

**Kenosha County**  
**Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (MJAC)**  
**(“Smart Growth”)**

**MEETING MINUTES**

February 26, 2008

**Present:** See Attached Sign-In Sheet

Fred Ekornaas, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion was made by Jeff Butler to approve the January 29, 2008 MJAC meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Dennis Faber and passed unanimously by a voice vote of the MJAC representatives.

**Status on Selection of Local Population and Employment Projections:** Kate Madison of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) reported that almost all of the participating local communities have contacted SEWRPC with their community-level projections. She stated that SEWRPC would be contacting the remaining municipalities again shortly, since the population and employment projections are essential for the plan elements.

**Review and possible action on Chapter X – Housing Element of the Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan for Kenosha County:** Kate Madison conducted a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the information contained in draft Chapter X – Housing Element of the Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan, including a brief summary of data covered at the previous MJAC meeting. This included a review of the housing affordability assessment for Kenosha County, public and private housing programs, and community policies and regulations that affect the provision of housing.

Ms. Madison also indicated where changes had been made to the draft chapter, according to committee and other recommendations, including the following: Table X-18 (Kenosha County Housing Affordability Index) had been expanded to cover housing units prices up to \$1,000,000; an inventory table of condominium units is planned for inclusion in the chapter; some information in the Kenosha County Housing Affordability Section (pg. 7) had been revised to reflect the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)’s affordability standard of 30 percent of a household’s gross annual income; four figures had been added, including one (Figure X-7) illustrating the distribution of housing stock age in the County, and others depicting the percentage of owner-occupied housing with a mortgage in the Region and State (X-4), the percentage of owner-occupied housing without a mortgage in the Region and State (Figure X-5), and the percentage of renter-occupied housing by monthly rent payment in the Region and State (Figure X-6).

Kate Madison then reviewed the housing goals and objectives developed for the County’s comprehensive plan, noting that recommendations focus on the provision of housing for households that earn less than the median income or are elderly or disabled. Specific housing issues that were identified included: housing supply, housing quality, housing cost, aging and disabled population, household size, housing distribution, and fair housing. Recommendations were then developed to address each of these issues, through the identification of housing goals, objectives, policies, and programs.

John Holloway asked for a definition of the term “accessory dwelling” (pg 31). Kate Madison stated that the unit was defined on pg. 10: “Accessory apartments, or dwellings, including ‘In-Law Suites’ and ‘Granny Flats,’ are secondary dwellings established in conjunction with, and clearly subordinate to, a primary dwelling, and may be part of the same structure as the primary dwelling or a detached unit on the same lot. These dwelling units are often intended for use by relatives of the individuals residing in the primary dwelling.” Discussion then followed

as to whether Kenosha County and its communities should adopt the plan recommendation to consider amending the County zoning ordinance to allow accessory dwelling units in single-family zoning districts as a conditional use. Mr. Holloway noted that many problems could ensue after the family member no longer occupies the accessory dwelling. Jean Werbie suggested that districts could be zoned for duplex, with the understanding that some units would be accessory dwellings. Fred Ekornaas noted that it would be very difficult to enforce who lived in the “granny flat,” and that homeowners who had invested money into constructing the accessory dwelling were unlikely to dismantle it when their family member had no more use of it. Nancy Washburn commented that a community in Tampa, Florida, had included accessory dwelling units as part of their neighborhood design, and that the “flex” units were very successful. Ms. Washburn added that the committee should take into account that many homebuyers were also entrepreneurs who might appreciate the flex unit as a working space, and therefore, it might be beneficial to make the construction of such units easier within the existing ordinances. Mr. Ekornaas stated that new planned unit developments might consider including flex units, but that “spot zoning” (that is, individuals asking for singular changes) should be avoided. John Roth also commented that not all businesses were compatible with residential uses, such as mechanics, and that the County would need to be careful before changing ordinances that might disrupt the quality of life. Jeff Butler noted that the recommendation was only to “consider” changing the ordinance, and that communities would need to continue tracking local trends to determine whether the demand for accessory units would warrant a change in the future. The MJAC agreed to leave the recommendation in the plan.

Jeff Butler asked whether the County and its communities should waive the subdivision review fee for all proposed subdivisions that demonstrate affordable housing, as recommended on page 35. Jean Werbie suggested instead that the County consider waiving impact fees for affordable housing and senior housing.

Jeff Labahn asked for clarification about the County and local goals and objectives, and whether the current draft element meets the Wisconsin requirements for a comprehensive plan for the local governments. Rick Kania stated that the comprehensive plan is intended to be both countywide and community-level: the recommendations, policies and programs outlined in the plan are supposed to encompass the entire County including local communities. However, some policies apply to certain communities and not others, especially as related to those providing sanitary sewer services while others do not provide such services, which affects the type of housing that may be accommodated.

Jean Werbie requested that one of the housing quality programs (p. 32) be clarified to read, “Ensure that building *maintenance* codes include requirements for adequate insulation, heating, and plumbing.”

Pat Finnemore requested a brief summary of where Kenosha County is within the three-year planning process to be sent with the next draft plan chapter.

Nancy Washburn asked if housing units in obsolete uses (for example, seasonal lakeside homes that homeowners now want to redevelop as year-round residences) should be addressed in the element. Ms. Washburn and Dennis Faber commented on the numerous issues regarding lakeside residential development and rehabilitation of older, substandard seasonal homes. John Roth noted that the County’s current process for dealing with obsolete uses was adequate, and Kate Madison stated that the issue could be addressed briefly in the housing element’s inventory section on unsound properties.

Jeff Labahn requested more time for the City of Kenosha to review the goals and objectives of the housing element. Approval of Draft Chapter X – Housing Element was deferred to a future meeting.

**Citizen Comments:** None

**Any Other Business Allowed by Law:** John Roth stated that the housing discussion had been fruitful, and he looked forward to additional discussions at upcoming MJAC meetings as the planning process continued.

**Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn was made by John Holloway, seconded by Dennis Faber, and passed unanimously by a voice vote of the MJAC members. The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kristen Lie, Kenosha/Racine Community Planning Educator  
Kenosha County Department of Planning and Development

Approved: April 29, 2008