

MINUTES
McLEAN COUNTY GIS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
Friday, May 15th, 2009, 10:30 a.m.
Government Center Room 404

Members Present

Paul Russell, Executive Director - McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC); Jim Karch, Interim Director - Public Works City of Bloomington (COB); Phil Dick, Director - Building and Zoning, McLean County (MC); Mike Ireland Assessor - City of Bloomington Township (COBT); Mike Hall, Director of Public Works - Town of Normal (TON).

Members Absent

Tony Cannon, Executive Director - McLean County 911 (ETSB).

Others Present

Khalid Hasan, Director of Regional GIS; Bill Jackson, GIS Coordinator - MCRPC; Joshua Thompson, GIS Specialist Supervisor of Assessments Office MC; Troy Olson, GIS Technician - City of Bloomington COB ; Leah Sweeney, GIS Specialist; Justin Nettleton, GIS Technician - Information Technology MC; Cassidy Killian, GIS Specialist IT - TON.

1. Call to Order

Mr. Russell noted the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m.

2. Attendance

Attendance was recorded by Mr. Jackson.

3. Consent Agenda

Mr. Hall motioned to approve the consent agenda as presented, Mr. Karch seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Items of Business

FY 2010 Budget Status

Mr. Russell reiterated that reserves in the GIS budget combined with some other funding, were likely sufficient to meet operating expenses for the next fiscal year without the annual contributions of consortium members. Mr. Russell reported that this information was presented to the Commission Executive Committee for consideration. Commission members for the COB, TON, and MC opted to not contribute their annual contribution for FY 2010. Mr. Hall moved to approve the budget, Mr. Karch seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Information / Discussion Items

A. Orthophotography/LiDAR Project Updates

Mr. Jackson reported that some of the final deliverables had been recieved. A recent delivery contained errors that were reported back to the vendor. Mr. Jackson discussed the final billings and invoicing to McGIS participants.

B. GIS Strategic Plan Update

Mr. Hasan reported that several surveys with COB, some with MC, and with Normal Township Assessor were not received despite best efforts. Mr. Hasan discussed the ongoing work for the plan and the possibilities of a working session with Baker in the short term future.

C. Other Discussion Items that May Arise

Mr. Ireland requested clarification on issues regarding cadastral data ownership, maintenance and mapping. He expressed concern that his office was not adequately informed of a recent contract between McLean County and the Sidwell Company to alter the cadastral geodatabase and maintain it internally.

Mr. Ireland indicated that he first learned of the contract when a Sidwell Company representative notified him that the geodatabase would become unavailable so that changes could be made to the database without his office's approval. Mr. Ireland asked the representative how Sidwell could enter into a contract with the County to make changes to City of Bloomington Township parcels? The response was that the County was paying for the work. Mr. Ireland expressed concern that this work was being done without a contract with City of Bloomington Township and the result would be a blurring of the lines of responsibility, ownership, and maintenance. Mr. Ireland indicated he wanted his own contract with Sidwell and he has legal counsel working on the issues.

Mr. Dick responded that Sidwell had reported significant problems with the cadastral geodatabase and the County interviewed two contractors to advise on what it would take to correct the problems. The Sidwell Company was selected to correct the problems and the County is in the process of setting up a system so that cadastral maintenance could be done in-house. Mr. Dick explained that the County decided that it was not advantageous to have Sidwell maintain the cadastral any longer. One reason cited being the long maintenance delays. Mr. Dick added that the County determined that this was essential for the reliability of the tax billing cycle.

Mr. Hasan explained that by statute the Supervisor of Assessments and the City of Bloomington Township Assessor both have the option to maintain parcels; whether with pencil and paper or digitally. Historically the GIS consortium has coordinated and cooperated financially and technically to come up with joint specifications that will serve the needs of all members. Recently there has been a need to improve the technical specifications. On a technical level we have made reasonable progress and we look from the policy group to put in the overarching policies and agreements that will make it work.

Mr. Ireland responded that it was not as simple as getting the tax bill out since City of Bloomington Township controls over 40% of all parcels in the County. To house the geodatabase on a County server rather than at Sidwell subjects the City of Bloomington Township to rules and policies of the County rather than rules and policies of Sidwell. He added that an intergovernmental agreement was in the works that addressed technical rather than policy aspects. Mr. Ireland described an alternate hypothetical scenario whereby the City of Bloomington Township would, unilaterally, take control of the cadastral data, change the data model without taking other members into confidence, and move it onto a Township server. In essence this is what the County has decided to do.

Mr. Dick replied that he thought it as reasonable that the City of Bloomington Township does not want the County to upgrade COB Township parcels, but added that he did not believe the County would do anything to the geodatabase that would jeopardize or compromise any other consortium members' needs, including the COBT.

Mr. Dick asked Mr. Ireland if he has a problem with how Sidwell was going to change the database. Mr. Ireland replied that he did not have a problem in principle with the technical updates provided these were discussed and coordinated through the consortium, but he did have a problem with any single party ordering changes on everyone's behalf.

Mr. Russell indicated that he had encouraged the County and township individuals to meet directly to address these issues before bringing it to the Committee and before any action was taken.

Mr. Hall replied that he thought that resolving these issues is what the GIS management Committee was for. Mr. Russell remarked that this issue did not arise from people sitting at this table. Mr. Hall added that those people are invited to be at this table and they have a need to be at this table. Mr. Russell agreed that this was a fundamental problem. Mr. Karch asked if this committee is by majority rule. Mr. Russell replied in the affirmative, but added that the Committee does not have any authority. If one member entity wants to do something on their own, the Committee does not have the authority to prevent it. We are a volunteer organization here to try and collaborate, coordinate and cooperate but sometimes there are differences of opinion. We are hoping to get some insight from the strategic plan on how to better address these types of issues. By having this issue out on the table and discussing it, maybe it will lead to establishing improved procedures for addressing similar issues in the future.

Mr. Hasan asked several key questions; do we want the consortium to progress and mature from GIS projects to a GIS program? Do we want to just keep the relationship based on projects where we get together to accomplish something, move apart, and then do our own thing? Is it going to be a sustainable program that we will work together in the future? Mr. Hall added that as a group, maybe the way we interact to do things needs to change. We may need to change our business model to match what we are doing. Mr. Dick agreed that we should use the strategic plan to try to understand the relationships between entities. He added that the City of Bloomington Township and the County need to work through this one. Mr. Ireland added that we have to get the vendor to recognize that we are both a client. Mr. Dick replied that he thought that can get worked out.

6. Adjournment

The regular meeting adjourned at 11:42 a.m. The next scheduled meeting of this committee, pending items of business and availability of members, is June 19th, 10:30 a.m. in Room 404 at the Government Center.

7. Executive Session

No executive session was required.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bill Jackson,
GIS Coordinator, MCRPC