

Members Present

Mr. Tripp, Mr. Liehr, Mr. Tholen, Mr. Vickery, Mr. Mulcahy, Mr. Einfeldt, Mr. Washington, and Ms. Polk

Members Absent

Mr. Olthoff, Mr. James, Mr. Reid, and Ms. Evans

In Attendance

- **Board Members**

Mr. Bossert and Mr. Byrne

- **Department Heads**

Mr. Boyd

- **Media**

Present

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

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

2. Public Comment

3. Approval of Minutes – November 18, 2015

The minutes were not ready for the meeting.

4. Building

- **Building Report – November 2015 & December 2015**

In November the Planning Department and the Building Division issued 48 building permits which totaled \$15,630 with a value of \$2,656,955. In December they issued 34 permits which totaled \$5,696 with a value of \$728,416.

Mr. Tripp made a motion to approve the Building Reports and Mr. Tholen seconded it. Motion carried with a voice vote.

- **Update on December 2015 Flood**

Mr. Skimerhorn stated that there was a fair amount of flooding in the area in the later part of December, most of it being in Iroquois County. They had 13 properties that were severely damaged and to-date 2 of them have been raised, 1 has been demolished, 4 are still in the planning stages to be raised, 1 is considering a buy-out, and 4 are still deciding what route of action that they would like to take.

Mr. Vickery stated that he understands FEMA has a lot of control over the results of this. Is that correct?

Mr. Skimerhorn stated that they do. They have to follow all of FEMA's rules. These 13 properties are all what they call "severe repetitive loss properties" which means that they have been damaged more than 50% of their fair market value and at that point the owners have three choices. They can raise the structure, demolish the structure, or remove it out of the flood plain to a different piece of property.

5. GIS

- **Update of GIS System**

Mr. Skimerhorn stated that Mr. Diercks who was in charge of the GIS Department left in late November and since that time the GIS Department has been merged in with the Planning Department under his control.

For the last month they have kept the system running but have dealt with a lot of system crashes because their equipment is old. Because of that, they hired Cloudpoint Geographics to help them with the transition of getting the system back to a state of operation that is acceptable. They have inventoried the physical system of computers, plotted the work flow and data access, analyzed deficiencies in the system, and prepared a recommendation but they have not got a full cost analysis yet. Also, none of their servers' data was being backed up so our IT Department went in and created backups for all of their servers. He cannot thank them enough for their help. He reviewed the problems and the recommendations that Cloudpoint Geographics gave them for the GIS system.

Mr. Tripp asked how involved will Mr. Duval be in this process.

Mr. Skimerhorn stated that he would be very involved. He meets with him at least twice a week and probably more often as they start implementing the recommendations.

Mr. Bossert stated that our IT Department has been heavily involved in helping to upgrade the equipment. They can upgrade servers for a fraction of the cost of new ones which is the avenue that they are pursuing right now.

Mr. Skimerhorn stated that new web server that they just purchased was in the \$2500 range from EBay. If they had to purchase the entire server new it would probably cost \$6000 to \$7000.

Mr. Skimerhorn stated that once the recommendations are implemented the work flow and data flow will be a lot more streamlined and it will be easier to maintain.

Mr. Skimerhorn stated that they had one and for a time two full-time staff members assigned to GIS. Now they have one part-time as he still has all of his planning duties. He is proposing to bring on a GIS technician to help with the day-to-day operation of the GIS. He would like to bring them on while they are building the new system so that they can be involved with that and so they can reduce the learning curve as they move forward. He is recommending that a technician is hired as soon as possible.

Mr. Skimerhorn recapped what they are planning on doing which is to take the system down from 7 servers to 4, merge the 4 existing websites into 1 main one with a few specialty site still out there, phase out the cloud servers and bring all of their data back into this building, get rid of as much of the open source software as possible, and hire a technician to help.

Mr. Bossert stated that they are working on a job description right now and he would suggest that they bring that back to this committee and get an approval from the committee to move ahead with that phase. From the start he thinks that they understood that they cannot rely on Mr. Skimerhorn being able to oversee all of this part-time. Mr. Skimerhorn will have oversight with a technician with some day-to-day duties. They are still well within budget of the GIS Department which has its own funding source and a nice reserve has been built up over time for GIS activities.

Mr. Liehr asked if he foresees any disruption for users during this transition.

Mr. Skimerhorn stated that he does not. They are going to build the new system side-by-side with the existing system. The existing system will stay online until the new system has been thoroughly tested and probably even for a few months after it is up and running before they flip the switch on the old system.

6. Planning

• Enterprise Zone Designation

Mr. Skimerhorn stated that they have two enterprise zones that was due to expire in June. The state made legislation that made all enterprise zones expire and required everyone in the state that wanted an enterprise zone to reapply so they did reapply and both of the enterprise zones were certified and are effective as of January 1, 2016. Maps that show the new enterprise zones were distributed to the committee members. They have the same names as the old ones but not the same boundaries. There is the Kankakee River Valley Enterprise Zone which is the METRO area plus Herscher and a little bit of 17 East and then there is the Kankakee County Enterprise Zone which covers areas of Manteno, Momence, Hopkins Park, and part of Grant Park was added this time.

• Singleton Quarry/Ditch Update

Mr. Boyd stated that back in 2015 the Attorney General's Office filed an action in the State of Indiana in an effort to gain additional information with regard to the creation and eventual production of stone out of a new quarry. The Attorney General's involvement was spurred by residents in the eastern half of the county that have great concerns about the sediment that is being dumped into the Kankakee River from Indiana. He and others met with the residents to discuss their concerns before jumping on board and before the Attorney General filed their action a couple boat tours were done, from Momence east of the dam to the Illinois/Indiana state line, by people who were able to give the history of the creation of sand bars and the significant change of flow over the past several years in that portion of the Kankakee River. After those tours were done a series of conference calls were held with his office, the Attorney General's Office, and some others. The Attorney General agreed to file an action and the county chose to join in the Attorney General's action rather than incur the cost of separate participation. However, this included the joint drafting of documents. They worked together to come up with the appropriate objection to the Singleton Quarry approval. At some point during the process Congresswoman Robin Kelley who represents this area joined in at least wanting to anticipate in the discussion phase of what could or should be done to help maintain the Kankakee River in its most appropriate condition. After a couple of phone calls involving the Indiana government and the representatives of the corporation that owns the quarry and will be running the quarry, he made a specific request to have a site visit which would give them an opportunity to see what their plan was which they agreed to so his office and the Attorney General's Office traveled to the quarry and toured the facility. It is unlike any quarry that he has seen. One of the more surprising things was that entirety of the quarry was pumped dry with just an 8" line. Their plans were that if it got any more than that they would add an additional 6" line but they did not anticipate that that would ever be necessary. Their entire water expulsion system and collection system is computerized so when the water that is being drained into a ditch next to their facility reaches a particular height the pumps automatically shut off and the water that is in the three really large retention areas immediately starts flowing in the opposite direction. It was quite an eye opener to see the system that they have there. It is difficult to describe because it is not the way we farm in Illinois. All of the farmland is surrounded by ditches that are 10' wide on all sides unless there is a road and even then most of them have a ditch between the road and the field and all of the water that is collected is forced off of the fields into the ditches. The ditches then all move or migrate to larger ditches, such as Singleton Ditch, and then to the canal which is the Kankakee River in the State of Indiana. The Kankakee River in Indiana has no true vegetation or shores; it is a canal. When the farmers get too much rain they open up gates and allow the water to get pumped directly into these ditches. Right across from this proposed quarry is a 10" pipe with a diesel pump attached to it. The amazing things is that when they have dry periods they pump the water out of the ditch and put it back onto their fields. It is a great system for the farmers but it is what has created an unbelievable amount of sediment in the Kankakee River. The other thing that was very surprising to him was the fact that there are two additional quarries that dump into the Singleton Ditch and those quarries are much older and it appears that they are much

more of a problem to the future of the Kankakee River in Illinois than this stone quarry would ever be. After going through the tour, reading all of the documentation on it, and meeting several times by conference call and a couple times in person with the other side it was pretty clear from the Attorney General's standpoint that this quarry is not the problem but probably the template for the solution. If they could get the other two quarries to do what this quarry does we would see a significant reduction in run-off and sediment from Singleton Ditch. Once the Attorney General and his office reached an agreement that this was probably not the best resources for the government they started looking at alternatives and agreed to file a motion to dismiss. Several things were discovered by his team and the Attorney General's team and one of the most striking discoveries was that the Army Corp of Engineers has divided authority over the Kankakee River based on the state line. They don't know why and are attempting to address that with the assistance of Congresswoman Kelley. Their goal is to have first the entirety of the Kankakee River basin, from its source near South Bend, Indiana to its confluence with the Des Plaines River with the formation of the Illinois River. They would like that entirety of river basin under a single office of the Army Corp of Engineers. The next thing that they would like is for the Army Corp of Engineers to form one of their specialty groups called The Silver Jackets to address the needs of maintaining the condition of the Kankakee River, certainly on the Illinois side. The goal of his office, the Attorney General's Office, and probably Congressman Kelly's office is to come up with viable solutions which will all cost money and then try and figure out how and who is going to fund those solutions.

Mr. Bossert asked if he needed direction from the committee to direct him to withdraw.

Mr. Boyd stated that it wouldn't hurt. He has already advised the other side that we are agreeing to withdraw because it is the right thing to do but it would be nice to have a motion to withdraw the county's participation in that litigation at this point.

Mr. Einfeldt made a motion to withdraw from that litigation and Mr. Tripp seconded it. Motion carried with a voice vote.

Mr. Bossert stated we also have the interest of Senator Kirk's office who has been calling frequently, since last summer after the aftermath of the flooding, inquiring on how we were. He invited him here to review the flooding situation and the overall situation with our river and the sedimentation which is breeding a flood issue. Since then the representative from Senator's Kirk's office checks in periodically. When the news came out that we were involved in this matter in Indiana the rep wanted to get an update and now with the news out that the AG's Office is pulling back they have their environmental team interested in looking at our documentation so he has scanned in the major components of the filing and sent them over to Senator Kirk's office. He may have to direct him to contact Mr. Boyd's office for further details.

Mr. Vickery stated that a tremendous amount of sediment comes into the Kankakee River from the Iroquois River, particularly at flood stage. Would it be wise to get Congressman Kinzinger involved as the Watseka area is his district?

Mr. Boyd stated that it can't hurt to get another congressman involved if he wants to get involved. The issue that they see in the river is not the mud line that comes down through the Iroquois, instead it is sand.

Mr. Vickery asked if he saw any foliage on the bank of the Singleton Ditch.

Mr. Boyd stated that there is no significant foliage. It appears to be seasonal grasses and weeds but as the water comes it pulls a lot of it out and then it grows back. He believes most of it is some sort of marsh grasses.

7. Old Business

8. New Business

- **Two Openings on Historic Preservation Commission – Attorney & Historian**
- **Two Openings on Zoning Board of Appeals**
- **Six Openings on Kankakee County Regional Planning Commission**

Mr. Washington announced the above opening.

Mr. Bossert stated that they particularly need some interest in the Zoning Board. Most recently a Zoning Board hearing was held Monday night and because they are a little short on membership it led to the fact that they only had four in attendance that night and it takes four votes one way or the other to come up with a recommendation. The four could not agree so they ended up with a 3 to 1 vote so it will come out of ZBA with no recommendation back to the county board. They are looking for one person from the west side of the county, particularly Salina or Essex, and one from the east side from the Momence, Ganer area.

Mr. Vickery asked what the requirements are.

Mr. Skimerhorn stated that there are no particular requirements except residency but they prefer someone who has some expertise in land use, zoning, and construction but it is not a requirement. A willingness to attend the meetings would be paramount as they are having a real problem that. Also, they want someone who can make objective decisions.

9. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:54 a.m. was made by Mr. Tholen and seconded by Mr. Vickery. Motion carried.

George Washington, Committee Vice-Chairman
Joanne Langlois, Executive Coordinator