

Indiana Land Resources Council
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 27th 2012
12:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
One North Capitol Ave, First Floor Conference Room

Present: Bruce Everhart, Joe Kelsay, Mary McConnell, Nancy Cline, Gene Schmidt and Eric Kelly

Absent: Jon Craig, Fred Walker, Dave Compton and Bob Burke

The meeting began with introductions by Joe Kelsay. Amy Cornell provided her executive director report including a summary of assistance provided to counties. The council review the April 2012 minutes. Eric Kelly moved to approve. Mary McConnell seconded. The council unanimously approved the minutes.

Amy gave a brief review of Planning for Agritourism: A Guide for Local Governments and Indiana Farmers. The council and audience members provided some suggested edits. Nancy Cline stated that she liked the positive tone of the document and the tips for increasing participation. Ag advisory groups such should these tools to ensure that they are represented in discussions. Bruce Everhart thought the document struck the right balance. It is a helpful and positive tool that provides a roadmap. Bruce moved to adopt the document as presented and amended. Eric Kelly seconded the motion. The council unanimously approved the guide.

Amy gave a brief overview of revisions to the Guide for Local Land Use Planning for Agricultural Operations. The revisions were necessitated by IDEM and OISC regulations that were passed in 2012. Mary McConnell moved to approve the changes. Nancy Cline seconded the motion. The council unanimously approved the updated Guide.

Amy gave an overview of revisions to Local Officials and Regulating Livestock Production. Mary McConnell moved to approve the changes. Bruce Everhart seconded the motion. The council unanimously approved the updated document.

The council discussed whether there were ways to track usage of the ILRC resources. They also suggested looking into whether social media, such as Facebook, could be used to promote the ILRC resources. Amy agreed to follow up with the ISDA communications team to see what tools are available.

Jamie Palmer from the Rural Wastewater Task Force (RWWTC) gave an update to the Council. The RWWTC is an independent group that meets monthly to share information about rural wastewater issues. Representatives from funding sources, public health agencies and regulatory agencies participate. She discussed revisions to the Indiana State Department of Health's Residential and Commercial Onsite Sewage Systems rules that became effective November 19, 2012. The amendments

included a significant restructuring to reduce redundancy, eliminations of many technical differences between the residential and commercial onsite system requirements, and to provide clarifications. IDEM is working on implementation of a new anti-degradation rule. These standards will make it more difficult to site a new water treatment plant. Septic issues will also be considered.

The Alliance for Indiana Rural Water received a 319 Grant to develop and implement a program that will reduce nonpoint source pollution for the Middle Patoka River. The project will start in January 2012. The tasks will include monitoring of water quality, education, cost share for the installation of BMPs. Septic issues are among those that will be addressed. Funding for wastewater projects has been reduced across all sources. Indiana's funding agencies would really hard to get the maximum benefit out of the collective resources that are available. State revolving funds have less money than in the past. The Clean Water Needs survey was just completed. Mid-way through the fiscal year most of the money for the year is obligated.

Jamie also updated the council on potential legislation for regarding regional sewer districts. The new Senate Environmental Affairs Chair is Sen. Travis Holdman. There are a lot of first and second term legislators in the House. Anti-rural sewer districts continue. Although no specific legislation has surfaced. Changes made during the 2012 session puts USDA RD funding at risk without mandatory connection ordinances. There are concerns that people will live in unsafe and unhealthy conditions. This could lead to more condemnation of homes. Eric volunteered to prepare a draft of a septic tank discussion paper by early December.

Eric discussed the proposed Discussion Paper Smart Growth for Indiana. The council discussed moving away from the term smart growth. The term is overused and implies that following the principles will eliminate all problems. Smart growth can be used to solve some problems. For example, New Jersey implemented principles to solve an affordable housing problem. The council is interested in promoting a common sense approach to planning. A balanced viewpoint and cooperation between decision makers is essential. Indiana is not currently recognized as a smart growth state.

Mary asked for clarification on how the document would be used at the state and/or local level. Eric clarified that the purpose of requiring local governments to file designated growth area plans with the ILRC is to create a central database that could be used for economic development. Nancy commented that she liked the statement that smart growth is a restatement of a commitment to planning. Effective comprehensive planning is essential and allows the community to set its own vision. She had some questions about the state funding section, such as what funding is available and how would the system work? One suggestion is that the state could deny funding to projects unless the local government has an updated comprehensive plan. The statutory requirements for a comprehensive plan are not extensive. A state review would not be a big burden. The federal government has a similar review system for transportation projects. Some of the suggestions in the brownfield section are already occurring.

Eric proposed the following action steps: breaking the sections into state and local and indicate actions to prioritize. Bruce suggested thinking strategically about how the document fits into the ILRC toolkit. The council had a roundtable discussion regarding next steps for the ILRC. Eric volunteered to talk with the transition team if needed. Gene suggested that Amy seek out more speaking opportunities to promote the ILRC toolkit. Bruce discussed the overall impact of the drought of 2012. The commodity supply is the tightest it has ever been. Farm real estate prices are at historic highs. The livestock situation is not as good. Home foreclosures seem to have stabilized. Nancy expressed concern about water resources and irrigation. Mary discussed that many conservation cost share programs were being undone.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy K. Cornell