

MINUTES

KANKAKEE COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Kankakee County Administration Building, 4th Floor Conference Room,
189 E. Court Street, Kankakee, IL 60901

January 21, 2021

In Attendance

Members:

Mr. Bergdahl, Ms. Cowhig, Mr. Maloney, Ms. Maricle, Chairman Miller, Mr. Paarlberg, Mr. Payton, Ms. Washington

Others:

Kankakee County Board: Chairman Wheeler, Mr. Kerkstra

Daily-Journal: Mr. Breach

Staff: Mr. Mergenthaler, Mr. Olson, Mr. Skimerhorn, and Mr. Wilson.

Open Meeting

Chairman Miller opened the meeting at 10:30 AM

Public Comment

Chairman Wheeler thanked the Regional Planning Commission for putting together the agri-tourism ordinance. He emphasized how important it is for businesses applying for agri-tourism permits to follow the guidelines. He added that similar to a food truck, agri-tourism businesses that serve food need to meet the same codes for the safety of the customers. He added that from that regard, the agri-tourism businesses are regulated like any other business and that there were not extra burdens imposed by the County but regulations all businesses must meet.

Approval of Minutes

Due to a quorum not being present, minutes from the previous meetings on August 20, 2020 and October 15, 2020 were not approved.

Election of Officers

Will hold election of officers at the next meeting when a quorum is present.

Agri-tourism Discussion

Mr Skimerhorn gave a presentation on agri-tourism in the County. Since the Kankakee County Board approved the agri-tourism ordinance on March 12, 2019 there has been one application and it was approved. He stated there have been several inquiries, but there haven't been any new applicants. He said the current agri-tourism business is Locavore Farms which grows their own produce and hosts dinner events. Mr. Skimerhorn noted that the agri-tourism aspect of the

business requires buildings be brought up to code for assembly. He said it typically entails things like ADA and fire safety. He also added that because it functioned as a restaurant, there were other codes that needed to be met. Mr. Miller thanked Mr. Skimerhorn for the update and that he was glad the Commission revisited the topic and would like to do so periodically in the future.

Greenways and Trails Plan Update

Mr. Mergenthaler gave a presentation on the Greenways and Trails plan update. He said the survey was available for anyone to take and that there had been 1,154 responses so far. His presentation included information on bicycle data that was provided by Strava Metro. He noted that the data only contains activities that individuals choose to log with the Strava app, which made the data helpful in determining patterns. Mr. Wilson added that the Strava service is fairly common among cyclists who ride regularly. Mr. Skimerhorn asked if the increase in bicycle rides may have been due to the pandemic. Mr. Mergenthaler believed it certainly could have been due to people having more time to bicycle, but noted that there seemed to be a sustained increase for the entire year, but that additional data in the future could help make that determination. He also discussed another aspect of the ridership data which was if rides were considered local riders or visitors.

Mr. Mergenthaler said he was beginning to put together and initiate a steering committee meeting in the near future. Mr. Wilson stated that Kankakee County would be moving to Tier 1 of COVID-19 restrictions and this will help with meeting going forward.

New Business

Mr. Bergdahl asked if the changes to the home business ordinance went through. Mr. Skimerhorn said it was approved and that if operated correctly the County is not notified of the business's existence.

Mr. Paarlberg announced his resignation from the Kankakee County Regional Planning Commission. He was one of the original members and had served the committee for about 20 years. He hopes his participation has been helpful. He said he would be turning 90 years old soon and thought it would be time to resign. He recommended Bruce as a successor and believed he would be a good contribution to the commission.

Mr. Skimerhorn thanked Mr. Paarlberg for his years of service and commented that Bruce should reach out to the County for an application.

Old Business

None.

Next Scheduled Meeting

Mr. Olson stated the meetings were scheduled for April 15, 2021, June 3, 2021, August 19, 2021, and October 21, 2021. He added that September 16, 2021, Mr. Bergdahl asked if there would be public meetings for the greenways and trails plan. Mr. Wilson stated that meetings would be held, but it may be difficult due to COVID-19 gathering restrictions.

Membership was discussed. Mr. Wilson said the next meeting would have an agenda item to

cover membership and check that all those whose term is expired are notified.

Bergdahl suggested having the RPC review additional ordinances. Mr. Skimerhorn said there were potential items, but due to time constraints for additional projects, there wouldn't be any soon.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Miller asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting

Mr. Bergdahl motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Maricle. Chairman Miller adjourned the meeting at 11:16 A.M.