

The Village of Roberts/Town of Warren Joint Comprehensive Plan committee met in person and remotely on Wednesday October 19, 2022, at the Village of Roberts. Co-Chair Katy Kapaun called the properly posted meeting to order at 7:00PM. Members in attendance: Katy Kapaun, Stephanie Lamia, Geno Hanson, Grace Hoyer, Michelle Aho Warren Tracy, Patty Kuebker Johnson, Cheryl Johnson, and Steve Melby; absent was Henry Nechville.

Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda by Hanson, seconded by Tracy. Motion carried.

Accept Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes from September 21, 2022, by C. Johnson, seconded by Hoyer. Motion carried.

Discussion on Housing and Economic Development: Guest speakers: Bill Rubin, St. Croix County Economic Development, John Hikgers and Brett Budrow, St. Croix County Community Development.

Bill Rubin started with general observations. Warren, Roberts, and St. Croix County are part of the 15 County Metro Area. Warren, Roberts, and St. Croix will continue to grow. Currently at 3.75 million residents and growing. There are Towns and Villages in St. Croix County that are losing residents as many as half of the counties. Volume between Hudson and Eau Claire was given the name West Central Freeway. Housing reality is homes are bigger, costlier, and emptier. There was a headline from CNBC stating that home demand is at a 25 year low due to higher interest rates. In St Croix County single family housing permits were 244 in 2022 compared to 291 in 2021. Every month the Realtor Association comes out with totals. Median price of sales is \$271,000 all home sales 8.4% increase. 265,000 YTD from August 2022 or up 10% YTD 2021. In the state 2.8 months of inventory a healthy market is six months. Fewer homes mean prices are being driven up. August 2022 there were 118 homes sold compared 134 in August 2021.

Fewer homes are being sold but the median sale price is going up. Wisconsin Affordability Index shows the median income and what people can buy using a 30-year fixed rate loan and 20% down payment. When the index goes down it means it is less affordable or buyers are stretched. In August of 2021 in index was 189 but was 135 in August 2022.

John Hikgers is a Senior Planner with St. Croix County. Worked for 25 years with the City of Waconia. They are in the beginning stages of updating their plan. There are nine chapters that needs to be worked on. Summarized the different programs that are available. Three cities that have active housing authorities (River Falls, Hudson, and NR). As they move forward, they are going to make sure residents know about these resources. Two weeks ago, they contracted with UWRF for a random survey of the nine chapters of the program. Conservation design is a cluster of houses with a common septic system, but higher area set aside. Builders are a little hesitant to use this type of systems. Brett Budrow added that the County is going thru the Comp Plan

process now. Conservation design in the Township of Hammond is getting filled up. Take two acre lots, this is being done on 160th with the smaller lots but more green space.

Active website with interactive tools where residents can weigh in on other items to provide feedback. December 1st and December 8th open houses to get opinions. Discussions about alternative housing options in the rural area. Accessory dwelling units on smaller units (parent houses). This was not adopted but this could come up again. They could have been allowed on the same septic and wells if the systems allowed for it but could not be on a single lot. Single family homes are permitted, and a duplex is a conditional use permit (two family dwelling). Kapaun asked if they are seeking input from others and they are, but Villages have their own authority. St Croix County is a little more stable with people not moving.

Household unit projections from the Department of Administration projections are in the table from 2013. Census was a little late this year there should be new projection early next year. DOA might be later than that. Should have our consultant help with our projected population and compare them to the WIDOA.

Budrow asked a question about the Warren Subdivision Ordinance. Does the required conservation design allow for a shared septic and water? They have talked to one or two developers in the last couple of years. There was a meeting in the last couple of years and the residents want to keep this design. With a new board they wanted to get a feel for what the consensus was in the community. Farmers wanted it to stay more constringent. Now most of the homeowners do not want neighbors so they still like this plan.

Hammond is using a package system meaning five or six houses to a mound system. More inspections of these types of systems. Warren is concern about pushing away homeowners' associations that have higher cost for single family. Roberts ends up being 2.6 people per household and this is consistent with the County. Towns that are more ag orientated (Stanton, Cylon, Baldwin, Rush River) are seeing the people per household going down. If we compare to Hudson, how does this compare? P Johnson asked because of schools, playgrounds, etc. Budrow said the person per housing is going down, but they are needing more housing stock to meet this need. St Croix County median age is 39.8 and is younger than some of the Northern Counties.

What percentage of the County working population commutes to Minnesota and they have these numbers just not with them tonight. Rubin thinks that the County average is 55%. River Falls, Hudson and Somerset must have 75% or 80% leave the County for work. 80% of the County population is within 10 miles of the river.

Is the interstate a blessing or a curse? What is the opportunity of available labor force in the community? Home grown economies, what happens if business is good? They grow and outgrow their facilities. Is there more land somewhere that they can remain in a community or general zip code in the community? Trend that has accelerated over the last couple of years is warehouse and distribution facilities. Logistics was a term that was not around before. What is the ability to access water and sewer? Are they a heavy water user? What demand are they going to put on the system? Incentive programs that come with the community, like the Roberts

Business Park. Roberts wanted economic development to grow within our community. Sometimes the role of providing the land falls to the unit of government. They see value in being the conduit to make economic development happen. Discussed TID financing and having the ability to reimburse the business for the cost of developing the land. The interstate is not going away, and Highway 65 is not going away. Communities will continue to grow along the interstate. Kapaun asked if Hudson is full. They had a private organization develop property and they have made the last sale this last summer (Hanley). They have been talking about where is the next 40 to 60 acres and they have not found this yet. Hudson has entered the redevelopment cycle of there time. They will have to tear something down (Hudson House, Pizza Hut, etc.) to make this happen. They are out of the business or industrial park space. Town of Hudson (County Road A) somewhere Hunt Electric acquired property to the North of it and they are putting up a 250,000 sq foot building out by Duro Bag. Discussed Main Street redevelopment and that Covid has messed with the retail model. What will it be after Covid? There is still traditional retail in Hudson, but it has also moved up the hill in Hudson. Main Street has become more of a service type industry. The fate of Main Street is challenged. (Second Street in Hudson or Davis Street in Hammond). Retail is still there but not the powerhouse it used to be. One exercise for the Comp Plan is looking at the street scape. What makes it noticeable? Is it the streetlights? There is a \$10,000 bounce back grant that does not need to be repaid if a business goes into an existing space. Office users are eligible for this grant. Right now, they are challenged to make manufacturing qualify. Discussed brick and motor business compared to someone that can do the same thing online, so maybe e-commerce might be more effective. Hudson Second Street is a destination. Does this mean we will have more destination spots? Old Main Streets are going to more of destinations? If so, what makes us unique and how do we sell it?

Warren asked about the rental housing market in St Croix County such as apartments, single family, etc. that are rentals. Bill said rental is not his area of expertise. The new rental rules in St. Paul or rent controls are pushing these people outside of the area. Town of Warren does have the twin homes which are owned by the same developers. They do not know the number of houses that are owned by a developer and/or rented.

P. Johnson asked when the County is looking at the zoning for the Town of Warren, do they look at what would be annexed by the Village? Within there plan they are going to show them as transition areas and the County will be looking at this.

Hanson talked about 1880 on 70th Avenue. They have been a great neighbor to the Township. From the traffic going in and out of the facilities to the upkeep going on they have done a good job at living up to their expectations. Valley is just a logistic company. Lamia asked if this is more of our evolution now going away from the trades? Aho said the cities are still looking for them. People do not want to warehouse their own inventory anymore. It is all staged. There are two more Amazon size buildings coming into Woodbury. Logistics traffic is not a problem. Kapaun said the proposed volume of trucks lately are causing issues with the Village projects. It

Village of Roberts & Town of Warren
Joint Comprehensive Plan Meeting
October 19, 2022

is the employee traffic that causes these traffic issues. Traffic plans must be good enough to handle this. We do not have this at Highway 65 and 70th Avenue.

The Animal shelter land is in the Town of Warren. They are currently not showing a lot of interest in this land because there is no water and sewer available. Tracy thinks that we need to look at the sewerable area to protect and reserve the sewerable area. The best land is the flat land adjacent to the development land. South of the interstate, this is prime land and someone with deep pockets can make this work. To the South of the freight liner there is a landowner that bought up a lot of that and they are interested in doing something with this.

Review the Request for Bid Document:

Propose the timeline for the process which we recommend 14 months. They could ask for more or do you give them 18 months. We are changing this to two-years. Aho will adjust the dates as discussed and add the municipality dates and forward out to the group. At the November meeting we can review any questions, and they could participate in this meeting if they are ready. Kaupan asked if there are any speakers for the November meeting that we are looking for? Ag resources and land uses. Conversation with the public land owners like the DNR , Kinnickinnic Land Trust, etc. Land conservancy is when the landowner owns the land but promises not to build on it. There might be some of this along the Kinni. This is important for when Goodwin develops new maps for us. We would hit a roadblock for future planning landowners have done this and we do not know about it.

Motion to adjourn at 8:53 PM by P. Johnson, seconded by Hanson. Motion carried.

Megan Dull
Village Clerk