**PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE**

Montgomery County Commissioners and Redevelopment Commission Moving Forward with Strategies to Help Spur Growth

**Crawfordsville, IN – Monday, November 13, –** Today, Commissioners’ President, Jim Fulwider and Redevelopment Commission President, Ron Dickerson announce their respective plans to help make targeted areas in the county more development-ready and thus promote economic development.

The Commissioners voted unanimously to approve an application for an OCRA (Office of Community & Rural Affairs) Comprehensive Planning grant. The grant is not competitive, so once received, the Commissioners will then instruct the County Plan Commission to initiate a Comprehensive Plan process. “This is about asset protection,” said Commissioner John Frey, “We are investing millions of dollars in utility infrastructure and today have no control over who wants to tap onto that infrastructure.” Commissioner Phil Bane added, “A comprehensive plan is NOT zoning, rather it is a land use plan that can provide continuity and will help avoid incompatible land uses.”

Without a comprehensive plan unplanned growth can destroy a community’s sense of place—especially those areas with natural green space. The failure to plan for growth can lead to hit or miss development, inadequate infrastructure, and can be a red flag for developers and other investors whose projects could bring tax dollars and jobs to the community.

The comprehensive plan process is collaborative and requires public engagement and input from residents. “That’s what appeals to me,” said Fulwider, “With input from our residents we can build a collaborative vision that’s right for our county’s future.”

Similarly, the County Redevelopment Commission approved a resolution to begin the refunding process of their sewer bond through the State Revolving Loan Fund. “After the Economic Development plan was completed by HWC Engineering, we were able to see the possibilities of growth along S.R. 32 east towards the I-74 interchange,” said Dickerson, “We then needed to evaluate all of the infrastructure needs in that area.”

What the RDC learned was the sewer upgrade planned for the area, was not quite large enough to support additional growth in the future. “The bond issued by the RDC to pay for the sewer upgrade was the right plan at that time, but the ongoing payment schedule of that particular bond has restricted the RDC’s ability to pay for any additional infrastructure needs,” said RDC member Phil Littell, “If we are going to plan for the future, we need to use the TIF funds more strategically.”

The additional monies that will become available through the early repayment of the State Revolving Loan Fund will allow the RDC to create a more strategic infrastructure development plan that can support both existing and future users, and have money to pay for those improvements.

“This has been a learn as you grow experience,” said RDC member John Frey, “We are just trying to position ourselves to be more competitive in the economic development arena.”

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