**OGLESBY PLAN COMMISSION
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE
MAY 14, 2025**

The Oglesby Plan Commission meeting was called to order by Chairman Ken Ficek at 6 p.m., Wednesday, May 14, 2025.

**PRESENT:** Kyle Videgar, Karen Watson, Jim Clinard, Bob Mente, Dave Peters, Lisa Carrico, Angie Partridge, Mark Duttlinger, Ken Ficek.

**ABSENT:** Rich Greening and Amy Arthur.

**SUMMARY:** The meeting primarily focused on reviewing and updating various strategic plans related to community development, natural hazard mitigation, public policy, infrastructure, and tourism promotion in the city of Oglesby. The discussion also covered ongoing and potential future projects related to parks, housing, public utilities, and emergency services. The aim was to evaluate progress on existing goals, identify areas for improvement, and assign next steps while ensuring community needs are met effectively.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY** Patridge, **SECONDED BY** Peters to approve the minutes of the April 23, 2025, meeting. **AYES:** Videgar, Watson, Clinard, Mente, Peters, Carrico, Partridge, Duttlinger, Ficek.

**REVIEW OF DEMOGRAPHICS PRESENTATION**

Partridge asked if, because of the growing Hispanic population in Oglesby, the Comprehensive Plan could be provided in Spanish. Kevin Lindeman, NCICG, said it wasn’t something that had been done before, but he could look into it.

**NATURAL HAZARDS MITIGATION PLAN**

Calvin XXXX, NCICG, briefed the board on updates to the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan. Two new mitigation strategies were introduced:

* Participation in developing a regional stormwater management ordinance to address flooding and protect lives and environmental property. It was noted that this is a duplication of an item already in the plan.
* Replacement and networking of sirens to cover gaps in city alert systems for better warning dissemination.

Clerk Clinard noted a couple of items that required updating or clarification, and the need to include the last council’s Hazard and Communications plan. That information will be shared with NCICG.

 **UPDATING 2020 PLAN GOALS, TASKS, AND IMPLEMENTATION**

**Public Policy and Partnerships**

* Continued improvement of partnerships with Illinois Valley Community College (IVCC) was emphasized.
* A recommendation was made to formalize regular meetings between the city and college representatives for better collaboration and annexation discussions.
* The inclusion and active engagement with regional organizations such as the Starved Rock Community Foundation, Economic Development Corporation, Illinois River Roads Scenic Byway, Heritage Corridor, tourism departments, and the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) were affirmed.
* A suggestion was made to broaden terminology from "regional" to “appropriate organizations” to allow a wide scope of partnerships, including state and federal agencies.
* Marketing efforts tied to Starved Rock Country branding and tourism were discussed. Oglesby currently participates in some publications and marketing but has seen intermittent activity in the past due to staffing.
* There was consensus on the need to continue and expand marketing efforts, including leveraging logos and banners, with a potential for developing a formal marketing plan.

**Government Structure: Home Rule Exploration**

* Clarification was made that "home rule" is a policy, not a form of government, which allows flexibility in city fund allocation.
* The plan will be updated to explore changing to home rule status, including investigatory tasks on pros and cons for Oglesby.
* Additionally, exploration of alternative forms of government or administrative structures may be included to determine what best suits city needs. There was discussion about the specific language, with Lindeman tasked with coming up with appropriate language to meet the concerns.

**Shared Service Costs and Regional Cooperation**

* The idea of regionalizing or sharing costs for services such as police, fire, ambulance, and public works was discussed.
* A question was raised if the city would benefit from shared garbage services.
* Mutual aid between fire and police departments currently exists.
* Potential expansion to shared ambulance or emergency medical services was considered, as well as joint purchasing agreements (e.g., salt, vehicles, asphalt, insurance).
* The goal of continued investigation into shared services remains active.

**Hospitality and Community Relations**

* Continued support of hospitality training programs to welcome and support new residents and businesses was endorsed.
* Collaboration with educational and business organizations for skills training and community integration was maintained.

**Community Resiliency and Permit Processes**

* Community resiliency was linked to emergency preparedness and streamlined permit processes during disasters to expedite recovery.
* The existing hazard plan is considered sufficient but will be periodically reviewed and updated where needed.

**TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC UTILITIES
Public Transportation**

* + The need to shift focus from just investigating public transportation needs to actively marketing existing services was discussed due to low community awareness.
	+ The need for wayfaring signage was noted.

**Infrastructure on West Side of Interstate 39**

* + The city identified a need for improved public utilities (water and sewer) on the west side of the interstate, which is crucial for attracting businesses.
	+ The plan will emphasize assessing current utility capacity and developing future infrastructure plans rather than focusing individually on electric service, which is progressing well with substation expansion.
	+ Road access limitations due to state highway regulations present challenges that require working with the Department of Transportation.

**Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)**

* + Water, sewer, and wastewater projects are included in a 10-year CIP.
	+ Transportation funding remains limited but actively pursued through grants and regional cooperation.
	+ Ongoing GIS mapping of utilities is being developed to assist planning and maintenance

**Grants and Funding Mechanisms**

* Maintaining awareness and pursuit of available grants is vital.
* Several grant notification sources are used by the city, NCICG, and consultants.
* The council has considered hiring a grant writer for efficiency but acknowledges grant administration demands significant staffing resources.
* Emphasis is on continuing to monitor eligible grants and applying strategically.

 **PARKS, RECREATION, AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES
Park Assessments and Development**

* Ongoing assessment of all parks remains a priority.
* There is recognition of a lack of parks on the west side of town, with calls to explore development of new park spaces in underserved neighborhoods.
* Suggestions included individual improvements such as upgrading neighborhood playgrounds and tennis courts.
* Parking remains a concern at LeHigh Park, and McPhedran Park.
* A proposal was made to formalize a task assessing needs for new parks anywhere in the city, not limited to the west side.

**Trails and Paths**

* + Attempts to develop walking and biking trails, including connecting to regional trails like the I&M Canal and Starved Rock Country paths, continue with limited success.
	+ Cooperation with neighboring communities and state agencies is crucial to create comprehensive, connected trail systems.
	+ Plans include making pathways ADA-compliant and coordinating future state infrastructure projects for connectivity.

**Community Facilities and Historical Preservation**

* The need to improve emergency services facilities, including police and ambulance, was discussed.
* The old firehouse is used by city departments but has safety concerns for other uses; alternate uses have been found.
* Maintaining and upgrading historical structures, such as the Dickinson House, is ongoing.
* Interest was expressed in developing a local historical society or museum, though concerns remain about the city’s capacity and resources to undertake such a project.

**Parks Maintenance and Features**

* The focus remains on maintaining and upgrading existing facilities, including pools and water features.
* The city recently approved a budget allocation for pool maintenance.
* Additional parking space at parks, particularly Lehigh Park, is a recognized need.

**Tourism and Economic Development**

* Oglesby participates in regional tourism marketing efforts and seeks to develop or attract more lodging and restaurant facilities.
* Past feasibility studies for hotels indicated insufficient demand, but interest remains contingent on the finalization of other tourism developments like park expansions and ATV parks.
* The city is open to supporting future hospitality growth by having data ready for developers.

**Housing**

* Focus on sustainable growth, quality housing, and meeting community housing needs.
* New construction codes are in place to ensure building quality.
* Promoting maintenance of existing homes through enforcement of property maintenance codes.
* Encouragement of senior housing development, with cooperation from local developers like the Stough Group.
* The property tax rebate program for new home construction is an ongoing effort, with marketing efforts aimed at real estate agents and lot owners.
* Affordable housing remains a complicated topic with limited direct city control.

**Next Steps and Follow-Up Actions**

* Review and finalize corrections and potential duplications in the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan.
* Formalize revised language and tasks regarding home rule exploration and government structure evaluation.
* Enhance communication and relationship-building efforts with IVCC and other key regional partners; consider formalizing a committee.
* Continue expanding and refining marketing plans tied to Starved Rock Country branding and tourism outreach.
* Pursue grant opportunities consistently, with potential consideration for grant-writing support.
* Plan for parks expansion with a focus on underserved neighborhoods; assess park land availability and resources.
* Maintain and upgrade community facilities.
* Support ongoing infrastructure development on the west side of I-39, including utilities and road access, coordinating with IDOT.
* Continue efforts to develop walking and biking trails, emphasizing connectivity with regional systems.
* Monitor housing development and the effectiveness of city incentives, promoting home maintenance and code enforcement.
* The next meeting will be at 6 p.m. June 11, 2024.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY XXXX, SECONDED BY XXXXX to adjourn at 7:45 p.m. **AYES:** Videgar, Watson, Clinard, Mente, Peters, Carrico, Partridge, Duttlinger, Ficek. **MEETING ADJOURNED.**