

Business

Regional Planning Commission (RPC) In Danger Of Being Dissolved

by Dan Nerhaugen

Does Fitchburg benefit from the wisdom of the Dane County Regional Planning Commission (RPC), or would the community be better off with the RPC dissolved?

The Dane County Towns Association (DCTA), which represents most of Dane County's 34 rural townships, is pushing hard for dissolution of the RPC, and it has asked Fitchburg's support in the effort.

A majority of municipalities must vote for dissolution in order to send the matter to the governor for action. As of last week, of the county's 61 municipalities, 20 towns and two villages - Blue Mounds and Cottage Grove - are believed to have voted for dissolution.

The Fitchburg City Council has yet to consider the matter; city planning and zoning administrator Tom Hovel doubts that any of the city's alders are likely to introduce a resolution to dissolve. Nevertheless, the towns association's efforts continue apace, and more municipalities may join the movement to dissolve.

What is the Regional Planning commission, and why does it matter to Fitchburg and other Dane County communities?

"A regional planning commission may be created by the governor," begins the pertinent Wisconsin statute, which goes on to say that the RPC shall, in an advisory capacity, recommend the "general location, character and extent" of major roads, parks, routes for public transit, public buildings, sewers "and other public utilities," as well as "areas for industrial, commercial, residential, agricultural or recreational development."

In this function, says the towns association, the RPC has become dictatorial toward, and unresponsive to, rural concerns, favoring instead the interests of Madison.

A problem created by statute and gubernatorial fiat can be corrected by statute and gubernatorial fiat, says the DCTA, which is lobbying municipalities to pass resolutions calling for the termination of the RPC. Whether dissolution requires Dane County's assent is a matter of debate that could require adjudication by a state court.

With the RPC dissolved, the DCTA would, according to a recent Association document, urge local officials to form a "voluntary cooperative association" with municipalities of Jefferson, Dodge, Columbia, Sauk, Rock, and Green Counties. The first five of those are the only Wisconsin counties not belonging to one of the state's nine RPCs. The voluntary association, says the DCTA document, would "serve to coordinate planning among these communities."

Tom Favour, who joined the RPC in 1971, serving as its executive director since 1989, said that Republican Governor Warren Knowles created the commission in 1968. Even then, said Favour, many in the county were concerned about its rapid growth and the related issues of water quality, transportation planning, and land use.

He said that there had also been discussions in the 1960s about forming a multi-county association, and Dane County's neighbors had declined. The executive director said that he and his RPC staff are in regular contact with those of other counties, and he is not aware of significant interest among Dane's neighbors to form a multi-county entity.

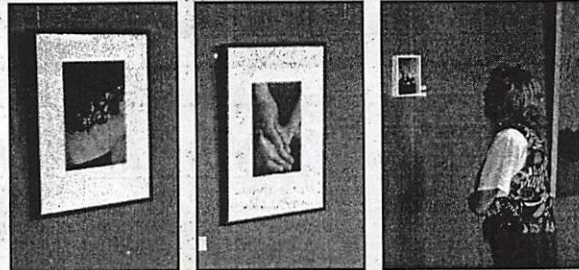
Next week we will take a closer look at the towns association's perspective on dissolution of the RPC; the following week, the series concludes by focusing on the views of RPC Executive Director Tom Favour and other RPC supporters.

ART SHOW OPENS AT PROMEGA...

Tuesday afternoon, July 21st, people from around the county gathered to gaze upon the newest exhibition to grace the walls of the Bio-Technical Center in Fitchburg's Research Park. Daniel Swadener of Ohio has worked with Promega arranging the exhibits for years. "I arrange the exhibitions for the artists. I work with a lot of artists and other galleries and museums and things. This is a pretty good focal point for me. I do a couple of exhibitions every year.

The show displays the work of two photographers and two painters. One of the painters is from Yugoslavia, and one of the women, a photographer, is from France. "I'm doing more international things," continued Daniel, "and some of the up coming exhibitions will be more international. I like to combine it. I've done some local shows. I've done some African shows and things like that. I really want to do more. Promega is an international corporation. They have manufacturing all over the world, and people buy Promega products from all over. We're trying to really incorporate that (international) as part of Promega. On-going exhibitions is one way to do it."

Three of the artists were in attendance; local artist Susan Kaye, as well as painters Milan Vujosevic and Jason Kinkaid. Valerie Orgeret, of France will be visiting during the end of the exhibition.



ABOVE: A variety of works from two different European artists is on display at the BioTechnical Center in Fitchburg's Research Park.

There are prices on the pieces for the art connoisseur who is interested in adding to their collection. "I don't always do exhibitions that are sales oriented, but the truth is to invite artists to exhibit, if they don't have some venue to sell, they're not going to bring their work. In America, people rely on sales, while some of the European artists they have a different support system and sales are not important."

Daniel spoke of how he got involved with Promega and how he selects the artists that will be showcased at these exhibitions. "Bill Linton, president of Promega, is an old friend of mine. I first met him when he first started this company twenty years ago. I've sort of been part of the company without actually working here. It was an idea that I presented to Bill; instead of decorating the place how about some exhibitions? He tried it to see what would happen. Evidently it worked because I'm still here. This all really comes out of Bill's vision of things. He actually brought me in here, because he

thought I'd have some ideas. He likes to do something a little different. So if there's any credit it goes to Bill.

Daniel has done a great deal of travel, covering America, Africa and Europe in search of artists. "I go to a lot of exhibitions and I met a lot of curators and artists, and I've got a pretty good file of artists. Also with the accomplishments here, I've had a lot of artists call. I look at a lot of portfolios. I think of a theme or a non-theme whatever it is and sort of put things together. It's been working pretty well."

The show, entitled "Male Pigment/Female Emulsion" will be on display through September 4th at the BioTechnical Center, 5445 East Cheryl Parkway. People can come in anytime during the business hours. All that Promega asks of visitors is that they sign in at the lobby desk. If there is a larger group of 10 to 20 people, please call ahead to make accommodations with the company. People can call (608)277-2669 for more information.

Council takes care of business

by Lucas Piper

The Council voted on several issues Tuesday night further strengthening their commitment and support to Fitchburg businesses. The Council unanimously approved the initial resolution for an industrial development revenue bond, on behalf of Bruker AXS, Inc., a business seeking to relocate from Madison to Fitchburg. Bruker is a high tech company that manufactures x-ray systems. By applying for an industrial bond, should it be awarded, the City will not incur any liability, will not have to accept any risk, and will not have to spend a cent.

In addition, the Council voted to accept the general implementation plan for Hospice Care in the Fitchburg Research Park. "My only concern is that we hold true to maintaining the natural features of the area," said Mark Vivian. "It's an asset to the City of Fitchburg," added Ron Johnson.

The Council also listened to John Flad of Flad Development as he proposed changes to the intersection of McKee Road and Seminole Highway. A retail center is slated to go in at the southeast corner of that intersection. The plan would make the shops more accessible and assist the traffic flow by permitting access to McKee Road as well as

Seminole Highway. There was a short discussion as to the safety of bicyclists that use the road. Eventually the proposal was approved and accepted by the Common Council.

The Council also made the fire department very happy by authorizing the purchase of a new Triple Combination Pumper Truck.

The ordinance requiring vehicles on Wilshire Drive as it approaches Chapel Valley Road to yield was deferred pending information coming from the

Public Works Department.

Operators Licenses were approved for Kristin Guelzow of Madison, Cynthia Guy, Jason Jelle, Darlene Koch of Waunakee, Laura Lund, Barbara-Ellen Rosser, and Kimberly Smith. The Council also accepted the Mayor's appointment of Richard Berkley to the Cable Commission through June of 2001.

The meeting ended with Senior Center Director, Sue Sheets presenting the strategic plan that has been developed for her department.

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