



Planning Progress

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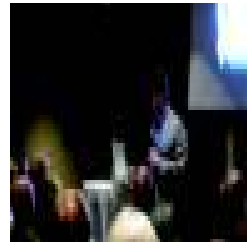
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Annual Dinner



Bob Nau with Kirt Conrad



Approximately 120 guests gathered at Skyland Pines on March 19, 2014, for this year's SCRPC Annual Dinner. Kirt Conrad, Executive Director/CEO of Stark County Area Regional Transit Authority (SARTA), was the guest speaker. Conrad has a Master's Degree in Public Administration, giving him years of experience and understanding of the federal grant system and new transit technology. He spoke about SARTA's new Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Facility and buses.

Conrad has been the Executive Director since 2009. SARTA operates 100 buses with 200 employees. Last year nearly 2.7 million passenger trips were transported by 30 fixed routes or demand response service throughout Stark County. SARTA opened Northern Ohio's first public-private CNG fueling facility. By midsummer, 23 vehicles will be powered by CNG. The equivalent of over 550,000 gallons of gasoline is dispensed from the CNG station. SARTA uses B5 Biodiesel as well as diesel electric hybrids. Currently they are conducting a demonstration of a bi-fuel CNG/diesel bus that burns CNG and diesel at the same time.

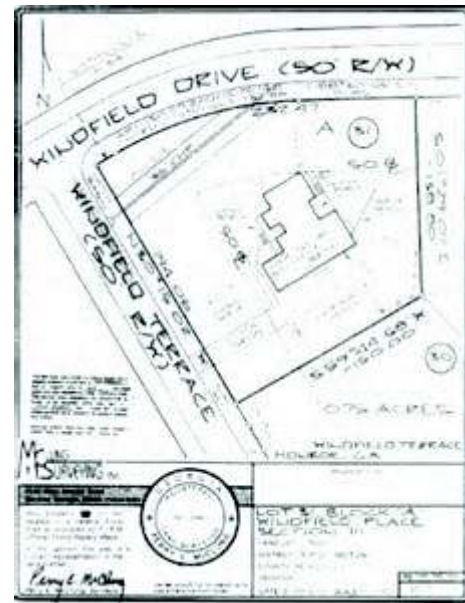
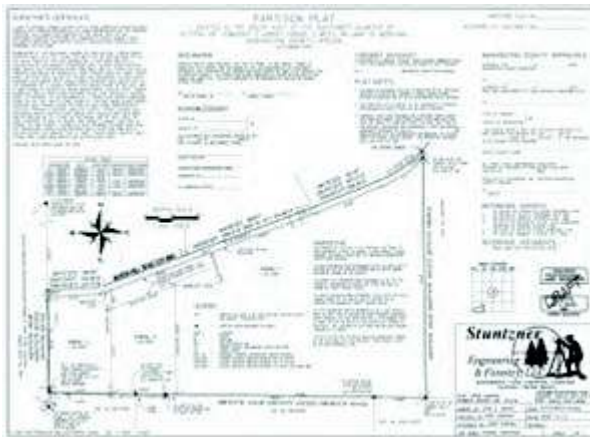
Subdivision Regulations

Subdivision regulations as well as zoning regulations are two major land use controls used by jurisdictions and have been used for over a century. The goal of subdivision regulations is to promote orderly and adequate development, and they directly affect many aspects of the real estate investing business. As such, real estate investors need to have a basic understanding of what subdivision regulations do.

These regulations control just what you might think they control; the subdividing of land from large tracts to smaller ones. Such things as street pavement width, surface water drainage, and intersection location are, among many other things, governed by these regulations. They do this by requiring the submission and approval of a preliminary plan followed by the submission and approval of a final plat, which basically are maps showing various information of the proposed division of land. If construction of public improvements is required to divide the land, then construction drawings are necessary. The approving body is often a planning commission, but it can be a city council, county commission or other governing body. Once the plat is approved, it is recorded in the local recorder's office.

At first glance, subdivision regulations can appear to be a confusing collection of rules designed to confound the developer and planning commissioner alike. Fortunately, the regulations are generally not as inaccessible as they first appear, and actually provide the backbone of a successful planning program. As you might have guessed, you can't draw a plat on the back of a napkin and submit it for approval. The plat must be drawn to specific standards and depict required information before it will even be accepted for review and approval. The plat needs to be drawn by a licensed surveyor and contain lot lines, street right of way lines, easements, set backs, lot sizes, utilities, drainage structures, etc., all drawn to scale and to the standards contained in the subdivision regulations and zoning ordinance.





Generally, subdivisions are divided into “major” or “minor” applications. Minor subdivisions are those that, because of the small number of lots created, or the lack of a need for public streets or other public facilities, can be approved in an expedited manner. Major subdivisions, in contrast, require a more extensive review, which while not required, usually starts with submission of a sketch plan on which the applicant presents the basic concept of the subdivision. A meeting is typically held between the applicant and the local planning officials to determine if the project complies with the subdivision regulations, including the jurisdiction’s zoning regulations. Projects which comply with all applicable regulations can proceed to preliminary plat approval. Fundamentally, the sketch plan serves as an early warning system for the applicant and the local planning officials.

Following sketch plan approval, the subdivider then submits a preliminary plan for approval, which is a drawing(s) showing a detailed lot and street layout, connections to utilities, and location of natural features and topography, as required by the subdivision regulations. It is reviewed for completeness and compliance with the design and development standards contained in the subdivision regulations and subsequently referred to the planning commission for either approval, conditional approval or denial. The planning commission holds a public hearing on the preliminary plan and votes on what action is to be taken.

Preliminary plan approval is a significant milestone for the applicant, who can then proceed with some confidence that the commission will approve a consistent final plat. Prior to submission of a final plat, construction drawings must be approved for any public improvements that are required. The final plat provides a detailed layout of the new land divisions as well as any easements or other restrictions being placed on the land, but should not contain any significant changes in the development’s overall layout shown on the preliminary plan. The final plat is reviewed similarly to the preliminary plan and subsequently referred to the planning commission for its action on the plan in a public hearing.

Water-Smart Landscaping

Spring is around the corner and everyone is anxious to get outside and clean up their yards. Help to conserve our water by following the tips below:

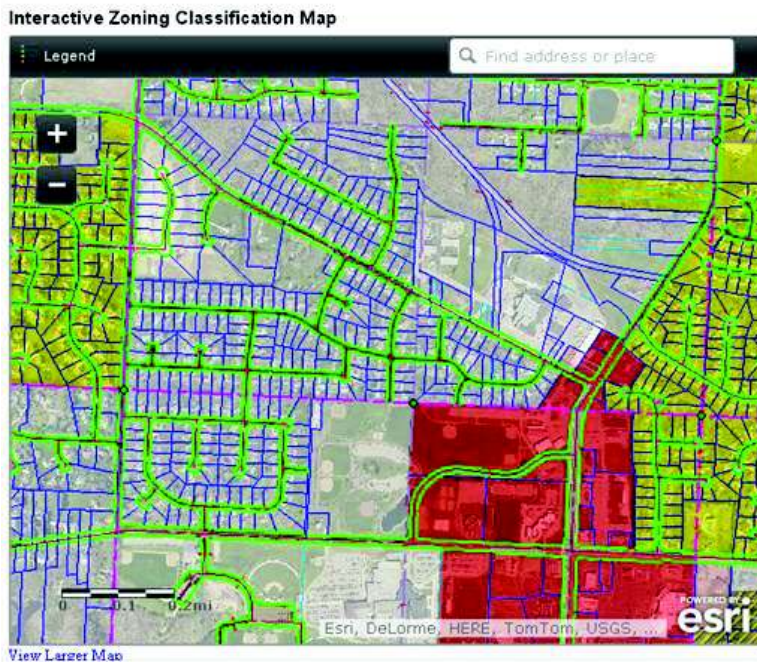
- **Go native or choose plants that need less water.** Once established, native and low water-using plants require little water beyond normal rainfall. If you're designing a new landscape or just sprucing up your current landscape, be sure to consider the water needs of the plants you choose.
- **Group plants according to their water needs.** Grouping vegetation with similar watering needs into specific "hydrozones" reduces water use by allowing you to water to each zone's specific needs. Turf areas and shrub areas should always be separated into different hydrozones because of their differing water needs.
- **Maintain healthy soils.** Healthy soils are the basis for a water-smart landscape; they effectively cycle nutrients, minimize runoff, retain water, and absorb excess nutrients, sediments, and pollutants.
- **Be selective when adding turf areas.** Turfgrass receives the highest percentage of irrigation water in traditional landscaping. To improve the aesthetics of your landscape and better manage outdoor water use, plant turfgrass only where it has a practical function.
- **Water wisely.** Know your plant's water needs and avoid watering during the heat of the day. If you have an irrigation system, make regular adjustments to ensure proper watering. And be sure to look for the WaterSense label on components for your system.
- **Use mulch.** Incorporate mulch around shrubs and garden plants to help reduce evaporation, inhibit weed growth, moderate soil temperature, and prevent erosion. Adding organic matter and aerating soil can improve its ability to hold water.
- **Provide regular maintenance.** Replace mulch around shrubs and garden plants at least once per year, and remove weeds and thatch as necessary.

In short, plan and maintain your landscape with these principles of water efficiency in mind, and it will continue to be attractive and healthy while requiring less maintenance and less water.



GIS Projects

The GIS Department completed the Storm Water Conveyance System Mapping Project in December 2013. This information and other permit requirements were due to EPA by February 9, 2014. This 5-year mapping project created an inventory of storm water data across approximately 652 miles of road. There were 1,134 outfalls located within the eight Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) included in the consortium. An overall total of 21,761 storm water features connected by 551 miles of pipe was inventoried.



With the new ArcGIS version 10.2 software release, the GIS Department is working diligently with the Stark County Auditor's GIS Department to deploy a map service through ArcGIS Online that would allow users to access valuable data online quickly and easily through an interactive map. The two departments developed a pilot map service for the City of Alliance that would allow users to access the storm water, sanitary, water utility, street sign inventory datasets as well as the base datasets maintained by the Auditor's office quickly and accurately. With the successful deployment of the pilot map service, creation and deployment of maps for other Stark County cities, villages or townships are in the process.

An interactive zoning classification map has already been deployed on the Jackson Township Zoning Department webpage. A screen shot of the interactive map on the township's website is shown above. This and future map services will allow the GIS Department to provide users throughout Stark County an easy and intuitive workspace for data viewing, editing and collaborating. <http://www.jacksontwp.com/JacksonTownshipQuarterSectionZoningMaps.aspx>

Bicycle Suitability Map

SCRPC is taking on the project of creating a Bicycle Suitability Map. This map will create Level of Service categories from beginner to experienced. Criteria that may be used are speed limit, traffic volume, number of lanes and elevation, just to name a few. We plan on using multiple forms of output to maximize access to these maps, including a map service that will work on your smart phone, tablet or any PC, or you can pick up a paper map at a number of locations. Look for news this fall for the roll out of this map!

Consolidated Plan FY '14 -'18

The Consolidated Plan provides the County's long-term and short-term community development goals and objectives that have been developed to address the national goals of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The Plan is required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to serve as a local guidance document. The 2010 Census and the American Community Survey 2009 & 2011 were utilized as resources. The CDBG Program goals include:

- The provision of decent housing that is affordable to low- and moderate-income households
- The provision of a suitable living environment, improving the safety and livability of neighborhoods, increasing access to quality facilities and services, improving housing opportunities, and revitalizing deteriorated neighborhoods
- The expansion of economic opportunities, creating jobs that promote long term economic and social viability and that are accessible to low- and moderate-income persons

Data Highlights-

Population	*	In the last seven years, the population has decreased by more than 5,000 in Stark County
	*	Aging population is increasing- 16.0% of the population is 65 and older
	*	Increase in female-headed households- 18.8%
Economy & Housing	*	In 2010, 10.0% of the population was living in poverty
	*	Minimum wage/single-income households cannot afford a 2-bedroom unit
	*	From 2000-2008, almost 1/2 of the units renting for less than \$500 were lost
	*	Over 88.0% of people spend more than 45.0% of their income on housing and transportation
	*	In 2010, 9.1% of housing units were vacant
	*	In 2013, there were approximately 1,500 foreclosed properties auctioned
	*	Approximately 1,623 individuals and families are homeless each year
Infrastructure	*	In 2013, Ohio Public Works Commission applications requesting -
	*	\$5.6 million in water lines
	*	\$29.5 million in streets & sidewalks
	*	\$6.1 million in storm sewers

Identified Needs - Public improvements, emergency shelter, aging population, affordable housing

To review the entire Consolidated Plan, go to www.rpc.co.stark.oh.us

Brownfields Assessment Grant

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Brownfields Program has been designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. Brownfields Assessment grants serve as the foundation of the Brownfields Program and support revitalization efforts by providing funding to inventory, characterize, assess, and conduct planning (including cleanup planning) and community involvement related to brownfield sites.

SCRPC has been working on and submitted a Brownfields Assessment Grant Application in cooperation with North Canton and Alliance. The EPA will be awarding an estimated \$63.2 million nationally for assessment and cleanup of brownfield sites. In the grant application, RPC has requested \$600,000, the maximum available, to do a community-wide assessment of brownfields. Grant announcements will be made sometime this spring.

The former Hercules Plant - already designated as a brownfield site.



LGIF Loan Application

A feasibility study of shared building department services among the county and cities in Stark County was completed utilizing grant monies from the Local Government Innovation Fund (LGIF) with the intent to increase efficiency and coordinate future planning among building departments.

It has been determined from that study that the current permitting software, where it exists, should be replaced with a permitting software

system that can be managed on a regional basis while maintaining jurisdictional autonomy with respect to finances, permit issuance, permit numbering and individual reporting mechanism.

The County is taking the lead in submitting an application for a loan to the LGIF that will cover costs for permitting software and implementation. SCRPC wrote the application, and along with North Canton, completes the coalition at this time.



Stark County Regional Planning Commission
201- 3rd St. N.E.
Canton, Ohio 44702

Upcoming Events

April

7	Subdivision Review	1:30 PM
8	SCRPC	7:30 PM
28	SCATS	1:30 PM

May

5	Subdivision Review	1:30 PM
6	SCRPC	7:30 PM
27	SCATS	1:30 PM

June

2	Subdivision Review	1:30 PM
3	SCRPC	7:30 PM
23	SCATS	1:30 PM

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