

**Hastings Charter Township
Barry County
Rutland Charter Township
Carlton Township
City of Hastings
Joint Planning Alliance**

**Draft Meeting Minutes
April 18, 2011**

Members Present: Miner, Medendorp, Carpenter, Warren, Haywood, Jasperse, Mansfield, Redman, Brown, McManus, Carr.

Members Absent: Wiswell, Lenz.

Ex-Officio Members Present: Geiger.

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Byrnes.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman Carr.

Carr led the JPA members in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Carr asked that the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance be moved on the agenda to a position in advance of the roll call.

Motion by Redman, second by Haywood to approve the minutes of the March 21, 2011 meeting of the Joint Planning Alliance as submitted, and to receive and place on file the agenda for the minutes of the February 16, 2011 and March 4, 2011 meetings of the Rutland Township Planning Commission, and the minutes of the April 4, 2011 meeting of the Hastings Planning Commission.

Motion carried.

Motion by Redman, second by Miner to approve the agenda for tonight's meeting as submitted.

Motion carried.

Carr asked for comments from the public. No comments were forwarded.

Carr introduced Tracy Baker. Carr stated that Mark Hewitt had resigned from the JPA Advisory Committee. Carr stated that Hewitt was a realtor, and represented the interests of that profession on the Advisory Committee. Carr explained that Baker was also a realtor and would replace Hewitt on the Advisory Committee. Baker stated that she owned At Home Real Estate in Rutland Township, and explained that she was present at tonight's meeting to observe the activities of the JPA.

Carr asked those present to report on activities in their respective jurisdictions.

McManus reported that Barry County had no planning or zoning related activities to report within the JPA area.

Warren and Haywood stated that Rutland Township's Planning Commission was working on an ordinance to regulate temporary signage, and a non-conforming use on Algonquin Lake.

Mansfield stated that the City of Hastings Planning Commission was considering zoning regulations applying to medical marihuana, and on modifications to the downtown business zones as recommended in the City's Comprehensive Community Plan (master plan).

Carr stated that he wished to take this opportunity to inform the JPA of the potential elimination of two firefighter positions at the Hastings Fire Department. Carr explained that the Hastings Fire Department provided emergency services to the BIRCH Rural Fire Association. Carr stated that the BIRCH Board of Directors had recently voted to recommend to the Hastings City Council the elimination of two of the three full time firefighter positions in the Fire Department to save BIRCH and the City over \$200,000 per year.

Mansfield stated that he believed that it was important that the JPA understand that the firefighter positions were being considered for elimination, since the JPA now played a crucial role in multi-jurisdictional service sharing agreements such as the City-BIRCH agreement. Mansfield stated that the elimination of the two fire fighter positions was one of a number of options the City was considering for cost reduction and budget control in the coming years.

Brown stated that the BIRCH Board voted to recommend to the City Council the elimination of the two full time firefighter staff positions due to the significant cost savings and relatively limited adverse impact on the services provided by the Fire Department. McManus questioned if Baltimore Township was considering withdrawing

from BIRCH. Carr stated that he did not know what action Baltimore Township would ultimately take, but that the cost savings resulting from the staffing reductions would be significant for all of the participating BIRCH entities. Brown stated that if Baltimore Township did withdraw all or a portion of their jurisdiction from the BIRCH service area, the reduction in staff recommended by BIRCH would keep the current BIRCH service more affordable for the remaining Townships.

Carr reported that the recent Open House held by Rutland Township to present the concept urban services agreement and gather public comment on the agreement had gone very well. Carr stated that he was pleased with the comments received at and following the open house, and pleased that there were very few negative comments offered or any strong opposition to the urban services concept. Carr stated that he had been approached by a number of community members following the meeting who expressed appreciation for the work of the communities and the JPA, and encouraged moving the process of developing the agreement forward.

Carr stated that the Rutland Township Board had directed Carr to contact the City and determine what steps were necessary to advance development of the urban services agreement. Carr stated that he intended to contact Mansfield within the next few days to start this process.

Brown stated that the JPA Education Committee had nothing to report.

Redman reported that the JPA website was up to date as of April 11, 2011.

Mansfield reported that he believed that all of the work on the projects authorized to date under the USEPA Brownfield Site Assessment Grant program had been completed. Mansfield stated that just under \$100,000 in grant funds remained available for additional work. Mansfield encouraged the members of the JPA to inform those in their jurisdictions of the availability of the remaining funding under the USEPA grant program.

Carr introduced discussion regarding adding additional members of the JPA to accommodate Redman's move into the City (residence), and to retain Wiswell as a JPA member. Consensus of the JPA was that Redman could continue to serve as a representative of Carlton Township since he owned property in the Township. Motion by Carr, second by McManus to strike JPA Work Task No. 7 and agenda item (9)b.

In favor: Miner, Medendorp, Carpenter, Warren, Haywood, Jasperse, Mansfield, Redman, Brown, McManus, Carr.

Opposed: None.
Absent: Wiswell, Lenz.

Motion carried.

Carr asked for comments from the public. No public comments were forwarded.

Carr asked for additional comments from the members of the JPA.

Redman reported that he served on the board for the Barry County Central Dispatch Authority. Redman reported that the Authority had reached a tentative agreement with the union representing their employees.

McManus stated that the Barry County Economic Development Alliance was moving ahead with the development of a regional strategic plan. McManus stated that it was likely that the plan would include 5 counties and take approximately one year to complete. McManus stated that Barry County did not currently have a regional strategic plan in place, and that development of the plan would make the County eligible to receive funding under certain programs. McManus also reported that the Village of Middleville and Thornapple Township were considering the development of a joint plan.

Miner stated that the Barry County Reapportionment Board would be meeting from 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 20, 2011 in the Courts and Law Building. Miner stated that the Reapportionment Board would be accepting public comment on reapportionment of Barry County at that time, and encouraged the members of the JPA to attend.

Carr asked for additional comments from the members of the JPA. No additional comments from the members of the JPA were forwarded.

Motion by Brown, second by Redman to adjourn at 6:59 p.m.

Motion carried.

Submitted by:

Jeff Mansfield
Secretary