

Mayor's Column for July 9, 2008 Review

On July 1, I attended a Rock County Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee meeting. The Committee unanimously approved a preliminary draft of the land use chapter of the Plan. The draft will be forwarded to the County Planning and Development Committee for consideration and the Rock County Board of Supervisors will likely adopt the County Smart Growth Plan in 2009.

The draft land use chapter explains it “is intended to serve as a tool to support and guide local land use plans and maps by providing information and education on planning principles, historic land use trends, existing planning factors and future land use expectations as well as presenting information on current and possible future land use conflicts and opportunities (5-1)”. The County recognizes its “role as a regional, coordinating planning body, tasked with planning for the best interest of all County resources and residents. . . (5-15)”.

The chapter identifies that “[a] main challenge of the Rock County Comprehensive Plan is to promote and encourage the orderly, efficient and compact development of land in a manner that maintains a balance among the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas and agricultural land and the need for continued development (5-21)”. It states that “[i]t is important for each individual community to understand the effects of their land use policies and decisions and to carefully consider new ways to manage development (5-21)”.

One of the land use objectives of the draft County Plan is to “[s]upport and encourage future land uses in rural Rock County that aim to preserve agricultural and natural resources. . . Rock County shall promote development in areas where sewer services are available in order to encourage high-density development and to preserve the rural area (5-25, 26)”.

Another draft land use objective is to “[e]ncourage and support development of land that is compact, cost efficient and energy efficient. . . Rock County shall encourage prioritizing development into the following areas (in order): 1. Urban infill areas. 2. Areas of existing and contiguous development. 3. Areas most easily served by municipal sewer and water. 4. Areas other than the above. (5-27)”

The draft states that “there exists a natural conflict on land issues between urban and rural governing jurisdictions. Cities and villages often need more land at their borders to grow and expand. This need often conflicts with the needs and desires of the rural communities (towns) surrounding the urban area. There is competition between urban and rural jurisdictions for tax base as well as lifestyle choice along municipal boundaries (5-19).” It points out that because “urban development usually requires less land than rural development, it makes sense to allow urban areas to expand into rural areas (5-19)”. It provides “the opportunity for more compact and efficient development that is on a more reliable municipal sewerage system (5-19)”. It rightly observes that the needs and rights of rural landowners are also very important. The County encourages joint planning

that includes resolving zoning, density, transportation and connectivity, annexation and other issues and is willing to participate in education, facilitation and conflict mediation when necessary to obtain the best possible future outcome for all County residents.

The Evansville-Union Implementation Committee was organized in January 2008 to identify and discuss issues of interest to City and Town. The advisory committee has been meeting monthly and this month's agenda includes discussion of land use.

Last week the Evansville Plan Commission voted against a proposed City Smart Growth Plan amendment to alter the future land use maps to change agricultural land to rural residential land. The Evansville and Union Smart Growth Plans are not consistent as to future growth areas. The Implementation Committee has hard work ahead of it to develop consensus on City/Town needs.

The Evansville Smart Growth Plan identifies development of a boundary agreement with the Town of Union as an action item in the Implementation Chapter. The joint Implementation Committee can provide the framework for an agreement through their work. The goal is a boundary agreement that will accomplish the best outcome for Evansville and Union that incorporates the regional objectives and guidelines of the Rock County Smart Growth Plan.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS/REMINDERS

The next meeting of the Rock County Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee will be on Thursday, August 21 at 6:00 p.m. in the Jury Assembly Room of the Rock County Courthouse in Janesville. The Committee anticipates preliminary approval of the draft housing element and introduction of the intergovernmental chapter of the Plan. An additional meeting is scheduled for October 16 at the same location to continue work on the intergovernmental chapter and begin discussion of the economic development element.

Weather permitting, the Main/Madison Street intersection should be completed in the next two weeks. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation has recently determined that curb and gutter on North and South Madison Street is in poor condition and will be replaced as part of the current Madison Street project. Completion of the WisDOT project is still scheduled for late August.

The Evansville Grove Society will host free walking tours of a small section of our City's historic district on seven Saturdays in July and August. The first walking tour will occur this Saturday, July 12, and subsequent tours are scheduled each Saturday through August 23. All walking tours begin promptly at 10:00 a.m. and will begin and end at Eager Free Public Library, 39 West Main Street. The tour is approximately one mile in length and will last 60-90 minutes. Tours will occur rain or shine unless there is severe weather.

Interested citizens can now sign up for e-mail notification of City news, meeting agendas and minutes. To register click on the Evansville e-notify box on the City of Evansville website at <http://www.ci.evansville.wi.gov/>.

The City of Evansville extends condolences to the family of Dale Bryant. Dale served our city as an alderman in the 1990s and was passionate about community issues in his hometown. Please keep Dale's family in your thoughts and prayers.

ENERGY SAVING TIP

To reduce air conditioning costs, use drapes, shades, blinds and awnings, particularly on the south and west windows of your home, to block out the hot summer sun.

COMMUNITY CONGRATULATIONS/THANKS

We congratulate the Evansville Jays, our Home Talent baseball team, on increasing their first place standing with a win against Stoughton on the Fourth of July. Good luck on the remaining games of the season!

Jean Wyse deserves special thanks for coordinating the planting and installing of the flower baskets on the new Main Street light poles. Thanks also to the many individuals that water the flower baskets. Banners for the new poles are expected to arrive shortly.

An Evansville resident called our hometown Fourth of July activities a "Norman Rockwell celebration". What a compliment! From the library ice cream social, parade, terrific music, Lake Leota Luncheon, food and fireworks to the baseball games, historic trolley tours, car show, quilt show and tractor pull, hundreds of volunteers contributed to our outstanding festivities. The Fourth of July Committee, Karen and Gene Bass, Greg Ardisson, Lynn Olson, Jared Redders, Evansville Lions Club, Evansville Community Partnership, Evansville Grove Society, Friends of the Eager Free Public Library, dozens of business sponsors—so many gave generously that it is not possible to mention everyone. To all of the volunteers, thank you for your time and effort!

Tom Calley, Chair of the Fourth of July Committee, deserves special recognition for his dedication and hard work. Please thank him personally when you see him.