

WHITE RIVER TOWNSHIP – GREENWOOD REORGANIZATION COMMITTEE

White River Trustee Office, 2929 S. Morgantown Road, Greenwood, IN

April 16, 2009

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Committee Chairman Pat Sherman called the meeting to order at 6:35pm.

PRESENT: Committee Members: Pat Sherman, David Payne, Dale Tumey,
Forrest Chambers, Eric Kapke
Don Hanlin (arrived 6:40pm)

Non-Voting Advisors: Forrest Mellott, John Griffin
Recording Secretary: De Lane

Following the Roll Call and Pledge of Allegiance, Mr. Forest Chambers made a motion to approve the Minutes from the meeting held on April 2, 2009. Mr. David Payne seconded the motion, and it passed with a vote of 5-0.

Sub-committee Reports

Planning and Land Use Chair Mr. Dale Tumey advised that a meeting was held the prior week in the Trustee's office, with approximately 35 people in attendance, most from the rural community, with many representing farms. Most of the comments from the audience were negative to the merging of the communities, with the feeling expressed that these residents would like for nothing to happen, and to just be left alone. Attempts were made to explain that the charge of the Committee was not to change anything, but to determine what could be done to facilitate a merge. Mr. Tumey stated that, after the meeting, he had an opportunity to discuss this with a few of the objecting residents, resulting in no change of mind from anyone, but a clarification and understanding of what the Committee's directive is; that is to come up with rules and regulations for a new community. He advised that it was his understanding that, if these residents had a choice, they would prefer to be included in Bargersville, rather than Greenwood. Mr. Tumey advised that he made it clear that the farmer's rights to farm were a top consideration.

Infrastructure Chair Mr. David Payne reported that his Sub-committee has been looking into road inventories, with the inventory received from Greenwood, but awaiting Johnson County's inventory. They are also studying historical budgets to determine monies spent on road repairs and maintenance. They are currently waiting on a decision from the City of Greenwood to allow them to review a draft copy of a study that was done for storm water utilities.

Health and Safety Chair Mr. Forrest Chambers reported that his Sub-committee has again met with fire department chiefs from Greenwood and White River Township, and the fire departments are compiling a study area, and creating a plan that they would like for the Sub-committee to review. Some Members have also met with Sheriff Terry McLaughlin again, receiving information concerning the dollar figures involved to operate the Sheriff's Department. Other Members have been reviewing County Ordinances, comparing those findings with Greenwood's Ordinances. They continue to work on Nuisance Complaints.

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Parks and Recreation Chair Dr. Eric Kapke reported that most information applying to facilities available to Greenwood and White River Township has been received. Based on national standards, which uses population figures, Greenwood is mildly underserved in certain areas, with White River Township more severely underserved. The framework for making changes to that has been started. Dr. Kapke advised that .01% of assessed value is currently budgeted for Parks and Recreation by the City of Greenwood, and if that same percentage is used in the future (as the operating expenses will not increase much), more capital funds will be available for the purchase of land and equipment to correct the situation. He added that Greenwood Parks has been in operation for over 30 years. Dr. Kapke advised that when the members examined the recreation facilities in White River Township and Greenwood, they not only looked at what was available publicly through the County and White River Township, but also what was available privately through churches, bantam football leagues, etc. A spreadsheet is being prepared for the Commission Website.

Audience member Mr. Jody Veldkamp asked if surveys had been done to reflect any interest on the part of the residents of White River Township for more parks and recreation areas. Dr. Kapke advised that surveying is beyond his Sub-committee's purview, and speculated that a new 5-year Comprehensive Plan would include a more intensive study. Mr. Dann Veldkamp asked if there had been an outcry from the residents of White River Township for more parks, and Dr. Kapke advised that, privately, he and members of the Sub-committee have received comments indicating an interest in more parks.

Governance Chair Mr. Don Hanlin reported that his Sub-committee is now prepared to discuss the aspects of a new Council in a reorganized government. He has discussed the requirements for making districts with the County Clerk, the Planning Dept. of Greenwood, and with the Association of Cities and Towns, and is prepared to discuss the role, the rules, and the make-up of the Council, etc. They are preparing to discuss the issue of the Clerk-Treasurer, Controller, and Department of Finance. Changes in the role of the Mayor will be studied after that. Mr. Hanlin advised that they are waiting and seeking guidance regarding taxes and services that would apply to the various service districts, and the types of budget needs that the reorganized government would have. The legal interpretation of "indebtedness" is still being pursued.

Finance Chair Paul Reed was unable to attend the meeting due to a family illness, and Mr. Sherman reported on his behalf. A meeting was held with the Council of the Department of Local Government and Finance at the State House in Indianapolis. Many questions were presented to the DLGF relating to the Indiana Statute 36-1.5 and they are preparing answers to these. Some of the questions involve debt, although there is no misinterpretation of IN 4-40, but an issue in question is how leases are to be interpreted for police cars and similar items. The DLGF is the entity in the statutes that has most of the control over requirements of reorganization, and will give their opinion on how this plan will work. Mr. Sherman advised that work is submitted to the DLGF as it is created,

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with requests for their views on some of the issues. He stated that the reorganization has the ability to recreate government, and restructure the Council and districts, to make certain that there is no gerrymandering with the districts.

Referring to Dale Tumey's mention of the meeting held the prior week, Mr. Sherman advised that one of the issues that Mr. Hanlin will be investigating is the possibility to have a district for the farming community that would require a unanimous council vote in order to change any ordinances. He stated that he has discussed the interim timing between the public question, and the actual effective date with the new council (possibly 16 to 18 months) with some of the concerned members of the community. Preserving the existing farm community ordinances is a question that will be presented to the DLGF, with an inquiry as to the possible appointment of a farm representative during that interim, along with the requirement of unanimous vote passage on any farming issue.

Mr. Sherman was advised that this is the largest reorganization the State have ever had, therefore many questions/issues need to be addressed.

New Business

None presented.

Old Business

Committee Advisor Mr. Forrest Mellott reported that the Committee was on time as far as the Timeline reflected, with the reminder that the status update meeting with the Greenwood Common Council and the White River Township Board is scheduled to be held on Monday, April 20, 2009. The next major milestone is in July, 2009, with a draft outline of the Reorganization Plan to be presented to the Greenwood Common Council and the White River Township Board.

Mr. Mellott also reported that the Committee Website is being populated, and noted that 300 visits to the Website had been shown in the first week. Mr. Sherman reviewed that the website address is www.WRT-GW.org, and contains the ordinances and the Indiana Code, and will, in the future, contain the Sub-committee Minutes. The Committee meeting Minutes are presently being posted on the website after approval.

Any other business to come before the Committee

An audience member asked who, specifically, initiated the entire idea of the reorganization study, advising that he could not find out who made this decision. Mr. Sherman advised that that question should be brought before the White River Township Board and the Greenwood Common Council at the Monday, April 20 Public Meeting, as the Committee does not have that information. Mr. Sherman added that each of the Committee Members was appointed by the Council, Township Board, or the Mayor.

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Adjournment

At 6:55pm, Mr. Sherman stated that the Sub-committees could meet at this time, with final adjournment after those meetings.

After the Sub-committee meetings, and with no further business before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm.



Patrick A. Sherman, Chairman

RECAP OF MOTIONS

Minutes of 4/2/09 Committee Meeting Approved, 5-0.