modify their original map.

Mr. James made a motion to suspend the meeting at 9:10 due to tornado sirens sounding and the need to go to the basement and Mr. Washington seconded it. Motion carried with a voice vote.

Meeting was resumed at 9:22.

Mr. Stauffenberg asked if any of Manteno is included in this.

Mr. Pallissard stated that none of Manteno is included.

Mr. James asked how set in stone is this. Can it be challenged?

Mr. Van Mill stated that it can be challenged. If you have data that shows that you are above the floodplain there is an amendment process that they commonly do.

6. Planning

- **Kankakee County/Manteno Enterprise Zone – Expansion of Boundaries**

Mr. Van Mill stated that over the course of several months they have been working with the Village of Manteno and the City of Momence with regard to the expansion of the K3 County Enterprise Zone. Kankakee County has two enterprise zones. They have the K3 River Valley Enterprise Zone that is comprised of the urbanized area in the communities of Aroma Park, City of Kankakee, Bradley, Bourbonnais and unincorporated Kankakee County. The second one is in the Manteno area. It was originally put in place about 1983 when the Manteno State Hospital closed down. It was established in the unincorporated Kankakee County and Manteno Township for the purposes of trying to stimulate growth and development in the vacant hospital. About two or three years later when K-Mart was looking at the site

adjacent to I-57 in the Village of Manteno, the Village of Manteno came to the county and asked for expansion within the village to that site. The county agreed to that and an intergovernmental agreement was created making the Village of Manteno part of this enterprise zone. This enterprise zone for over 20 years has been a copulation of things happening within the Village of Manteno and unincorporated Kankakee County and Manteno Township. Looking at Momence and seeing the development that is occurring and the industrial base that they have and the need to put together economic development incentive programs, they have been working very closely with them. A couple years ago they entered into an agreement with Main Street Momence to loan \$50,000 in order to have a Revolving Loan Fund Program in their downtown area. As they have been developing their economic development strategies county-wide, Momence is a hub of employment in the eastern end of the county and some very big employers are in that area. There is also opportunities for growth and expansion there and to redevelopment the historic downtown but one of the things that seem to be always absent is economic development incentives that would help boost that, so over the course of a few months they have been talking with the Village of Manteno to evaluate their interest and their support to expand the enterprise zone. They worked with the City of Momence to get the city council to go along with the idea that this is good for their community and they ultimately got to that point. They have put together a draft application to extend the K3 County Enterprise Zone to Momence by a three-foot strip, which is legal to do, with a legal description that takes it into the city and encompasses the area that they are projecting to put into the enterprise zone. It is within the boundaries of the City of Momence which includes the industrial areas on the northern end, the basic downtown area in the central area, and the industrial areas that are at the southern end. There are approximately 12 square miles that this enterprise zone can encompass. To date prior to this, he thinks that they have 1.78 square miles. This will add not even a ½ mile. This is going to get us maybe in the range of 3 square miles and will still have 9 square miles to use. They are coming here today to get support through the passage of two resolutions. One to modify or amend the intergovernmental agreement that will include the City of Momence as part of the Kankakee County Enterprise Zone and also an ordinance that will expand the boundaries of the enterprise zone to this location. There are two resolutions to this. They did hold a public hearing in the City of Momence on April 18 and they had companies and local officials come out in support of this expansion.

Ms. Bernard asked if the property taxes of the properties included in this would remain the same. What percentage of what is being looked at to bring in more industry is not developed?

Mr. Van Mill stated that they would. Right now there is not a lot of undeveloped area. They could offer enterprise zone to companies in negotiations and offer expansion of the enterprise zone in negotiations with companies that would be looking to relocate to the community. There is a lot of vacant land that these companies have and they are hoping this would stimulate growth or expansion of the existing industrial base.

Mr. Bernard asked if there were any enterprise zone benefits that these companies could currently avail themselves of if this passes; such as, sales tax exemptions.

Mr. Van Mill stated that building materials would be the only thing that would be part of a building permit.

Ms. Bernard stated that she would like to see some kind of report with regards to what kind of wages are being paid to workers in these zones and what kind of benefits that they are getting.

Mr. Van Mill stated that the main ones do have a benefit package which would include health insurance. The wages range depending on skills.

Ms. Bernard stated that she noticed that this enterprise zone is also including retail. Isn't the purpose of enterprise zones to encourage manufacturing and better wages? She doesn't see retail as giving people living wage.

Mr. Van Mill stated that he thinks jobs are a component of it. Enterprise zones are based upon what the community decides as their enterprise goals. The Manteno Enterprise Zone does include a component for commercial development where they can enjoy a property tax abatement. That is how it has been since its inception. The K3 River Valley Enterprise Zone only provides property tax abatement for commercial, industrial, and manufacturing. That was what they decided they wanted to do. Throughout the state, there are communities such as Dixon that gives abatements to residential. The parameters are not real defined. It depends what the economic development policy of the community is.

Ms. Bernard stated her concern with retail is that retail is like secondary economic development. It is dependent on demand and the way demand is stimulated is by having jobs that pay living wages.

Mr. Van Mill stated that they are finding that they do need the lower end scale of jobs because we do have sectors of our population that have low skills and they need to be able to filter them into positions that they can get and then develop their skills over time through work so they can progress to higher skill positions.

Ms. Bernard stated that she thinks that we should be looking at our economic development policies and dollars more carefully. We are competing with other states, cities, and China.

Mr. Bossert stated that we are competing with other states, communities, and other countries and we need to have tools in our toolbox. We need to continue to look for ways that we can encourage investment whether it is manufacturing or retail in some of our older communities. As we sit and negotiate with companies who are thinking about expanding in this community, they want to know what we can do for them. There are other communities lined up to offer a decent incentive. It is a very competitive game right now everywhere. He thinks bringing Mومence into the mix is a good move.

Mr. Washington asked if there is any infrastructure on any of the vacant properties.

Mr. Hess made a motion to approve the expansion of the enterprise zone into Mومence and Mr. Tripp seconded it.

Discussion

Mr. Van Mill stated that most of the area that they proposed has all the necessary utilities for industrial growth. They did not include areas that do not have it accessible. They also have already sent this to the Department of Agriculture for their sign-off, which they have done. They look at in terms of whether we are indiscriminately taking farmland out of production but in this case it is all urbanized and within a municipality.

Mr. Washington stated that in this process we are attempting to be prepared ahead of time.

Mr. James asked how successful these programs have been in the past. Are we just putting things into place so that people who have been existence can get a discount to expand or are we really utilizing what it is designed to do? What is our track record so far on this?

Mr. Van Mill stated that there are two ways to expand an enterprise zone. One way is if an eminent project is coming down the pipe. We can go to the state with an application to get the zone expanded to that site. It is a pretty straightforward project and can be done quickly. The other option is when there is no eminent project in place and it is being used to identify areas to stimulate growth and development. The state has some very tight parameters for doing that. You have to demonstrate whether there is a loss in population, that the area in which you are trying to expand the enterprise zone to has a population of people below poverty of a certain percentage or there is predominate unemployment in an area. There are some pretty high standards that have to be met. It has to be proven that the unemployment rate in these areas is over 120% of the state average. We are over a 120% of the state average so there is predominate unemployment here; therefore, we can justify an expansion here. The companies that are in place now will not get any benefits for what they have done in the past or give them any property tax abatements for what they have now but if they do expansions, add more real estate, or if they add new jobs there are some incentives. Probably 95% of industrial growth in Kankakee County has occurred in an enterprise zone area.

Mr. Vickery stated that he views this as giving a town all the tools that they need. It streamlines the process. There has been a lot of construction on several projects out there and they are hoping that there will be another expansion up to the north in a retail operation because a chain came in and bought the grocery store and there maybe an expansion there.

Mr. Bossert asked about the positive movement by the city council.

Mr. Van Mill stated that they have been to a number of meetings of theirs and have tried to educate them on the benefits of the enterprise zone program. They had decided internally that they would not move forward with developing the application unless they got a motion that passed the city council that directed them to apply, which they did get. They have to get Manteno's approval, also.

Mr. Bossert asked about the school district.

Mr. Van Mill stated that the school district has approved the single property tax abatement. The taxing districts only have to pass a resolution abating taxes and they have not done that. They may do that over time but it is not necessarily a requisite that they have that right now. It can be done at any time. The idea here is to get the boundary in place and then start talking with taxing districts to see whether they want to participate or not. It is totally voluntary.

Ms. Bernard asked if there is a guesstimate as to the amount of property tax that will be lost due to the enterprise zone.

Mr. Van Mill stated that none right now. There is nothing on the books right now for expansion. PrecisionAir may come online about the same time that this is ratified, if it passes. They have already been given a property tax abatement.

Ms. Bernard asked how much of an abatement did they get. How many jobs did that create? What are the wages?

Mr. Van Mill stated that they got what they have been offering to every other industry - every year a step down for five years. He thinks it was 40 jobs. He doesn't know the wages.

Ms. Bernard stated that we need to keep jobs in the county but we really need to look at the whole picture. If we keep giving breaks for low wage jobs it is not going to boost the area long-term. We need a strong middle class.

Mr. Vickery stated that fifteen years ago they had a lot of empty manufacturing buildings in Momence. Those are all full today. He supports Ms. Bernard's view on the wage issue but he also knows that the decay from empty buildings in a small town is a serious issue. They have been able to overcome that and they want to continue to move forward.

Mr. Van Mill stated that one of things that he sees that is different with Momence from others is that it is on the national historic registry. That is something that they needed to take a good look at to see if they can help property owners get some incentive to keep the buildings up. In the future, that historic downtown is going to play a big role in tourism. There is no other place in the county where what is found in the downtown area in Momence can be found elsewhere. Hopefully, this is one of the ways that they can help.

Mr. Arseneau stated that he thinks this is a very positive thing and a very good thing for the Momence area and the Manteno area, as well.

Ms. Bernard asked if federal programs are available for historical preservation.

Mr. Van Mill stated that there may be but he doesn't think that they go into the sales tax abatement on building materials, which is one of the benefits, nor will it affect property tax because real estate is not going to be added in the downtown area.

The original motion carried with a voice vote. Ms. Bernard voted present.

Mr. Washington made a motion to amend the intergovernmental agreement to include City of Momence in K3 County Enterprise Zone and was seconded by Mr. James.

Ms. Bernard stated that they do not have resolutions for either one of these. She would like to see them.

Mr. Vickery stated that he recognized her point but they will move forward. That is not normally done with resolutions.

The original motion passed with a voice vote. Ms. Bernard voted nay.

- **Economic Development Update**

Mr. Van Mill gave the committee a brief overview of the economic development program and the economic alliance's work program. This was passed by the alliance board a couple months ago and it is their blueprint for what they are going to do during the year. The annual work program is broken down to three components that they see as crucial to the economic development office. The first is operations, the second is the economic development program itself, and the third element is their marketing of the community. As the economy is starting to grow they want to focus on insuring that they put out a good message about the county.

Mr. Van Mill stated that they initiated a business plan competition called "EnterpriseU" and he considers it a major success. When they first put it together he thought that they would get maybe 10 or 15 applicants but

they got 44. They just completed their last public event and they have all been well attended. This is something they plan to do every year.

Mr. Van Mill stated that on June 10 they are unrolling the river roundtable program and he would like to see all the board members there. They are rolling out a document that is over 100 pages that looks at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the river in three major areas. One being environmental, two being community and economic development, and three is recreation and tourism. He showed a teaser video about the K3 River. It is not totally done, but they thought the committee might like to see the short clip.

Mr. Van Mill stated that they are putting together an Economic Development Incentive Summit some time after August 10. They will bring in the school districts, the communities, and private industries and they will sit down to look at this and see what they come up with. They have gotten commitments from one of the heads of finance with the State Board of Education that will talk about the impact of enterprise zones on school district budgeting and they also have the head of the State TIF Association coming down. The details on it will be coming out shortly.

Mr. Van Mill stated that he thinks things are picking up. It has been a long time since he has had contact from outside site locators looking to locate in Kankakee County but within a 45-minute period on Monday he had two. They are meeting with some representatives this week and hopefully they can get some of our vacant industrial facilities occupied. They are also working with our existing industries looking at expansions and growth opportunities. It seems our current industries are maintaining employment and there is some hiring going on, which is encouraging. They are also seeing some capital investment happening within the county.

Mr. Vickery stated that economic development appears to be a big game throughout the country. The nice thing about what we have put together as a county board and committee is an economic development force. We are in the game.

Mr. Van Mill stated that he thinks what has been very beneficial is that we did have the flexibility to do things that maybe traditional economic development organizations may not have been able to do in the past; such as, the river project and the entrepreneurial program. He has his counterparts in other counties looking to us as a model. They have come and visited their meetings.

Mr. Vickery stated that small towns really don't have the staff, expertise, and exposure that our economic development effort here in K3 County can provide. It has been very beneficial in Momence. It really is a tool that the county has developed and is passing it along giving these small towns some support.

Mr. Washington stated that the comment about small towns has been the thing that he has always advocated from day one since he started on the Kankakee Regional Planning Commission – we should support as much as possible the small towns of K3 County as much as they need and want that support in order for the entire county to grow. One can't succeed without the other.

Ms. Bernard asked what we were doing to try to expand the enterprise zone to Pembroke.

Mr. Van Mill stated they have evaluated some of the benefits of that. Obviously, the one location that makes the most sense is the Nestle facility. That is where he is trying to get and this is getting it closer. That is the next thing he will be looking at doing.

Ms. Bernard asked if one of the obstacles to doing that was the distance - it would be geographically hard to extend the zone out there.

Mr. Van Mill stated that was when they were looking at the K3 River Valley Enterprise Zone. That zone has a lot more square miles and there is only two square miles left. He thinks it is just a matter of getting this thing moving. If this Mومence one gets passed, it will be the first unit of government that has been added since 1986.

Mr. James asked for an update on what is happening where the prison site is out there. Is it still owned by the state?

Mr. Van Mill stated that the state still owns it and the Village of Hopkins Park has a 99-year lease. They have had a couple sniffs at it for various businesses. It has about 160 acres. One of the things that is unfortunate is that they have put in millions of dollars of infrastructure into the ground. They have stripped off the top soil and are left basically with sand.

Mr. Bossert stated that they poured footings. There is concrete all over out there. If someone wants to do something, they are going to have to rip all of it out and start over which is going to create a huge cost.

Mr. Vickery stated that both economic alliance and the county through the revolving loan fund have really helped a lot out there with refurbishing the Nestles plant.

Mr. Van Mill stated that there are two dates that he would like the county board members aware of and would love to have them involved. It is June 7 at the Hilton and everyone will be getting an agenda that will have who the speakers are. The second date, June 21, is going to be the final presentations of the eight businesses in EnterpriseU.

7. Old Business

Mr. Hess stated that if the ZBA Case #11-01 that was tabled earlier makes changes on the plans doesn't it have to go back to ZBA.

Mr. Van Mill stated that if there isn't any new testimony he thinks it is their call. If they are reducing the request then he would say that it could just stay here. He has not yet seen what they have to provide.

Mr. Vickery stated that he thinks that if the committee looks at it in June and they want to send it back to ZBA then they can. Right now we are waiting on information from them.

Ms. McBride stated that we declined this already so why is it even being sent back to committee.

Mr. Van Mill stated that it went to the county board but was referred back. The applicant is asking to modify the request.

Ms. McBride stated that if we make a rule we need to stick to our own rule.

8. New Business

- **Two Terms Expiring on Zoning Board of Appeals**
- **One Term Expiring on Historic Preservation Commission**
- **Three Terms Expiring on Board of Examiners & Appeals**

Mr. Van Mill announced the above openings.

Mr. James asked what the eligibility to qualify for these openings.

Mr. Van Mill stated that only one that has some requirements is the Board of Examiners. The people whose terms are expiring are an architect, a commercial contractor, and a residential construction contractor.

9. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:32 a.m. was made by Mr. Washington and seconded by Mr. Tripp. Motion carried.

Jim Vickery, Vice-Chairman
Joanne Langlois, Executive Coordinator