

MINUTES

Members Present

Mr. Olthoff, Mr. Washington, Mr. Tripp, Mr. James, Mr. Vickery, Mr. Liehr, Ms. Polk, and Mr. Mulcahy

Members Absent

Mr. Tholen, Mr. Reid, Ms. Evans, and Mr. Einfeldt

In Attendance

- **Board Members**

Mr. Bossert, Mr. Hess, and Mr. Payton

- **Department Heads**

Delbert Skimerhorn

- **Media**

Present

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call

3. Public Comment

Mayor Mark Hodge commented on the Wildlife Refuge.

Jim Piekarczyk commented on the Wildlife Refuge.

Christine Doud commented on the Wildlife Refuge.

Kathe Brunnick commented on the Wildlife Refuge.

Georganne Higgins commented on the Wildlife Refuge.

Sharon White commented on the Wildlife Refuge.

4. Approval of Minutes: April 20, 2016, May 18, 2016, June 22, 2016, and August 17, 2016.

The minutes were not ready.

5. Building

- **Building Report - July 2016**

Mr. Skimerhorn reviewed and discussed the report with the committee.

Mr. James made a motion to approve the building report, and Mr. Tripp seconded it. Motion carried with a voice vote.

6. Transportation

- **Downstate Operating Assistance Grant Agreement**

Geoff Olson reviewed and discussed the Accounting and Transparency Act grant that the State of Illinois approved. The resolution that was approved in May is not up to the standards that the state wants, so they need to change the wording in order to get the contract. It is basically a formality so they can execute the contract.

Mr. Vickery made a motion to approve the change to the original resolution, and Mr. Washington seconded it. Motion carried with a voice vote.

7. Planning

- **Appointment of Steven DePasquale to the Kankakee County Historic Preservation Commission**

Mr. Liehr made a motion to approve the appointment, and Mr. James seconded it. Motion carried with a voice vote.

- **Planning Organization 2016 and the State of the Department**

Mr. Skimerhorn stated that he wanted to give an overview of what is happening at the department and some of the challenges they are facing. He gave a PowerPoint presentation that displays the organizational chart of their office, staffing, budget, revenue, and various divisions and responsibilities of the office. The current budget is \$290,000. Office hours have changed to 9am to 4pm and they now close for an hour for lunch. They have not had a code enforcement officer since last October, and they have 52 open complaints. Due to the windfarm, revenue has been increasing, but it is a one-time thing. He also discussed plans for 2017, including updating software, migrating data, and updating building codes and regulations.

Mr. Skimerhorn also stated that Gary Phillips is retiring in November 2017, and they need to find a replacement for him as soon as possible.

Mr. James asked what happened to the process where the volunteer fire department would eliminate the buildings that need to be demolished.

Mr. Skimerhorn stated that they have to get permits from the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) to burn down a house, and most of the fire departments don't want to go through that process.

Mr. James asked if it was possible that they could go through the process of getting the permits.

Mr. Skimerhorn said that he would have to look into it, but there is still cost involved in debris and foundation removal after the fire.

- **Review of 1998 Resolution Opposing the Establishment of the proposed Grand Kankakee Marsh National Wildlife Refuge by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

Chad Miller from the Farmland Bureau stated that U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed a National Wildlife Refuge in 1997 with no community support. In 1998, the County Board adopted a resolution opposing the refuge. The proposal by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service went away in 2001. It was then reintroduced in May 2015, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said they were given approval by the director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Mr. Miller reviewed and presented a PowerPoint with various maps that showed the areas where the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service plan to acquire. The establishment of a refuge in these areas would disrupt the established draining pattern, cause the need to tear down structures, and other issues. It would include 38% of the entire area of Pembroke Township. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service stated that they officially established the refuge with the acceptance of a land donation in Iroquois County in 2016. We recently took a tour of a community in Southern Illinois with a wildlife refuge. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sells the idea to the community that it will bring tourism and economic development, but there are posted signs that the areas are closed to the public. We saw no signs of tourism. The property is removed from tax rolls, and the burden to make up the losses falls on the residents of the area.

Ms. Evans thanked Mr. Miller for a very thorough presentation of information.

Mr. Miller stated that they need to update the resolution opposing the refuge, as the name of the refuge, the focus areas, and the size they referenced have all changed since 1998.

Mr. Washington stated that they opposed it 1998, and they oppose it now.

Mr. Liehr stated that the names of elected officials also need to be updated.

Ms. Evans made a motion to approve the changes to the 1998 resolution and move it to the County Board, and Mr. Tripp seconded it. Motion carried with a voice vote.

8. Old Business

None

9. New Business

None

10. Adjournment

Mr. James made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:28 a.m., and Mr. Mulcahy seconded it. Motion carried with a voice vote.

Bill Olthoff, Committee Chairman
Diane Owens, Executive Coordinator