

**Congress Township Comprehensive Planning
Steering Committee Meeting Summary
April 19, 2007**

Members Present: Tim Bible, Rick Witucki, Karl Kanehl, Jim Stephenson, David Tegtmeier, Randy Tegtmeier, Arleen Wester, JoAnn Wester, Don Wester, Bob Wright, Debbie Starcher, Nichole Madrill, Don Buren, Bonnie Krueger, Jeff Layton, Dean McIlvaine, Carmela Massaro, and Elaine Koch

Planning Staff Present: Katie M. Myers and Robert L. Murray

Officials Present: Bill Cletzer and Dave Knight

The meeting was held at the Congress Township Hall in Congress. Each member was given a packet of information including: the results from the community survey, comprehensive planning 101 work book, 2000 centennial census data for Congress Twp., and 2007 poverty guidelines. A brief meet and greet started the meeting.

The first topic discussed was the results of the survey. We talked about the rating of services. The HIGHEST rated services were fire and public schools. The committee had comments on both.

FIRE

- Good response time
- Extremely visible
- Community oriented
- Funded by 2 levies
- Joint district services 2twp.'s and 2 villages; 2 Full time firefighters and 38 volunteer fire fighters
- Village of Burbank Fire services a one-mile strip in Congress Township

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- "Schools are the township"
- New facilities
- Excellent rating with the State
- Low student/teacher ratio
- Help groups
- Variety of funding sources
- Run efficiently
- Do a lot of grant writing
- Historically the levies pass better than fair
- Open enrollment has increased by 30 students 06-07 year as compared to the 05-06 year

- Two top districts students are coming from; Black River (Medina Co.) and Wooster

Services rated the LOWEST in the township were police, job opportunities, and cultural/entertainment and water quality. The committee had these comments in regards to all four:

POLICE

- Slow response time
- 0 deputies contracted to the township
- Lack of visibility
- Too many unsolved crimes
- Examples of common crimes include; breaking and entering, vandalism and theft
- Village of West Salem only has part time officers that only work 2/3rds of the time
- Village of Burbank no longer has a police department
- Too many speeders in the township

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

- Limited opportunities for those with a h.s.diploma or less
- No jobs for teenagers, leads to trouble

CULTURAL/ENTERTAINMENT

- Nothing to do
- Everyone travels to Wooster
- No sit down family restaurant except 1 in West Salem
- Odd that there is nothing at the (2) I-71 interchanges
- Small theatre production for the youth would be great

WATER QUALITY

- Smells and is high in salt
- Very high sulphur

Secondly, we discussed the results of the survey, section titled Things That Needed to be Done. The item most highly SUPPORTED was protecting the agricultural base.

Comments included:

- Protect open space
- Losing farmland with the 3 acre minimum lot size
- No sites available for higher density housing
- Wells are a concern

The item most survey OPPOSED was annexation. The only reason mentioned by the committee was because they did not want the noise and pollution from heavy industry.

The third item on the agenda, was to cover Comprehensive Planning 101, discuss the various sections of a plan, including, community facilities and services, economic development, housing, land use and natural resources.

Robert L. Murray and Katie M. Myers gave the committee a few facts and variables to take into account. We then broke the committee into sub-committees.

1) Community Facilities and Services:

Pat Kanehl	Elaine Koch
Arlene Wester	Bonnie Krueger
Bob Wright	

2) Economic Development:

Jeff Layton	Nichole Madrill
Karl Kanehl	Rick Witucki

3) Housing and Natural Resources:

JoAnn Wester	Dave Tegtmeier
Carmella Massaro	Tim Bible
Don Wester	

4) Land Use:

Jim Stephenson	Dean McIlvaine
Randy Tegtmeier	Debbie Starcher
Don Buren	

Each Sub-Committee submitted notes taken for their group, here are the bullet points:

Group # 1 (Community Facilities and Services)

- Community Infrastructure
 1. New Water Treatment Plant
 2. Some Capacity of Sewage Treatment
- Transportation
 1. Train-Cargo
 2. Greyhound Bus stops in West Salem
 3. I-71 (2) exits
- Inventory of Open Space
 1. Corace Deake Park in West Salem
 2. Dragway 42
 3. Soccer/Baseball/Football facilities at school
 4. Wetlands are a concern as a drainage problem
- Analysis of Community Services
 1. Fire and EMS- Darn Good! Well equipped and managed, but may need to look at another station or so because of the size of the area
- Historic/Cultural Resources- Historical Society (old farm houses)
(old Cemeteries)

Group # 2 (Economic Development)

- Would like current employment/unemployment data
- Updated water data I-71 area @301 and 539
- Railway availability and use
- Utility availability; wind energy an option

Group # 3 (Housing and Natural Resources)

- Wind power/solar power
- Indian Historical site
- Wildlife-hunting-fish farms
- Info from Chet-building inspector
- New schools bring in new families
- What is the turnover rate of residential population?
- Foreclosure rate?
- Finance opportunities in the community
- Brain Drain
- Poverty rate and percentage of usage?
- What services are already available?
- What does farm land lease for?
- Water supply, rights, and quantity

Group # 4 (Land Use)

History:

- Residential or agricultural very little commercial

Existing Land Use:

- Specialty crops
- Organic farming

Identify redevelopment areas:

- 42 corridor-commercial?
- Try to preserve open space

Description of Intergovernmental Relationships:

- West Salem v. township
- Where we border with other counties/townships we should have compatible zoning
- Would West Salem cooperate with our township?

Items we would like to have:

- Map to compare early 1990's to now
- # of building permits in the last 15 years

The groups ended their discussions and were challenged to begin thinking about the goal and objectives that they would like to see in their plan.

All were encouraged to do a bit of “homework” and bring any relevant materials to the next meeting.

Next meeting: May 22, 2007 7-9 pm Congress Twp. Hall