

**Olentangy Watershed Planning Partnership
Meeting of Thursday, May 13, 2010
Congregation Beth Tikvah
Worthington, Ohio 43085
Meeting Summary**

Attendees:

Partner Communities

Janet Brown, Village of Riverlea
Jay Shoup, City of Marion
John Peacock, Pleasant Township
David Hull, City of Columbus
James Andres, Brown Township
John H. Carter, City of Columbus
Mary Jo Cusack, Village of Riverlea
Lynda Bitar, City of Worthington
Beth Hugh, Orange Township
Warren Zachman, Richland Township
Roger Groll, Richland Township
David Schrote, Pleasant Township
Rex Strine, Claridon Township
Jim Hatten, Oxford Township

Stakeholders

Laura Shinn, Ohio State University
Natalie Pirvu, Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Scott Sanders, Delaware County Regional Planning Commission
Emily Weber, Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District
Matt Trokan, Sierra Club

MORPC Staff

Jerry Tinianow, Director of the Center for Energy and Environment
Joseph Kitchen, Planner
Erin Grushon, Planner
Brandi Whetstone, Outreach Specialist

The meeting was called to order by Jerry Tinianow at 4:32 p.m. Jerry welcomed the OWPP partners to the meeting and reviewed the agenda.

Joe Kitchen welcomed the OWPP, reviewed the overall process and timeline for developing the Olentangy Watershed Planning Partnership's (OWPP's) Balanced Growth Plan, and reviewed the straw poll results.

Straw Poll results:

Does the OWPP want to adopt goals? 13-0 in favor

Does the OWPP want to designate Priority Agricultural Areas (PAAs)? 11-1 in favor

Joe Kitchen reviewed the progress the OWPP has made, the process for developing Priority Area definitions established at the April 29th meeting of the OWPP, and the Priority Conservation Area (PCA) and Priority Development Area (PDA) definitions the OWPP adopted. The definitions the OWPP adopted at the April 29th meeting are as follows:

Priority Conservation Area (PCA): An area designated by local jurisdictions for protection, conservation, or restoration because of its ecological, cultural, recreational, or historical value and for the significant role these areas play in maintaining the integrity of the watershed.

Priority Development Area (PDA): A locally designated area defined by its potential for development or redevelopment in accordance with the area's infrastructure, development, or plan and the area's ability to accommodate development in a manner consistent with our goal.

The OWPP agreed to proceed with developing a Priority Agricultural Area (PAA) definition using the same Priority Area definition process established at the April 29th meeting in an open-discussion format.

The partnership reviewed the past PAA definitions used by the four past endorsed Balanced Growth Plans. Warren Zachman suggested working off of the Swan Creek definition for PAAs to develop the OWPP definition for PAAs. The Swan Creek Partnership definition for Priority Agricultural Areas is as follows:

“PAAs are locally designated area targeted for continued, expanded and/or intensified agricultural activities due to possession of naturally occurring or human-created traits which make it conducive to highly productive agriculture, silviculture or other natural product creation processes.”

After reviewing potential PAA definitions drafted by MORPC staff, Natalie Pirvu supported the idea of including “farms of significance to the community for historical or cultural reasons” in the OWPP PAA definition.

Jay Shoup asked why the partnership might want to include “prime” farmland in the PAA definition. Jerry clarified by stating that using prime farmland as part of the PAA definition does not mean that land outside of the PAAs cannot be used for agriculture. Areas designated as PAAs are targeted by the partnership as priority areas for agriculture. Joe adds that communities in the partnership will have the opportunity to review their own Priority Area maps and to make necessary revisions to accurately reflect the desired result for their community.

A partnership member indicated that they would like to remove “highly productive” and “silviculture” from the PAA working definition. Partners debated over keeping silviculture in the PAA definition or removing it. Jerry asked the partnership if they would like to include aquaculture to the definition. Beth Hugh suggested that the partnership not be too specific in the definition thereby opening up the possibility of excluding an important element.

The partnership resolved the debate by agreeing to add “and related activities” to the PAA definition in addition to exploring the possibility of including a glossary of terms, such as agriculture, at a later date.

Scott Sanders stated that he would like to have “historical, cultural” to the definition before “natural or human created...”

The partnership shaped the following Priority Agricultural Area definition together:

Priority Agricultural Area (PAA): A locally designated area targeted for continued, expanded and/or intensified agricultural activities due to historical, cultural, natural or human-created traits which make it conducive to agriculture and related activities.

Jim Hatten moved for acceptance of the above statement as the OWPP definition for Priority Agricultural Area (PAA). The motion was seconded. The partnership unanimously voted in favor of adopting the above definition for Priority Agricultural Areas in the OWPP Balanced Growth Plan.

Erin led the partnership in a discussion regarding the establishment of a process for criteria selection. She reviewed PCA and PDA criteria “titles”. Using the criteria “title” floodplain, she reminded the partnership that if such a feature were selected, the partnership would need to define this in more detail (such as the 100-year flood plain). Erin stressed the importance of identifying a data source for each criterion in order to be able to create the Priority Area maps. MORPC staff will communicate with the partnership regarding what data are available.

Lynda Bitar asked why “libraries” would be a criterion after viewing “libraries” as a potential criterion in the presentation. Erin clarified that this is just a general title and that “points of interest” might be a better phrase. If selected, the “points of interest” would be further defined by the partnership utilizing the available data.

Erin showed the partnership an example PCA map of open space in the Olentangy Watershed to illustrate how a map might look if the OWPP decided to use open space as a feature to designate Priority Conservation Areas. She informed the partnership that GIS will be used to map the criteria the OWPP chooses to use to designate Priority Areas.

The partnership reviewed the pros and cons of using “grid overlay” versus parcel data when creating the Priority Area maps. One pro to using grid overlay is the uniformity across all jurisdictions in the watershed while parcels vary in size both within and between jurisdictions. A pro to using parcels is greater detail, though grid overlay only produces minor loss of detail. The size of the grid units is ¼ mile by ¼ mile.

Utilizing the grid overlay, a grid would be laid over the community and each grid cell would be categorized according to the Priority Area criteria. The predominant use in each grid cell would be utilized in Priority Area categorization.

If parcel data are used, the maps will not be consistent across the watershed. Parcel data are not available in all communities in the watershed in a usable format for the purpose of using GIS to map the Priority Areas. Many communities would need to provide parcel data in a GIS file if the OWPP decides to strictly use parcel data in lieu of a grid overlay.

Beth Hugh stated that grid overlay may be difficult for the public to understand and that the maps may not be recognizable, whereas the public may more readily recognize a parcel map. The possibility of using both grid overlay and parcel data was raised.

The partnership reviewed the criteria weighting and ranking process versus the non-weighted criteria mapping used in two of the past endorsed Balanced Growth Plans

Erin worked with the OWPP to establish a framework for criteria selection and definition. The floor was opened to suggestions from the OWPP and three potential options were presented:

1. Whole group- To have the whole OWPP select criteria and define them. This would require meeting on additional days.
2. Technical committee- To have a group of volunteers from the OWPP work together to select and define criteria, then report to the OWPP.
3. Priority Area Technical Committees- To have three technical committees, one per Priority Area with OWPP volunteers on each committee to select and define criteria for their respective Priority Area.

The idea of developing a straw poll to send to the OWPP was brought to the table. The document previously sent out to the OWPP with the aggregated list of criteria and definitions from the past four endorsed Balanced Growth Plans would be modified to a straw poll format and sent to the OWPP for voting and feedback.

David Hull suggested that we have a technical committee that would do some of the work, to send out a straw poll of the criteria, and then to come together as the whole OWPP to take a look at the results.

A final decision is made to proceed in the following manner:

1. MORPC staff will develop the straw poll using the aggregated criteria and definitions from the past four endorsed Balanced Growth Plans and will send it to the whole OWPP for voting and feedback.
2. The OWPP Technical Committee will meet to consider the results of the criteria straw poll and to work with the straw poll results to select criteria and to develop definitions to recommend to the whole OWPP.
3. The OWPP Technical Committee recommendations will be presented to the whole OWPP so that a final decision can be made regarding the criteria that will be used to designate the Priority Areas.

Brandi initiated a discussion on potential learning opportunities for the OWPP including the proposed Scenic River float in June. Jerry followed up by indicating that there will be additional educational opportunities in the coming months for the OWPP. John Carter suggested "farm town" days where different sustainable farm practices could be showcased.

Jerry noted that we would need to wrap up the criteria selection and definition process by the end of June in order to proceed in the Balanced Growth Planning Process in a timely manner.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.