



MCDPS

...planning and achieving sound, orderly development and related community and regional goals.

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Newsletter of the **MEDINA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING SERVICES**

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6th ANNUAL COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING DAY OPEN HOUSE

By: Susan Hirsch, AICP

The A. I. Root Co. Community Room, was the perfect historic venue for the Department of Planning Services' 6th Annual Planning Day Open House that took place on November 9, 2007 in commemoration of World Town Planning Day. The new location was necessary because the attendance at the prior Open House had outgrown the Department of Planning Services conference room. World Town Planning Day, founded in 1949, is sponsored in the United States by the American Planning Association. It is celebrated throughout the world in at least 30 different countries.

The theme this year was, "A Celebration of Medina County – A Rich Heritage and a Bright Future." In keeping with this year's theme, a giant timeline depicting the history of Medina County was prepared by the Planning Services staff. The timeline hung as a backdrop for the festivities.

The Open House was attended by more than 100 persons who viewed displays from 18 agencies, organizations, consultants and vendors. Agencies and organizations included:

- Medina County Economic Development Corporation
- Medina County Building Department
- Medina County Auditor
- Medina County Health Department
- Medina County Park District
- Medina County Highway Engineer
- Medina County Soil & Water Conservation District
- Medina County Railroad Safety Task Force
- Medina County Sanitary Engineer – Central Processing Facility
- NOACA
- University of Akron – Medina County University Center
- University of Akron – Department of Geography and Planning
- Medina County Home Builders Association
- Ohio Planning Conference – Akron Section
- Akron Regional Air Quality OEPA
- Western Reserve Land Conservancy



Colleen Conley, Tom Russell and Commissioner Steve Hambley look over the Medina County timeline.

This year, many of the consultants and vendors represented "green" products and services that dealt with sustainability; they included:

- Williams Creek Consultants (Planning Consultants)
- Shaw Contract



- Tandus
- Easy Graphics
- ZEP Mfg.
- M & M Health

“Buy Local” was the message behind this year’s refreshments as most of the snacks were provided by the following local bakers, farmers and even our own Planning Services staff.



Planning Director Patrice Theken.



Commissioner Pat Geissman, along with other members of the Railroad Safety Task Force, accepted the Public Agency Coordination and Cooperation Planning Award.

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| Sweet Rolls, Pumpkin Rolls, Sweet Breads | Mose D. & Mattie Swartzentruber - Amish Bakers, Homer Township |
| Artisan Breads and Rolls | Bread Divas
Elizabeth Olvich, Litchfield Twp. |
| Bratwurst and Kielbasa | Beriswill Farms
Pete Ricci, Valley City |
| Jam | The Village Smithy
Joyce Smith, Homerville |
| Sauerkraut | Tom Russell, Planning Services |

As in past years, the Open House was the occasion for awarding persons, agencies and organizations that have worked to further planning in Medina County. This year’s winners were:

Citizen Community Service Planning Award – James Gerspacher, Medina City, in recognition of his commitment to an improved quality of life in Medina County by encouraging a greater understanding of land use planning, by providing a private sector viewpoint in many community projects and by providing an excellent example to the business community of the value of participation in local government.

Residential Subdivision Planning Award - Riverwalk Subdivision – Liverpool Township, accepted by Dave LaHotan and Kerry Illes, in recognition of their creative use of land design to produce a subdivision that conserves environmentally sensitive land.

Agency Planning Award - Soil and Water Conservation District – accepted by Jeff van Loon, Program Administrator. Medina County Soil and Water Conservation District, through its comprehensive review of environmental issues affecting subdivisions and its work with communities on comprehensive planning, has contributed to conservation and environmental planning education of Medina County residents, and has supported environmental quality and public awareness.

Public Agency Coordination and Cooperation Planning Award - Railroad Safety Task Force, accepted by Pat Geissman, Chairperson. The Railroad Safety Task Force, through multi-agency coordination and cooperation, has improved the safety of many railroad crossings throughout the county through partnerships with local and state agencies and by seeking a variety of funding sources. Other Task Force members in attendance included: Lee Geissman, David Riffer, Peggy Folk, Buck Adams, and Joshua Swindell.

Green Building Planning Award - Labyrinth Management Group – accepted by Leslie and Lance Traves in recognition of their commitment to the environment and sustainable redevelopment in Medina City. Labyrinth Management Group renovated an historic building on the Square in Medina City using many recycled and environmentally-safe products.

Also, the following participants were recognized for their commitment to planning education. Those persons attending five or more Zoning Workshops include:

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| Bob Arnold | Larry Cray |
| Wilbert Geiss | Karen Schoonover |
| Lee Kehoe | Jim Likely |
| James Miller | Mike Pope |
| Marlene Oiler | Ron Oiler |

Individuals recognized for attending four Workshops include the following:

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| Peggy Folk | Larry Landis |
| Janet Pindroh | Jack Poe |
| Gwen Snyder | |

Plans are already underway for the Open House in 2008. Watch the Department of Planning Services Website for details as they become available.

LEED-Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design

LEED provides a complete framework for assessing building performance and meeting sustainability goals. Based on well-founded scientific standards, LEED emphasizes state of the art strategies for sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality.



James Gerspacher received the Citizen Community Service Planning Award.



Leslie and Lance Traves of Labyrinth Management Group in Medina accepted the Green Building Planning Award.



Peggy Folk was recognized for her attendance and participation in our 2007 Workshop Series.

What is Sustainability?

By: Patrice Theken, AICP, Zach Greatens, and Chris Bartell

On October 25, the Department of Planning Services held a workshop titled "Planning for Sustainability." Speakers included Charles Huber, Medina County Chief Building Official, Jim LaRue, a retired forensic residential building investigator and Lance Schmidt, Project Manager for F. G. Ayers, Inc. The subject, sustainability, was addressed from the perspective of each of these gentlemen.

There is a lot of discussion these days on the television, articles in the newspapers, and speakers at planning and zoning conferences, on the topic of sustainability. Why is it important that we consider sustainability in planning for the future of Medina County?

First of all, what is it? Being sustainable means to behave in such a manner that meets the needs of the present while ensuring that future generations have the same or better opportunities (Brundtland Commission, 1987). In the words of Thomas Jefferson (1789), "Then I say the earth belongs to each generation during its full course, fully and in its own right, [but] no generation can contract debts greater than can be paid during the course of its own existence." In other words, we should not take more resources from the earth than we are replacing for use by our children's children.

A good example of a company focused on sustainability is Greenbridge Developments, LLC in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Greenbridge Developments' company vision is to develop communities in existing neighborhoods that promote human and ecological health. In other words, a community that restores the air, water, and soil, and contributes to the quality, diversity, vitality and prosperity of its neighbors. An essential component to this is to embrace new construction methods, innovative renewable building materials, and forward-thinking renewable energy strategies capable of restoring our relationship to the planet.

Greenbridge Developments' inspiration comes from the 2002 book *Cradle to Cradle* by William McDonough and Michael Braungart. The cradle to cradle process uses the earth's interdependent systems to nourish one process with the waste from another, relying on an ever renewing flow of resources.

According to Greenbridge Developments, sustainable design aims to comply with three primary principles of sustainability: environmental sensitivity, social equity, and economical vitality. This philosophy can be applied to the design of small objects for everyday use, or the design of substantial projects such as housing developments, office towers, and city planning. Greenbridge is committed to the following sustainable developments:

* **Environmental Sensitivity:**

Energy efficiency, natural daylight, indoor air quality, rainwater catchment, green rooftops and terraces, solar thermal, bicycle friendly

* **Social Equity:**

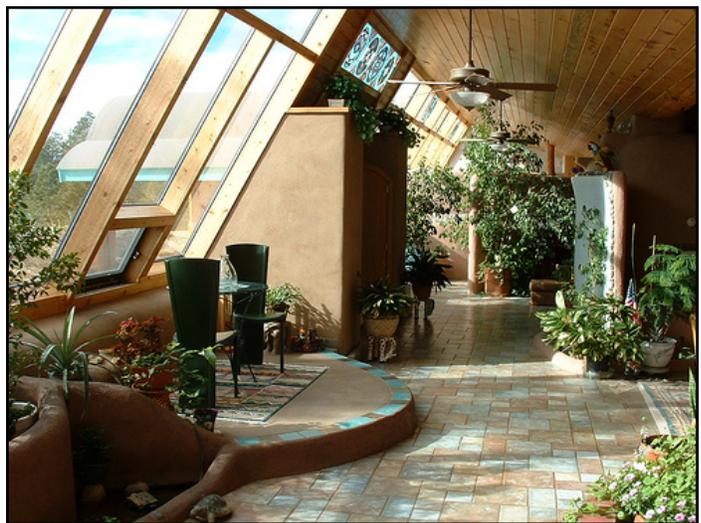
Affordable and diverse housing, retail services, employment opportunities, historic documentation, educational components

* **Economic Vitality:**

Community renewal, increased public safety, new economic hub.

All sustainability is local.

Greenbridge Developments, LLC is committed to following "smart growth" principles of revitalizing



A passive solar house uses energy from the sun as its primary heating source.

town centers, rather than using up farms and forestlands and contributing to urban sprawl. Their buildings are built close to mass transit systems and urban infrastructure. Residents are able to park their cars, opting to take the bus, walk, or ride bicycles as an alternate mode of transportation. Buildings also follow the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards for energy efficient practices; such as water conservation, indoor air quality, and sustainable sites.

The first project of Greenbridge Developments, LLC is in their hometown of Chapel Hill, NC. The Greenbridge site location was chosen for both its practical qualities and potential possibilities. The current infrastructure has water, sewer, telephone, power, paved roads and 3 bus stops. It is also centrally located between the main streets of Chapel Hill and Carrboro.

Showing great potential, the West End neighborhood is experiencing an economic revitalization – developing this site will greatly add to the momentum. This potential is recognized by the city, as the Greenbridge site is located within the "opportunity zone" as created for Chapel Hill's downtown plan.

Another topic of discussion at our October Workshop was passive houses, or passive solar houses. Passive solar design refers to the use of the sun's energy for the heating and cooling of living spaces. A passive solar house is a building that uses design and architecture to get the right sun gains without overheating and/or cooling. In other words: a passive solar house gets its cooling and heating needs from surrounding landscape, climate and natural elements. This is accomplished due to its:

- shape and orientation
- windows system
- trees planted around it, or other shading elements
- materials used on walls, floor or roof (thermal mass)

In this approach, the building itself or some element of it takes advantage of natural energy characteristics in materials and air created by exposure to the sun. Passive systems are simple, have few moving parts, and require minimal maintenance and require no mechanical systems.

A Passive House is a very well-insulated, virtually air-tight building that is primarily heated by passive solar gain and by internal gains from people, electrical equipment, etc. Energy losses are minimized. Any remaining heat demand is provided by an extremely small source. Avoidance of heat gain through shading and window orientation also helps to limit any cooling load, which is similarly minimized.

Today, many in the building sector have applied this concept to design, and build towards a carbon-neutral future. Over the last 10 years more than 6000 buildings in Europe - from single and multifamily residences, to schools, factories and office buildings - have been designed and built or remodeled to the passive house standard. Passive design is practiced throughout the world and has been shown to produce buildings with low energy costs, reduced maintenance, and superior comfort.

For more information on the topics in this article and more, please go to the following websites:

<http://www.house-energy.com/>

<http://www.greenbridgedevelopments.com/>

<http://www.greenbuilder.com/sourcebook/>

<http://www.thenaturalhome.com/index.html>

Green Roofs

Besides being attractive, they create oxygen, harvest rainwater for reuse, and diminish rainwater runoff to storm drains. Stormwater is captured by special water retention layers installed beneath the soil of the plantings on the rooftop gardens. This layer is made of egg-crate shaped material that can hold up to two inches of rain before it overflows into the roof drains. This simple technique keeps rainwater in reserve beneath the soil, making it available to plants through a wicking process when the surface soil is dry.

December 7 Zoning Inspectors Meeting

By: Tom Russell, AICP

The December Zoning Inspectors meeting was well attended, with a sizeable contingent from Summit County. It was very informative. Charles Huber, Chief Building Official for Medina County gave an update on the legal technicalities regarding the inspection responsibilities for manufactured houses. The inspection and permitting of these houses was convoluted to the point of being suitable for a Sherlock Holmes novel. Recent changes in the law and governmental agreements have resulted in the majority of manufactured homes in Medina County are inspected and permitted by the Medina County Building Department.

Ms. Bonetta Guyette of the Akron Regional Air Quality Management District (<http://ci.akron.oh.us/Health04/divisions.htm>) that covers Medina, Summit and Portage County spoke about the growing air quality problems created by outdoor wood-fired heaters and boilers. Currently these burners are not regulated by federal, state or county regulations, however they are often less efficient and dirtier than other home heating devices. They can very thick smoke with small particles that can be a nuisance and unhealthy to breathe. This is especially true if green wood, household trash or other refuse is burned. She encouraged all those attending to inform their local officials and encourage them to enact local controls to address this growing problem.

Following Ms. Guyette was Ms. Amy Wainwright of NOACA (Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, www.noaca.org) who spoke on the air quality in the area. Ms. Wainwright distributed several publications about air quality that included a report stating that Medina County is the area classified as being in non-compliance with air quality standards for fine particles. The report also includes a series of recommendations as to how to address this problem.



2008 Zoning Workshop Series

By: Patrice Theken, AICP



The Medina County Department of Planning Services and David Civittolo, Director of the Medina County Ohio State University Extension Office, have a tentative series of workshops scheduled for 2008, beginning with January 16th, the Basics of Zoning, presented by William Thorne, Medina County Prosecutor's Office. The Basics of Zoning is an introduction into the world of zoning, and is great for not only new zoning officials, it is very informative for those have been in the business of zoning and planning for a number of years. Trustees, council people, planners, engineers, developers, builders, and anyone affiliated with land use will benefit from this workshop. Attendees will walk away from this workshop with at least one new piece of zoning knowledge they did not have when they came in. The workshop will be held in the Conference Room, of the DPS offices, 124 W. Washington Street, in Medina, at 6:30 p.m.

February 13th at 6:30, speakers from the Ohio Ethics Commission will spend a couple hours with us to explain ethical conduct and what it means to public officials. The Ohio Ethics Commission promotes ethics in public service to strengthen the public's confidence that Government business is conducted with impartiality and integrity. The Commission has jurisdiction over Ohio's public officials and employees at the state and local levels of government, except legislators, judges, and their staffs. The presentation will be held at the Administration Building, 144 N. Broadway, in the Choral Room.

Many of the 2008 workshops will be held on Wednesday. This will allow many zoning officials, council people and trustees the opportunity to attend, because many township meetings are held on Tuesdays or Thursday, conflicting with the DPS workshops. A flyer with the 2008 dates is attached to this newsletter, as well as located on our website. The theme of this year's workshop series will be endangered species – we will be preserving endangered species, those that are enhancing their zoning knowledge, and increasing their population, through attendance at the workshops, which will in turn protect their habitats. Please call to RSVP your attendance, and to confirm that the workshop will be held at that date and time, at least until we get the schedule finalized.

Establishing Priorities With Green Building

It is rarely possible to do everything we would like to reduce the environmental impact of building projects. It takes time to research alternative design and construction systems; new materials may not have proven track records; higher costs may be an impediment; or clients simply might not be interested. Therefore, it makes sense to figure out where our efforts will do the most good.

Finding a Basis for Establishing Priorities

Several related factors should be considered in making objective decisions about where our investments of time and money will do the most good in reducing environmental impact.

First, we need an understanding of what the most significant environmental risks are. These may be global in nature, or more specific to a particular region or site.

The second critical factor is an understanding of how our buildings contribute to these risks, and how significantly the measures we adopt can help the situation.

The third factor has to do with the specific opportunities presented by each individual project.

Finally, we have to consider the available resources and agenda of the client.

Given all these factors to consider, deciding which environmental goals to pursue on a given project might seem overwhelming. To provide a more concrete starting point, Environmental Building News has come up with a list – a priority ranking of measures to reduce the environmental impact of buildings.

Environmental Building News Priority List for Sustainable Building:

- 1) Save Energy – Design and build energy-efficient buildings.
- 2) Recycle Buildings – Utilize existing buildings and infrastructure instead of developing open space.
- 3) Create Community – Design communities to reduce dependence on the automobile and to foster a sense of community.
- 4) Reduce Material Use – Optimize design to make use of smaller spaces and utilize materials efficiently.
- 5) Protect and Enhance the Site – Preserve or restore local ecosystems and biodiversity.
- 6) Select Low-Impact Materials – Specify low-environmental impact, resource-efficient materials.
- 7) Maximize Longevity – Design for durability and adaptability.
- 8) Save Water – Design buildings and landscapes that are water-efficient.
- 9) Make the Building Healthy – Provide a safe and comfortable indoor environment.
- 10) Minimize Construction and Demolition Waste – Return, reuse, and recycle job-site waste.
- 11) Green Up Your Business – Minimize the environmental impact of your own business practices, and spread the word.

In deciding which measures to pursue on specific projects, consider the relative benefits of each measure. Pick the low-hanging fruit first, and go after the tougher issues as time and resources allow.

This article was written by Alex Wilson, Nadav Malin, and Peter Yost and printed in the May 2001 issue of Environmental Building News.

For more information, please go to:
www.buildinggreen.com.

To read the full article, please go to:
www.buildinggreen.com/ebn/sample/reprints.cfm

Energy Star Appliances

Energy Star is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy helping us all save money and protect the environment through energy efficient appliances that incorporate advanced technologies requiring 10-50% less energy and water than standard models.

Results are already adding up. Americans, with Energy Star appliances and products, saved enough energy in 2005 alone to avoid greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those from 23 million cars - all while saving \$12 billion on their utility bills.

Welcomes and Goodbyes

At the end of 2007, we must say goodbye to two vital members of the Medina County Planning Commission, Pam Miller, representing Medina City, and Ron Rhodes, representing the Medina County Township Trustee Association. We are sorry to see them leave us, because their contributions are important to the planning process.

New Planning Commission members are Bob Zienkowski, City Manager, Brunswick replacing Pat Beyer, former Safety Director for Brunswick, who retired in October.

Colene Conley, the 2007 President of the Planning Commission, has been re-elected by the Medina County Township Trustee Association (MCTTA) to represent that organization on the Planning Commission (Ron Rhodes will serve as her Alternate); Rita Holt from Medina Township was elected in December to sit on the Planning Commission representing the MCTTA.



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| January 16 | Workshop: Zoning Basics; 6:30 pm @ Dept. of Planning Services |
| February 6 | Planning Commission Meeting; 6:30 pm @ Dept. of Planning Services |
| February 13 | Workshop: Ethics; 6:30 pm @ County Administration Building |

Why Green Technology

When green technology is incorporated into a structure, the average utility costs are decreased by 50% - according to the U.S. Department of Energy. In addition, green buildings require less maintenance and repair, and promote better health among occupants. However, green buildings don't just benefit the individual, they benefit our society at large by reducing the environmental impact of a structure.

Buildings consume more than 35% of all energy and more than 65% of all electricity used in the United States. Much of our electricity is produced from burning coal, which pollutes our air and water and fills our atmosphere with greenhouse gases, resulting in global warming.



Pictures from the Open House Picture Contest: The Old Mill in Chatham; The University of Akron - Medina County.

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