

PLANNING - Dundee TWP.

Local History
Please keep clippings in folder
subject Dundee Township
date of material 1976-1979

WHERE
ARE WE
GROWING?

LOCAL LAND USE STUDY
OF
DUNDEE TOWNSHIP



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
Carpentersville-Dundee
Area

March 1974

HISTORY OF THE STUDY

Among the earliest studies undertaken by the Carpentersville-Dundee Area League of Women Voters after its organization in 1970 were those concerned with environmental issues related to the use of water resources, water and air quality, solid waste management, and the conservation of natural resources. Our studies established that all of these concerns converge at numerous points in the use of land; and that the misuse of land, both in urban and less developed regions, has resulted in pollution, congestion, loss of open space, high taxes, and the deterioration of a suitable living environment.

In view of the population projections and growth trends which forecast a rapidly accelerated development and urbanization of Dundee Township in the next decades, and because of a growing concern among our membership about the effect intensification of development could have on the future of the communities of Carpentersville, East Dundee, West Dundee and Sleepy Hollow, we voted at our annual meeting in April of 1972 to initiate our first local study, to be called a Local Land Use Study of Dundee Township, whose scope would include the following:

- I. Planning Commissions
- II. Zoning
- III. Coordination between local boards for planning purposes
- IV. Housing opportunities for low and moderate income families
- V. Future growth and land use

Shortly after adopting this study item, a committee was organized to gather available facts and information, and given the responsibility of presenting the results of its research to the League membership at four meetings over a period of two years.

In September of 1972, Mr. Ivan Alten, Director of Urban Development for the Kane County Planning Department, was invited to speak at a meeting concerning the progress of the development of the Kane County Master Plan. Planning officials from the four villages were invited to attend as well as the public. As a result of the meeting our League agreed to work with the Kane County Planning Department in a pilot study of Dundee Township related to land use and zoning regulations.

League members worked on the pilot program for several months preparing a land use map of Dundee Township, and a comparative zoning study of the seven cities and villages exercising zoning authority in the township. This material was included in a presentation made by the Kane County Planning Department in November of 1972 at a meeting attended by League members, village officials, and planning and zoning commissioners from the seven municipalities having jurisdiction in the township, and later incorporated in the Interim Land-Use Plan, Kane County Comprehensive Planning Program, and presented to the Kane County Board in March of 1973.

In addition to familiarizing themselves with a multitude of materials related to the field of planning and land use, League representatives attended village meetings as observers to keep abreast of planning developments, including the public hearings held for consideration of the proposed Carpentersville Comprehensive Plan, and the proposed Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance of Sleepy Hollow. They also attended workshop meetings sponsored by the Kane County Planning Department.

In that phase of our study which involved assessing housing opportunities for low and moderate income families in Dundee Township, we conducted interviews with officials from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Illinois Housing Authority, and the Elgin Housing Authority. On-site tours of federal and state subsidized housing developments were arranged for the committee, including a single family home development and an apartment development in Dundee Township; an apartment complex for the elderly, and multi-family and single-family units in Elgin.

Having presented to our membership the essential information through our local League Bulletin and discussions meetings, consensus questions were developed by the committee for presentation to the membership for the purpose of reaching consensus concerning the Local Land Use Study in January of 1974.

Consensus, insofar as the League of Women Voters is concerned, means agreement among a substantial number of members, representative of the membership as a whole, reached after study and discussion. Consensus is expressed in terms of rather broad objectives. It is not tied to specific legislative measures or specific proposals of public officials or others. The body of opinion expressed in a consensus becomes a League position. A League then begins the continuous process, called action, of working in the community toward goals established by member agreement.

I. PLANNING COMMISSIONS

Since our study was initiated two years ago, we have found a significant increase in the concern for planning processes among officials in the four villages we surveyed. We have also observed a growth in general interest and approval for local planning activities among the public in our communities. Although each of the communities had functioning planning commissions two years ago, it appeared to us that decision-making in the planning-zoning process was done case by case, or on an individual basis, with no clear planning framework in which any of them operated.

This state of affairs has altered considerably recently. The Carpentersville Comprehensive Plan has been adopted by the Board of Trustees of that village. This plan was developed with the assistance of professional planners. The Planning Commissions of East

Dundee and West Dundee are considering proposed comprehensive plans developed by planning consultants. The Sleepy Hollow Plan Commission has submitted to the village board a proposed initial comprehensive plan developed by members of the commission.

Our research has led us to several conclusions concerning the field of planning in general.

It is desirable to require environmental impact statements which estimate the probable social, economic and environmental outcomes of land use proposals presented to planning and governing boards. This puts the burden of furnishing information on those who want change, and provides the means for the public to get the facts and data they need to represent their interests, and stimulates meaningful citizen participation in land use issues facing the communities.

An effective planning program requires expertise and knowledge on the part of both appointed and elected officials. They should be familiar with planning concepts, have broad understanding of contemporary problems, and be diligent in their efforts to secure the knowledge and information which will generate solutions to these problems. However, in our communities, most members of the governing bodies and planning boards are private citizens who are either unpaid, or paid modest amounts for their labors. They earn a living by day, and attend to their civic responsibilities by night. As their duties become more complex, the demands on their time increase. Therefore, it would seem to be highly advantageous that some form of continual professional planning and management assistance be provided to local officials who have the responsibility for developmental policies and decisions. Possibly funding for this assistance will be furnished in greater measure by the federal and state governments in the future. In any event, some provision should be made for the funding of professional assistance in municipal budgets on a regular and ongoing basis.

II. ZONING

League members, working under the direction of the county planning group, did a comparative study of the zoning ordinances in existence in all the municipalities wholly or partly in the township, as well as the county. The municipalities included were: Algonquin, Barrington Hills, Carpentersville, Elgin, East Dundee, Sleepy Hollow and West Dundee. The zoning designations in use (eg., R-1, B-2, F-1 etc.) and the definitions given to them in each zoning district were charted. On a second chart an effort was made to correlate the zoning classifications comparing definitions and combining those that were similar in various municipalities (and the county) under one designation.

The county's object was to encourage all zoning bodies to adopt zoning designations which would have the same meaning in

adjacent municipalities. The League found great variation in existing designations as compared with definition. For example, R-1 in one district could mean a single-family dwelling allowed on a minimum of five acres, in another, a minimum of one-half acre, and in a third on a 60 x 100 foot lot. Confusion was created by the same zoning designation having different terminology in adjacent municipalities. An area intended for factory uses might be zoned I, C, or F-2. To make inter-village discussions more meaningful, zoning terminology and definition should be established that are comparable from one municipality to another.

Concurrent with the League's study, the Village of Carpentersville developed and adopted a comprehensive plan and then a zoning ordinance designed to obtain the goals and objectives of the plan. The Zoning Commission of Sleepy Hollow developed a zoning ordinance based on a proposed comprehensive plan. At the time of this writing, the zoning ordinance has been adopted, while the comprehensive plan is still under consideration. East and West Dundee are developing comprehensive plans, and until these plans are adopted by their village boards, land use decisions will continue to be made under previously established zoning ordinances. Experts in the field of planning are in agreement that the zoning ordinance of a municipality should be enacted subsequent to the adoption of a comprehensive plan in order to implement the specific proposals contained in that plan.

The committee concluded that questions involving the engineering of sewers, water lines and roads, and the long-term effect of change in the topography, as well as fiscal plans, call for knowledgeable assistance which can perhaps be best obtained through professional planning assistance.

III. COORDINATION BETWEEN LOCAL BOARDS FOR PLANNING PURPOSES

Our studies indicate that major land use decisions have regional implications because the kinds of problems which are increasingly becoming the concern of local government frequently transcend city boundaries. Transportation, water supply, solid waste disposal, drainage, police and fire services, employment opportunities and social services are but a few of these problems.

Regional coordination between local governments is difficult to implement because competition between communities for tax producing residential and commercial construction makes it difficult for a spirit of cooperation to be generated between communities which otherwise share common bonds.

We found little communication and consultation between the governing and planning bodies of our communities, or with other taxing bodies. Recently, tentative steps have been taken which could modify this condition, and lines of communication have been established because of a land use proposal which requires inter-village consultation.

IV. HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOW AND MODERATE INCOME FAMILIES

The Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 states the goals of the Congress of the United States to be a "decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family." Using this guide as a comparison in our study of housing for low-moderate income families (\$5,000 to \$10,000 yearly for a family of four) to the existing housing constructed with federal subsidies in Dundee Township, it soon became apparent there was little in this category on which to make comparisons.

League members were able to visit several locations to view low-moderate income housing funded federally, others funded by the Illinois Housing Authority. Two of these federally subsidized developments were located in Dundee Township, several were located in Elgin. On-site inspection of housing developments in Dundee Township left League members with mixed judgments. While one multi-family development was attractive, apparently in good repair, and on a picturesque site, League members pointed out the need for more imaginative planning. The location of parking areas and refuse centers makes the area appear congested and lacking in open green space. We also felt it would be more desirable if housing designed to meet the needs of families in this category was not concentrated geographically but located on scattered sites. Another idea of merit is the approach of the Illinois Housing Authority which subsidizes middle-income housing and reserves a portion of these units for low-income families.

A major criticism of the federally funded housing developments was that construction was "shoddy" (nearly one in four containing significant defects at the purchase closing.) Similar complaints in one single-family development in Dundee Township has moved residents there to petition and bring suit against the builder.

Federal aid to home buyers and the rent supplement program were suspended in January of 1973 pending a six-month study revamping period. A study completed since this time recommends that the federal government expand experiments in giving cash assistance for housing allowances to the needy, allowing them to choose their own housing on the private market, and to continue the suspension of its subsidized housing programs, except those in progress or in the process of development before January of 1973.

Alternative ideas and plans from other sources have been suggested including one covering Dundee Township. The Regional Housing Coalition (an organization comprised of mayors, business groups, citizen groups, NIPC etc.) has proposed a plan for balanced distribution of housing opportunities for low and moderate income families for Northeastern Illinois. It divides Kane, Cook, Lake, McHenry, DuPage and Will Counties into sectors and estimates the housing needs for low-moderate income families in each sector, and calls for voluntary participation by the communities involved to achieve overall balance in the distribution of such housing in

each sector.

NIPC estimates the total need for reasonably priced housing for the low-moderate income bracket to be 229,400 additional housing opportunities during the next ten years in the counties mentioned above. The ten-year estimate of housing units needed (by new construction and the use of the existing housing supply) for Kane County is 9,500 units, or 4.1% of the total, evenly spread through as many communities as possible.

One obvious conclusion to be drawn is that we have fallen short of the HUD goal, and, as a result, we have a housing problem which could reach enormous dimensions.

V. FUTURE GROWTH AND LAND USE

When the League began its study there were no comprehensive plans for the villages of Dundee Township. There were, however, forecasts by the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission and other demographers of tremendous growth to come in Kane County. According to 1972 NIPC figures, Dundee Township could expect a population increase of 15,000 by 1985, and another 15,000 between 1985 and 1995. Kane County was expected to almost double its size to about one-half million people.

Much of this increase must be fitted into the existing municipalities in the county and the township. Since each municipality has jurisdiction for $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles beyond its limits when it comes to annexation of unincorporated land, and because the four villages in Dundee Township lie so close together, there is much overlapping of jurisdictions. League members urge that the four villages get together to decide which ones will indeed have the right of annexation of disputed lands. Elgin, Algonquin, Gilberts and Barrington Hills need to be consulted also. Some compromises and adjustments will have to be made if comprehensive plans now formally adopted as planning instruments and those being prepared are to have any reality.

In the past Dundee Township has consisted mainly of single-family dwellings; in the last five years the majority of construction has been of multi-unit buildings and attached houses. Another concept, that of the Planned Unit Development, or P.U.D., may be the chief feature of future construction as ordinances to provide for these have been added to the zoning regulations of the villages. A PUD basically provides that the usual zoning regulations are waived so that the developer may make the best use of land by having greater freedom of design. More living units may be put on land best suited for building than normal zoning ordinances would permit. The less suitable land - that requiring fill, having poor subsoil consistency or unusual scenic qualities - can be left as open space or recreational land. The total

number of acres involved is used in computing the population density, though the living units will be on a small portion of these. The builder thus is able to construct enough units to be economically feasible, and the community maintains an acceptable level of population per acre.

Throughout the 50 states governing bodies are coming to grips with growth and its attendant problems. In looking ahead citizens and planners might wish to consider efforts being made elsewhere.

The state of Hawaii was the first to recognize land as a public resource rather than a salable commodity. California followed closely with its stringent regulations to protect its mountainous coastline. In Connecticut ecological and environmental concerns caused re-zoning of the Great Salt Meadow area though scheduled for industrial development. Interested persons watch closely to see the outcome of lawsuits instituted by the owners in these cases asking for fair compensation when the use to which they expect to put their property is denied them.

In some areas efforts are being made to control the speed of growth by setting a maximum on the number of units to be built in a given year. Others, such as Boca Raton, Florida, have set a population "cap" by setting a ceiling on the number of dwelling units that can ever be built. Palo Alto, California, discovered it would be cheaper for the city to buy half of the town's acreage of undeveloped foothills than to allow them to be developed. It has budgeted monies to start foothills acquisition, and decreased the zoning density permissible in this area to discourage development. Ramapo, New York, has adopted a time-controlled zoning ordinance, which allows development in accordance with an 18-year capital-improvement program.

Our study again shows that planning and the ability to implement the plans is all-important in maintaining a good place to live.

CONSENSUS QUESTIONS ON LAND USE STUDY

In what kind of community do you wish to live? How shall we achieve it?

The consensus was that our community faces inevitable growth, maintaining the status quo is impossible, but there is a wish to retain the "small town" atmosphere and as much of the unique natural advantages of the Fox River Valley as possible. Planning is essential. Planned growth with allowance made for green space along the Fox River and incorporated into present and future communities requires that all communities in the area cooperate on a regular and continuing basis. We cannot afford separateness and divisiveness in this matter. Anything that promotes sudden, chaotic growth in our area should be discouraged.

Should diversity of housing be promoted and encouraged in our communities?

Industry is needed in our area to provide for employment of present and future residents and to broaden the tax base. A diversity of housing is needed. At present single-family and multi-family dwelling units are available for groups ranging from low-middle to high incomes. A very limited amount of low-income housing is available, some apartments and some single-family residences. Planned unit developments would be one solution to providing diverse housing. Groups of moderate-rise multiple-family dwellings surrounded by green space would not necessarily change the character of the area. Subsidized housing which would allow lower income families the purchase or rent of single-family residences would be another solution. Housing for the elderly is needed, and should be near shopping and public transportation that might become available. Minorities should be able to buy where they can afford, including high-income housing.

On what level should the planning be done and by whom?

The villages in the area should work together in planning. An area planning commission should be set up on a permanent basis to work on the problems of environment and land use that concern all the villages. Professional planners might be hired on an interim basis to promote this. Local citizens should be involved early in the planning for the future but professional planning staffs should be consulted for their expertise. Some strong guidelines are important from the state and federal levels.

What consideration should be given to other taxing bodies affected by land use decisions, such as school, library, park and fire protection districts?

Regular communication and consultation should take place for the good of all the communities since the tax dollar must be split among all the taxing bodies.

What are our planning priorities as related to our community goals?

Communities cannot think in terms of tax benefits alone when considering growth and development. Benefits are balanced by costs. Possible sources of revenue should be examined in terms of social costs; for example, schools, police and fire protection, roads, recreation, traffic and health hazards. The highest priority is given to planning for controlled growth with the help of an informed, alert public. Communities should insist that all plans be considered in terms of their total cost to the area.

Local Land Use Study Committee
Patricia L. Heffron, Chairwoman

Anne Johnston
Margaret Mechtenberg
Marjorie Naslund
Theresa J. Peterson
Sarah McPeak

Elizabeth Robinson
Constance K. Stuppig
Frances J. Zilliox
Barbara Whitehouse