

## 2007 ANNUAL REPORT HANCOCK REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

The year 2007 brought about Staff changes, office moves and flood waters to HRPC. But we weathered the storms and kept afloat (puns intended) to have another productive year.

### Minor Subdivisions

The Hancock Regional Planning Commission (HRPC) is responsible for reviewing all minor subdivisions of land (lot splits that do not require a plat) for compliance with the Hancock County Subdivision Regulations. Deeds for these lots must have a stamp of approval from HRPC before they are accepted for transfer at the Courthouse. Staff also reviews any minor subdivisions of land for the City of Findlay for compliance with the Findlay City Subdivision Regulations. HRPC does not stamp these deeds but reviews them and provides a form stating that it meets requirements. These deeds are then taken to the Mayor's office for the approval stamp.

The number of minor subdivisions reviewed in rural Hancock County decreased significantly from 94 in 2006 to just 64 in 2007. The number decreased within the City of Findlay corporation limits as well from 23 in 2006 to 17 in 2007.

Following is a table of lot splits that were approved per each Township in the County.

ALLEN	AMANDA	BIGLICK	BLANCHARD	CASS	DELAWARE	EAGLE	JACKSON	LIBERTY
3	3	3	5	0	4	7	2	9
MADISON	MARION	ORANGE	PLEASANT	PORTAGE	UNION	VANBUREN	WASHINGTON	TOTAL
2	4	6	4	0	4	2	6	64

### Platted Subdivisions

HRPC also must review plats for new subdivisions within Hancock County for conformance with the Subdivision Regulations. New subdivisions must initially be presented to HRPC as a Preliminary Plat which shows all land owned by the developer and the proposed layout of streets and lots. Final plats can be phased with only portions of the subdivision final platted at any one time. The Final Plats are recorded to establish the lots of record.

In 2007, HRPC reviewed two (2) preliminary plats in Hancock County.

- Somerset Park – 71 single family lots in Liberty Township on the south side of CR 95 just east of the intersection of Torrey Pines Drive
- Sturbridge Colony – 51 single family lots and one condo lot in Marion Township on the west side of TR 237 just north of SR 568

There were also four (4) final plats approved by HRPC in 2007.

- Somerset Park 1<sup>st</sup> Addition – 15 single family lots in Liberty Township on the south side of CR 95 just east of the intersection of Torrey Pines Drive.
- Indian Landing at Red Hawk Run – 22 single family lots and 2 condominium lots located west of Red Hawk Drive in Biglick Township
- Krickside Subdivision – 2 commercial lots in Allen Township located on the north side of CR 99 just west of Interstate 75
- Sturbridge Colony – 2 single family lots and 1 condo lot in Marion Township on the west side of TR 237 just north of SR 568

### **Hancock County Subdivision Regulations**

HRPC also reviewed four (4) variance requests in 2007. The requests were for vacating recorded utility easements, and variances from lot width and setback requirements. Three of the four requests were approved. The variance for a lot width in Allen Township was denied as it would have created lots smaller than City lots with a 50' minimum width (B and C Residential zoning classifications).

The Subdivision Review Committee also worked for several months with the County Commissioners, County Engineer and local private engineering firms to come up with an amendment to the Subdivision Regulations in regard to drainage requirements. The amendments increase the detention and drainage requirements from a 5 year storm to a 100 year storm. New regulations also call for maintaining a 10' wide dry path- way through streets during a 100 year flood event. The amendment was approved by HRPC in October, 2007. A public hearing was held on December 10, 2007 and the amendments were passed on to the County Commissioners for their public hearing and approval. The County Commissioners have scheduled a public hearing on those amendments for February 7, 2008.

### **County Zoning**

The Hancock Regional Planning Commission is required to review any amendments to Township zoning. These can be amendments to their zoning text or changes in zoning classifications as shown on their map. Townships are required to seek a recommendation from the Planning Commission on these matters before they can hold hearings and make decisions on the changes.

HRPC reviewed eight (8) requests for changes in zoning districts in 2007 for the townships of Hancock County. These were:

- A request to rezone 22.9 acres in Marion Township on the north side of US 224 just east of Eastern Woods Subdivision (Birchaven) from A-1 Agriculture to B-3 General Business. This had been reviewed by HRPC in late 2006, but was re-heard due to a

procedural error in the Township process. Thus it was returned to HRPC in January, 2007. HRPC recommended that the land be zoned B-1 Institutions and Offices.

- A request to rezone 7.569 acres in Marion Township on the north side of US 224 just west of Eastern Woods Drive from A-1 Agriculture to B-3 General Business. These parcels lie in front of the Birchaven complex. HRPC recommendation was to rezone to B-2 Local Business.
- A request to rezone 3.07 acres in Liberty Township on the west side of CR 140 from B-2 General Business to I-1 Light Industrial. This lot contains a total of 5.003 acres and the front 400' is currently zoned B-2 while the rear is zoned I-1. The HRPC Board recommended approval of the request.
- A request to rezone 5.548 acres in Marion Township on the west side of TR 212 from B-1 Institutions and Offices to B-3 General Business. HRPC recommended denial of this request.
- A request to rezone Deer Landing Subdivision in Marion Township on the east side of TR 227 from R-1 Single Family to a PUD (Planned Unit Development) to permit 49 single family condominium lots. Recommendation was for approval of the request.
- A request to amend the PUD for Sturbridge Colony Subdivision in Marion Township. HRPC recommended approval of the rezoning.
- A request to rezone two (2) parcels on the southeast corner of US 68 and TR 168 from A-1 Agriculture to I-1 Light Industrial in Jackson Township. The Board recommended approval of the rezoning to I-1 Light Industrial.
- A request to amend the PUD in the Deer Landing Subdivision to change 16 single family lots to condominium lots. HRPC recommended denial of the request.

HRPC also reviewed map changes and text amendments proposed by the Delaware Township Zoning Commission in 2007. The amendment was the addition of a section on Adult Entertainment Uses. Changes in the map were made around the interchange of new US 30 and SR 37 and along the boundaries of the Village of Mt. Blanchard.

Bil Homka and Judy Scrimshaw attended several Marion Township Zoning Commission meetings this year to review the proposed amendments to their Zoning Resolution. Some of the amendments include tightening up of the sign code, additional definitions and adding some new districts. New to the Resolution are Flood Districts, Planned Residential Development (PRD) to replace the old Planned Unit Development (PUD) language, a Riparian Overlay District and a Corridor Overlay District. The Commission's concerns were addressed and the changes made to the text. Revised copies were given to the Hancock County Prosecutor's office, the Marion Township Zoning Commission, Zoning Inspector, Board of Zoning Appeals and Township Trustees in December, 2007. Staff will meet with the Township again to review any changes or concerns and the Township will begin its public hearings and meetings to finalize the amendments in early 2008.

## **Findlay City Planning Commission**

HRPC Staff also serves as Staff for the Findlay City Planning Commission. Judy Scrimshaw prepares written reviews for all applications on the City Planning Commission agenda each month. Staff also provides graphics for the Staff report.

In 2007, the Commission reviewed 60 new cases. The breakdown by type of case follows.

- 31 Site Plans
- 3 Preliminary Plats
- 6 Final Plats
- 12 Zoning Amendments
- 5 Alley/Street Vacations
- 1 Flood Plain Variance
- 2 Zoning Text Changes

The new Findlay City Planning Commission Rules and Procedures went into effect as of January 1, 2007. There is a provision in the new rules for “Administrative Approval” of the more minor applications and requests. HRPC Staff along with the City Engineer and Zoning Officer are responsible for reviewing these items and approving or denying the request. Their action is then reported to the Planning Commission at its next meeting.

HRPC Staff along with the City Engineer’s office exercised their authority in granting administrative approval to several items in 2007. Small building additions, home occupations, small parking lot additions and similar items qualified for this streamlined approval process.

## **City Zoning**

A Planned Mixed Use Development (PMUD) overlay district was reviewed by the Findlay City Planning Commission in 2006 and was sent to Findlay City Council in 2007. The Ordinance was adopted on September 18, 2007.

The first request for the new PMUD Overlay District came in November, 2007. The Thayer Group requested that some underlying zoning be changed and the PMUD Overlay be applied to the land that encompasses Swale Park, the former Brandman Tire site and several residential lots. The preliminary plan of the development was approved with conditions after a public hearing at City Planning Commission on December 13, 2007. The project is now known as RiverPlace.

Staff began work on the rewrite of the City of Findlay Zoning Code this year. Work on this project will continue through 2008.

## City of Findlay Land Use Plan

Work on the City Land Use Plan Update was completed in June, 2007. Matt Cordonnier worked diligently to format volumes of information, photos and mapping into a finished document that was presented to Findlay City Planning Commission in July, 2007 and approved. The Plan is available on the HRPC website.

HRPC Staff now uses the document as reference in reviewing of site plans, zoning requests, subdivision plats, etc. that come before City Planning Commission. The Plan is also referenced for proposed rezoning requests and development in the adjacent Townships.

## Grants

Since the late 1970s, HRPC has been administering Community Development Block Grant funds for Hancock County. The Community Housing Improvement Program (CHIP) was added to the mix in the 1990s as well as Economic Development grant programs. HRPC Staff has served as the administrator for all these programs whether allocated to the City of Findlay or Hancock County.

Since 2004, Grant Administrator, Lydia Mihalik has actively pursued other funding opportunities for local government entities including the City of Findlay, local Townships and Villages, the City of Fostoria, and businesses both existing and new to the area.

In 2007, HRPC administered the FY06 CDBG Formula grants for Hancock County and the City of Findlay. **Hancock County received \$ 102,000** which was allocated to a bridge replacement on TR 217 in Washington Township. FY07 CDBG applications were submitted in July, 2007 and the County will spend the FY 07 County funds in the Village of Arlington to replace an 8 inch waterline in the area of Wilch and Arlington Streets. **The County was awarded \$99,000** toward that project.

**The City of Findlay received \$166,000** for FY 06 and the money was spent in the Wilson Street area for storm sewer separation and street improvements as has been done the last several years. The City also submitted its application for FY07 funds in July, 2007 and will use those funds to assist with the repair of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Bridge. The City was awarded \$162,000.

HRPC continued to administer the FY2005 CHIP funds for Hancock County this year. The CHIP program is ongoing through 2007. The components of the CHIP program are Tenant Based Rental Assistance administered by the Hancock Metropolitan Housing Authority (HMHA), Emergency Home Repair and New Construction. Emergency Home Repair funds were expended early in the year. Three of the four homes in the New Construction segment of the grant were under construction before the end of 2007 and the fourth will hopefully be started in early 2008. The County was granted an extension to August, 2008 to complete that portion of the grant.

Successful grant applications for the **City of Fostoria** included a **\$500,000 Economic Development (ED) grant awarded to assist Kiser Enterprises** with the purchase of Machine Tool & Fabrication Corporation. The company hopes to be able to expand the business and create additional jobs for the Fostoria community.

The City of Fostoria also received **\$900,000 in funds from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT)** Transportation Enhancement Program in 2007. This grant will assist in the development of the Iron Triangle Visitor Center on a converted brownfield junkyard. It will create an attractive visitors center and park focusing on the railroad history of the City. The resulting tourism will hopefully provide a spark for the economy of Fostoria.

The Greater Fostoria Community Foundation awarded a grant in the amount of **\$20,000 to the City of Fostoria** for a skate park.

**The Village of McComb obtained a grant of \$11,349** from the Natureworks and Land & Water Conservation Grants Program. The money will be used for improvements at the Chloe Griener Memorial Park.

A grant in the amount of **\$66,000 was awarded to the Hancock Park District** from the Recreational Trails Program for the Blanchard River Greenway Trails Phase 2 project. This more than quarter mile connector is the missing link in an eight mile stretch along the Blanchard River corridor through the heart of Findlay.

**The downtown park project** at the corner of E. Sandusky Street and S. Main Street received a Lowe's Grant in the amount of **\$20,000**. The funds will be used to purchase materials for the construction of the site.

In February, 2007 the City of Findlay applied for a FEMA Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) grant. The money was available to communities for the purchase of properties with a history of repetitive flood damage that were insured under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The City was able to purchase five (5) homes in November, 2007 with the **\$249,307 grant**. These will be demolished and left as greenspace.

In the meantime, the August 2007 flood had occurred and Lydia Mihalik and Jackie Schroeder once again began the process of analyzing flood prone properties to submit for a Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). The first round application was submitted in December, 2007 for **\$1,600,000**. Once again the homes will be purchased by the City and returned to greenspace to reduce the long-term risk of flood damage.

Also in December, 2007, HRPC assisted Hancock County Department of Job and Family Services with an application for a National Emergency Grant (NEG) that totaled \$1.2 million. The money will be used for clean up along the County's waterways. Hancock Regional Planning Commission will administer the grant and Job and Family Services will provide employees for the project. HRPC will hire a manager, two team leaders, and 12 people to complete the work.

## **Revolving Loan Funds**

The Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) program uses money from prior CDBG Economic Development Loans that are paid back to the communities (Findlay, Hancock County or Fostoria) to help other businesses that meet the criteria. HRPC filed three RLF applications last year.

Two of the three applications were successful. **Cramer Signs** at 231 E. Front Street applied for a Downtown Façade RLF. He was awarded **\$12,500** to improve the exterior of his building.

**The City of Findlay** was approved for **\$67,000** in RLF funds for construction of the downtown park at E. Sandusky and S. Main Streets.

Several meetings were held regarding possible projects for the RLF program but no new requests were actually filed. Unfortunately, this seems to be a sign of the times.

## **Other Planning Projects**

The **Monclova Township Land Use Plan** update was completed this year. Monclova Township is located in Lucas County, OH. Bil Homka and Matt Cordonnier presented the new document to the Monclova Township Trustees. The Township is reviewing the update and it is anticipated the updates will be adopted in 2008.

Matt Cordonnier completed work on the **Hancock County All Hazard Mitigation Plan**. The document went before both City Council and the County Commissioners for adoption. If this plan had not been completed, the City would not have been able to apply for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs after the August flood.

Hancock County began the process of partnering with seven (7) other counties along the new **US 30 Corridor** to plan for potential economic development. The counties included in the consortium are Allen, Crawford, Hancock, Hardin, Putnam, Richland, Van Wert, and Wyandot. Meetings were held and the process was begun to hire consultants and attorneys for the group. Throughout the year HRPC used its website to survey people across the seven (7) counties for input. The first document is due in February, 2008. The group decided in October to continue working together and form a 501(c) (3) to market the region.

## **HRPC Associate Memberships**

The HRPC website is being kept up to date by Matt Cordonnier. We try to encourage all Associate Members to provide us with information regarding their jurisdictions to post on our site. It seems to be quite helpful for agencies and the general public when they are looking for answers, applications, or copies of publications. It has surely saved a few gallons of gas and postage over the last year. The Public can visit us at **[www.HancockRPC.org](http://www.HancockRPC.org)** to

research zoning resolutions, subdivision regulations, grant activities, planning projects, obtain applications, etc.

HRPC has established new membership levels to encourage county-wide participation from all jurisdictions and help keep everyone informed of planning related issues. Member Townships or Villages can place additional information they wish to publicize on a page dedicated to their jurisdiction on our website. We currently have six Villages – Arlington, Arcadia, Bluffton, McComb, Mt. Blanchard, and Van Buren – three Townships – Amanda, Biglick and Marion - and the City of Fostoria as Associate Members.

## **Brownfields**

A Brownfield Training Day hosted by HRPC, the City of Findlay and Malcolm Pirnie was held at the Cube on May 4. The three hour session provided hands on demonstrations of soil and groundwater sampling, and a lesson in the major steps of conducting Phase I and II Environmental Assessments. The targeted areas in Findlay where environmental assessment will occur were explained. It was a time for networking with planners, officials, developers, lenders, environmental engineers, attorneys and businesses on brownfield issues.

On June 22, Bil Homka, Lydia Mihalik, Matt Cordonnier and Judy Scrimshaw hosted a booth at the Ohio Brownfield Association Annual Meeting in Sandusky. We attended sessions and stumped with companies and consultants in hopes of getting our name out to potential clients.

## **Office Move**

In November, 2006, the HRPC Staff had relocated their offices to 320 S. Main Street while the City undertook a renovation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Municipal Building. The new office space would combine HRPC and the City Engineering offices in a “one stop shop” type arrangement. Staff moved back into the Municipal Building during the week of August 6, 2007. Timing may have been everything in this instance. Just two short weeks later, the City was inundated by the August flood. The building at 320 S. Main was substantially damaged by the flood waters. HRPC still had boxes of records, books and office supplies stored in the rear of the Commissioners Office at the time and did lose some files.

The office has made improvements to our computer software programs to help with our billing and time sheets. The previous program was more cumbersome and did not do all the things we had hoped. The new program seems to be easier to manipulate for our specific needs.

## **HRPC Staff**

On March 14, 2007 Staff attended the Township Trustees banquet at the Lodge at Riverbend and had a good time as always.

Several staffing changes occurred in 2007 for our agency. Assistant Grant Writer, Laura Muzy moved to Cleveland in February but continued to work remotely for our office on an as needed basis. We still call upon her periodically for assistance.

Jan Cole retired from HRPC in March, 2007 after 8 ½ years with our agency. She continues to be the Fiscal Officer for Biglick Township.

Melissa Edson was hired to replace Jan Cole in early April, but decided to return to her position at the Commissioners office in August when the position became open again. Regina DuVernay resigned from her position as Office Manager to accept a position in the private sector in August also.

Jackie Schroeder joined the Staff part time as our new Engineer in July, 2007. She has been introduced around the County as a resource for everyone with engineering issues. We hope to have her on some real engineering projects soon, but in the meantime her assistance with the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program applications has been invaluable.

In September, 2007, Cindi Wright joined the Staff as Office Manager. She had accounting experience in the private sector and has adapted well to our office. Cindi has done a great job of learning the multiple accounting programs which the City, County and our agency use.

Grant Writer, Lydia Mihalik, welcomed a new addition to her family this year. On November 8, 2007 Elizabeth (Libby) Mae Mihalik arrived to join big brother J.J. in the Mihalik clan.

Staff level is currently holding at five full time and one part time employee.