

County Planning Connection

Winter 2011



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Form-based Code

What is Form-based code? Conway Township decided to further explore this planning technique by hosting a December 1, 2010 presentation of the subject by guest speaker Glen Pape, Regional Land Policy Educator for the Southeast Region of MSU Extension.

Form-based codes are an alternative to conventional zoning. Conventional zoning separates uses into districts (residential, industrial, commercial, etc.) whereas form-based code addresses the relationship between: 1.) building facades and the public realm; 2.) the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another and; 3.) the scale and types of streets and blocks.

Communities designed with form-based code provide:

- Flexible space that can service many uses
- Places that attract people of all ages
- Places that combine employment, retail, civic and residential uses
- A pedestrian-oriented environment in which there are sidewalks, and in higher density areas, basic retail and services shops are within a 1/4 mile

- A link between building and public spaces
- Streets that are built for all users (e.g. pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles)
- Small blocks

Form-based codes are very strict about fundamental issues such as the creation of public spaces, but less-important rules such as on-site parking and micromanagement of land use types, are loosened compared to typical zoning codes.

Why is this planning technique important? Talented, well-educated people who are the key to success in the New Economy are attracted to the quality living environments that form-based code creates. They like amenities and places that attract people.

Proponents of form-based code say that these development regulations offer great predictability in what the end product (development) will look like. Examples of desired development are illustrated in the ordinance in the form of site layout, frontage types, streetscapes, building types and pictures.

Some communities re-write their zoning (*continued on page 2*)

HOT TOPICS:

Mark The Date:
Livingston County Planning Brown Bag Lunch, Noon, February 23, 2011, at the Marion Township Hall. Planning topic to be determined. An e-mail invitation will follow.

2011 Livingston County Planning Work Program

With helpful suggestions from visits with our local township units of government, the County Planning Department has created a comprehensive 2011 Work Program that will lead our projects throughout the year and serve as a base for years to come.

The 2011 Work Program includes five program sections: Communication, Planning & Zoning, Economic Development, County Administrative Support and Clerical Support. The bulk of our projects fall under Communication, however, they are short-term and of a quick duration, so they

account for only 6.3% of our total work program. The bulk of our staff time will be focused on Planning & Zoning (33.3% of total) and Economic Development (27.6%) endeavors.

Our 2011 projects range from creating a brochure of department services and a brown bag lunch series to 2010 Census Demographic Analysis, an Economic Development Map and a Livingston County Parks & Open Space Plan. To view this work program in its entirety, visit the County Planning website under [Information & Publications](#).

Form-based Code (continued)

ordinance to implement form-based code, while most communities apply a form-based code to a limited portion of their community; often to downtown or key redevelopment areas that have been the subject of detailed physical planning.

Genoa Charter Township in Livingston County is an example of a community that has used this later approach. They have applied a form-based code overlay to the future development of the Genoa Town Center at the SE corner of Dorr Road and Grand River Avenue. The Township zoning ordinance provides the following purpose statement for this area:

“The intent is to facilitate the development of a traditional, pedestrian-oriented town center with mixed-use buildings containing retail and service uses on the first floor and residential or office on upper floors, similar to the traditional downtown character of Brighton and Howell. The commercial components are to be complemented by surrounding residential development within a walkable distance consisting of townhouses and single family residential that follow traditional neighborhood design principles, with pedestrian oriented streetscapes and a system of neighborhood open spaces. Development shall be in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the Genoa Township Master Plan.”

For additional information or to schedule a form-based code presentation in your community contact Glen Pape at: papeglen@msu.edu

As communities begin to realize the benefits of growing compactly, form-based codes are gaining popularity.

Following are some communities with form-based code or code updates in progress:

- Village of Suttons Bay, Michigan
- Miami, Florida
- Sarasota County, Florida
- Denver, Colorado
- Livermore, California
- Flagstaff, Arizona

For sample codes see Form-Based Codes Institute at:

<http://www.formbasedcodes.org/>

Spotlight On... Hamburg/Green Oak/Putnam Township Joint Planning Commission Meeting

A week before Christmas, Hamburg Township Zoning Administrator Pat Hagman renewed an old tradition of holding a combined Planning Commission meeting with the neighboring communities of Green Oak and Putnam Townships. Although Green Oak and Hamburg Township had held joint planning meetings in the past, it had been approximately five years since they last met.

As the host community for this event, Hamburg Township set the agenda, chaired the meeting and lead the discussion on each agenda item. The impetus for holding this joint

Planning Commission meeting was to discuss issues that link the three communities together, such as the Huron River, the M-36 corridor, and the Lakeland Trail. Also discussed were Master Plan updates that each community had initiated, and the process of local environmental review.

This December 16 meeting was very well attended by over 20 zoning administrators, planning commissioners and planning consultants. The outcomes of the meeting included, but were not limited to:

- A mutual interest in conducting

an M-36 corridor access management plan.

- The need for common riparian protection language in their zoning ordinances.
- The need for acquisition of easements for the Lakeland Trail and paving of this linear park.

Overall, this type of a collaborative planning commission meeting is a mutually beneficial planning endeavor that would be well worth duplicating in other Livingston County communities.

Census 2010 Release Dates

United States
**Census
2010**

Everyone is waiting for the release of Census 2010 figures because of its importance to our future planning. So when are the first data products expected? Following is a snapshot of release dates in 2011, the data products to be expected, and the lowest level of geography that will be provided.

- **Feb 2011- March 2011: Census Redistricting Data.** This includes State population counts for race and Hispanic or Latino categories and State housing unit counts by occupancy status. This data is for purposes of determining Michigan's number of seats in the House of Representatives based on population.
- **May 2011: Selected Population and Housing Characteristics.** This release will include data at the county, city, village and township geographic level.
- **June 2011 - August 2011: Summary File 1.** This release will include selected population, race and housing characteristics to the Block and Census Tract level.
- **December 2011 - April 2012: Summary File 2.** This includes population and housing characteristics by race to the Census Tract level.

County Planning Commissioner Beth Hammond Retires

After thirteen years of service to the Livingston County Planning Commission, Beth Hammond has decided to retire to further enjoy travel and volunteering at the Fenton Adopt-A-Pet with her husband Harry.

Beth began her service to the County Planning Commission in 1998 when she was Clerk of Tyrone Township. With her extensive municipal experience she has educated the Planning Commission on local government process and has helped guide the decision-making of this government body. For six of her thirteen years on the Planning Commission Beth also served as Vice-Chair. She lead the Commission with diplomacy, patience and kindness.



Beth was honored for her work at the November 17, 2010, County Planning Commission meeting and at the December 6, 2010, Board of Commissioners meeting where she was presented with a resolution of recognition.

We sincerely thank Beth Hammond for her investment of time, talent and knowledge as a Livingston County Planning Commissioner. Please join us in wishing Beth many years of happiness in her retirement!



Beth Hammond addresses the Board of Commissioners

Results of Brown Bag Lunch Survey

In the Fall 2010 edition of **County Planning Connection** we posed the idea of a brown bag lunch series hosted by the County Planning Department and Planning Commission. This program will be much like the Planners Luncheons that our department has sponsored in the past, however, it will be a low-cost/no-cost version because participants will bring their own lunch. To assist our department in the planning of these lunches we asked for participation in a short survey available on the County Planning website. We received some great input on this survey, including:

- **Level of Interest:** Survey respondents indicated their interest in a Brown Bag Lunch series. Sixty percent (60%) of respondents indicated that they would be very interested in this program, while 20% indicated that they are somewhat interested and 20% indicated that they are not interested.
- **Willingness to Host A Lunch:** Sixty percent (60%) of survey respondents expressed that they would be willing to provide the location for a lunch and help the County Planning Department secure a speaker.
- **Topic Ideas:** The topic ideas that received the highest ranking include: GIS Geographic Information Systems; Redevelopment; Workforce Development; Transportation; Walkable Streets; Land Use Management/Planned Growth; and Economic Development. Write-in topics included: Sharing of Services, and Cooperative Opportunities to Condense Planning and Zoning Regulations.
- **Best Day of the Week and Time for Lunch:** Persons who took the survey suggested that Mondays and Wednesdays were the best days of the week for such an event and 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. or 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. would be the best time frames.

Based on this response, we've decided to proceed with the idea and we have included this project in the 2011 Livingston County Planning Work Program. Our intent is to hold the lunches every quarter or as initiated by a local community. For every brown bag lunch: 1.) a local community will generate a topic of discussion, and suggest the no-cost location for the event, such as their government hall or a location with a special planning interest. 2.) County Planning will aid the local community in securing a guest speaker and will host/facilitate the event. 3.) attendees will be responsible for bringing their individual lunch and beverage to the event.

We believe that this program will have many benefits including the provision of:

- an opportunity to get together with planners from other Livingston County communities thereby opening the lines of communication and potential collaboration
- a planning educational forum in which to learn about new planning techniques, best-practices and highlight local planning endeavors.

An e-mail invitation to the first brown bag lunch on February 23, 2011, will soon be distributed. Marion Township will be the host community. Please contact us with any questions or concerns.

Planning Particulars

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The Livingston County
Planning Department
extends our sincerest
thanks and a happy
retirement to
Nancy Vorhoff,
our Administrative Assistant
at County Planning for over
3 years. Best wishes in
your retirement!

Professional Emergency Manager - PEM

Congratulations to Principal Planner Scott Barb, who has just earned his Professional Emergency Manager (PEM) designation from the Michigan State Police Emergency Management & Homeland Security Division!

Everyone within the Livingston County Planning Department now has their PEM designation which was achieved by successfully completing a multitude of required emergency management courses on-line and in the classroom, and passing a written exam. The eleven required classroom courses are taught in Lansing by instructors from the Michigan State Police Emergency Management & Homeland Security Division. These courses consist of instructor-lead discussions, group activities and case studies taken directly from current threats or events in Michigan and nationwide. Once a person achieves the PEM designation, they must annually complete twenty-four hours of training to retain the status.

This training and subsequent attainment of the PEM designation, has given our staff new perspective on how the development that results from our planning & zoning practices can result in threats to our man-made and natural environment. We have used this expertise to collaborate with other Livingston County departments and draft the 2007 Livingston County Hazard Mitigation Plan, as well as the Cities Readiness Initiative.

Professional Emergency Manager training is available free of charge to all local communities in Livingston County. For further information please see: <http://www.michigan.gov/msp>.



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Jeanne Clum, Vice-Chair

James Sparks

Sylvia Kennedy-Carrasco

Brian Prokuda

Bill Anderson

Questions or comments? Or to refer someone for our e-newsletter mailing list—

Contact our Staff at (517) 546-7555