

CHAPTER II

CURRENT ADMINISTRATION

As a regional planning commission begins the organization process, it immediately begins to consider some of the very significant and very difficult problems associated with day to day administration of the commission's affairs. It is concerned with budget and sources of funds. It raises questions about the need for staff, its cost and space to house the staff. Travel becomes an issue--whether it be within the region or outside it. The need for consultants is discussed. And questions are raised about the availability of funds for planning assistance. It is the purpose of this chapter to examine these issues in terms of existing laws and regulations.

BUDGET

Budget considerations are often approached very gingerly by new regional planning commissions; perhaps because they were not considered forthrightly with the participating local governments prior to organization. Experience has shown that those promoting regional planning often fail to tell the governing bodies that regional planning will cost money and they will have to provide a major part of it. Thus the governing bodies are sometimes shocked and resentful when they are asked to appropriate several thousands of dollars to maintain this regional planning organization after it has been created.

Organizers of regional planning commissions should know--and should tell everyone concerned--that certain basic costs must be met every year to have a minimum, on-going regional planning function. They should also know--and tell everyone concerned--that there will be additional costs from time to time on an irregular basis as necessary to perform certain tasks beyond the minimum.

It is difficult to suggest what size budget is necessary for a regional planning commission. So much depends on the size of the commission, the area of jurisdiction, the population of that area, and the specialized work which needs to be undertaken. However, every regional planning commission should have a minimum staff and a minimum budget.

Except for the regional planning commissions which are organized in metropolitan areas, it appears reasonable to suggest that the minimum budget should approximate \$53,250.00. This should be used to employ basic permanent staff, rent suitable space, provide for ongoing office expenses and provide for the necessary travel both within and outside the region. The breakdown of the minimum budget would be approximately as indicated in Appendix G, Suggested Minimum Budget, Multi-County Regional Planning Commissions.

At least as important to the regional planning commissions is the question of how the local money is to be obtained. Any number of formulas could be suggested based on population or land area or assessed valuation or combination of all of these. There is no formula which would be satisfactory in all cases, but one appears to be receiving some acceptance. It is based on the population of the county, with the County Commission making the mill levy and providing for the full county cost regardless of the numbers of incorporated municipalities which may be involved. Using the \$53,250 minimum budget as an example, and spreading it over a region with 200,000 population, the average assessment would be slightly less than twenty-seven cents (27¢) per capita. Obviously, this will vary depending upon the work program cost for a given year and upon the population base to be assessed.

It should also be noted here that on a number of occasions communities or counties have completed all or some elements of a comprehensive plan

only a short time before entering into a regional relationship. In such instances it is common to give that city or county credit for the recently completed work in terms of a reduced dollar assessment for one year.

Whether such should be done, and how much the credit should be, would be a matter of negotiation among the several members on a case by case basis.

Local governing officials often note that while they are sympathetic to the concept of regional planning they are faced with severe budget and taxing limitations which make fund raising exceedingly difficult. Certain local funding sources are worthy of special attention.

General revenue sharing is now a reality and each general government organization receives a specified sum of money which can be used for a wide variety of purposes. Planning studies is one of the purposes which is approved by the federal government. *Since this is federal money, however, it cannot be used as the local funds which would be required for matching purposes if 701 assistance were to be requested. Federal funds cannot be matched by other federal funds.*

A second source of local funds is the general fund portion of the local budget. The general fund is very tightly controlled by state law and there is typically far more demand for dollars from this fund than is allowed by state law. Thus in very many instances, the local government must discontinue or reduce commitments to established programs if dollars are to be allocated to a new program. This is an exceedingly difficult and painful process and it is not often done. New program dollars must most often be found in a new source of revenue.

Kansas law now allows both incorporated cities and counties to establish a mill levy for the purposes of industrial development. The limit is 0.5

mill but it is outside the general fund levy limit. In the legislation which applies to cities, the law is very unspecific; and it is questionable whether this mill levy could be used to finance the local costs for comprehensive planning. Some cities have used it for this purpose, but legal counsel will disagree as to the propriety of such action. The law which applies to counties, however, is much more specific; and there is no question that counties may use this levy to fund local planning costs.

ANNUAL WORK PROGRAM

One of the most important planning activities in terms of federal agency certification is the Overall Program Design (OPD). Probably the most significant part of the OPD is the annual work program. Both need to be thoroughly understood.

The overall program design is a statement by the planning commission of the work it needs to undertake during the next three to five years of its life. There are four significant characteristics of the OPD:

1. Identification of the work tasks which need to be performed.
2. A general description of the purposes, methodology and end results of each work task; and relationship to other work tasks.
3. An estimate of the resources required to perform each work task, including an estimate of
 - a. money required
 - b. staff personnel required
 - c. other personnel (consultants) required
 - d. potential sources of funding
4. A time schedule for performing each work task, including a definition of priority for each work task in the overall three to five year time span as well as an indication of the working time which should be assigned to each work task.

In the OPD, it is anticipated that the earlier years of the three to five year span will be more specific than the later years. It is also anticipated that each year it will be updated and extended one year into the future. In the updating process it may also prove desirable to amend

the priority assignment, the cost estimate and the estimate of other resource needs.

As indicated above, probably the single most significant part of the OPD is the annual work program. This has certain very specific functions:

1. It justifies the budget request for the coming year.
2. It establishes specifically the work tasks which are most urgently needed by the commission.
3. It establishes specifically the staff needs, consultant needs, space needs and equipment needs for the coming year.
4. It provides a clear framework within which the most meaningful citizen participation can be generated.

The annual work program, as the name clearly implies, is a very specific statement of the work to be performed in the first year of the OPD. At the end of the year, it must be examined critically to determine what progress has been made. This critical examination must be concerned with the following questions:

1. Were all the programmed work tasks undertaken?
2. Were all of them completed?
3. Were other work tasks substituted for those which were programmed?
4. If so, why? Was it a case of mismanagement, or was it because of an emergency change in priorities?
5. If any of the programmed work tasks were not undertaken, should they be re-programmed for next year, or should they be postponed for later years?

6. In the course of performing any of the programmed work tasks has it become apparent that the scope should be changed? Should there be a greater or lesser assignment of resources? Are there other peripheral areas of interest which should be explored?
7. What action steps, if any, need to be undertaken to implement the recommendations coming from the performance of each work task? Who should initiate these action steps? When? How?

It is evident that the Annual Work Program is a critical, viable document in any properly functioning planning program. Properly designed, carefully and thoughtfully reviewed, adequately funded, this document can serve much as the calendar of events for the coming year. Deviation from it should be minor; and deviations should be allowed only after the most careful consideration of all pertinent factors.

STAFF

The Department of Housing and Urban Development requires, as a part of its certification, that there be an "adequate staff". The definition of adequacy is left to the regional commission and its advisors. HUD has indicated that, in general terms, the minimum would be a director, one assistant planner, and a secretary. In the suggested minimum budget, included as Appendix G, it is recommended that the minimum staff also include a draftsman-researcher. The kind of training that is required for the planning director is left to the determination of the state planning staff; with HUD accepting that determination. In general, the director should have experience and training such that he would be qualified for "planner-in-charge" as such is defined by the Planning Division, Kansas Department of Economic Development. In some instances, however, a person who is adequately trained in public administration, economic development, or engineering might be acceptable if that orientation is appropriate in terms of the regional work program. Suggested job descriptions and qualifications are included as Appendices H through L.

As indicated above, some situations strongly suggest that the director of a regional planning agency should be trained other than as a planner. Such a person, who would probably be labeled "Executive Director" should be strongly oriented and experienced in public administration. It would be necessary for him to have as his assistant, a "Planning Director" who would meet "planner-in-charge" requirements of the State Planning Division.

Such an arrangement with two highly paid staff members would surely increase the commission operating costs, and the value to the commission should be very carefully studied before such a decision is made. However,

if the regional organization is to be multi-functional from the beginning, there are benefits to having a director whose primary function it is to administer, coordinate and publicize the several commission functions.

It is noteworthy here that selection of the director--especially the first Planning Director--should be undertaken with the greatest of care. It is not enough that this person be a competent planner, although that certainly is an essential attribute which the selected person must have. But, equally important, this person must also be a skilled administrator; a "grantsman" skilled in the techniques of obtaining non-local financial assistance; and a diplomat who can work with the tenuous ties of cooperation and the lingering traces of parochial suspicion and distrust which so often characterize a regional organization in the early years of its existence.

As a commission begins the task of searching for a director, it should proceed on the basis of a recognized and acceptable procedure. Certain points are stressed here:

1. Decide what kind of director fits the particular situation-- a "planner" or a "non-planner" who would have a planner as an assistant.
2. Decide what the commission wishes to offer as attractions and what legally must be offered. Included here are such things as
 - minimum salary
 - vacation leave
 - sick leave
 - hospitalization and life insurance
 - support for attendance at professional conferences
 - interview expenses

- moving expenses
 - on the job travel arrangements
 - supporting staff
 - office quarters
 - legal holidays
3. Advertise for applicants. The American Society of Planning Officials publishes twice monthly a job listing known as "TAB". This is the only recognized listing of professional opportunities regularly available to nearly all persons in the planning profession, and is by far the most effective way to contact planners who might have an interest in the job opportunity offered.
 4. Evaluate the applications and obtain letters of reference from the applicants' former employers, listed professional references and professors from their academic planning program.
 5. Select the very best (perhaps a maximum of three) of the applicants and seek a personal interview either with the full commission or a personnel committee to whom the selection task has been entrusted.
 6. Select the best and negotiate all details of employment.

This is a time consuming and laborious process. But nowhere is the old maxim "Haste Makes Waste" more true than in this process. Every precaution must be taken to try to assure that the commission is satisfied. Equally important, the successful applicant must be satisfied. A commission can ill afford to select a director in too much haste and then discover in a few months that the one selected is incompetent, incompatible with the people or is dissatisfied with the conditions of employment.

The cost of a planning staff will be approximately the same regardless of the type of training so long as the level of training is approximately equal and so long as one person serves as director and "planner-in-charge".

It could be expected that the director will command a salary of at least \$15,000.00 per year and that his assistant (if not a "planner-in-charge") will command a salary of about \$10,000.00. Secretarial assistance is estimated at about \$4,800.00; and a draftsman-researcher at about \$6,000.00 per year. These are general figures and there are many possible variations from these, depending upon the area in which the commission is located, the cost of living in that city, and other similar considerations.

SPACE

Many planning operations are inadequately housed with so little space that they cannot function correctly. Obviously the amount of space needed will relate directly to the size of the staff. In any event, however, there should be private office quarters for the director; there should be drafting and working space for the draftsman and the assistant planner; there should be reception and work space for the secretary. Additionally, it would be highly desirable, but not essential, for the regional planning commission to have a hearing room which would be capable of seating 50 or more persons. This is often avoided by using county court rooms, city council chambers and other such meeting rooms; and some commissions will wish to rotate their meetings and hearings among the several cities in the region. Moving from space to space for meetings and hearings, however, is somewhat confusing and generally less satisfactory than having a permanent hearing room. Office space is estimated to cost \$1,800.00 per year.

It should be noted that in some instances, office space may be given to a regional commission on a "no cost" basis by one of the participating cities or counties so that they will benefit from the economic stimulus of having the office located and staff residing in their city. This possibility should be explored in all cases.

As a final comment on space, it should be noted that in most instances the first one or two months after the first director is employed will be largely devoted to establishing the office. Locating an office, perhaps remodeling it, equipping and staffing it are time consuming. No director

should be expected to produce much substantive work until the mundane but essential office establishment task is completed.

TRAVEL

One of the major jobs of the planning staff in a regional organization is to perform an informational and educational function. This requires movement about the region to visit with citizen groups and governing bodies of cities and counties on an almost constant basis. If the staff is performing its job well there will be many requests for appearances for technical assistance, for public relations appearances, and for attendance at governing bodies' hearings throughout the region. In Kansas the size of the regions is such that many thousands of miles could very properly be traveled in a year's time. In addition, the staff will have numerous occasions to travel outside the region, particularly to the various federal regional offices and to the state capital. Once again in Kansas it is probable that these trips would be made by automobile rather than by public transportation and could total several thousands of miles in a year. Finally, it is in the interests of the commission that the director and perhaps the chairman of the commission should be supported to attend the national planning conferences held annually somewhere in the United States. These two planning conferences are quite important to both the professional and lay planner, in that new ideas and new methods for problem solving are made available and can be utilized to the advantage of the region and its citizens upon return from the conference.

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

Throughout professional planning circles there is general agreement that effective public relations and genuine citizen involvement are essential to a fully successful planning program. Agreement on how to achieve these two elements is much less general.

Public relations activities may include any of those techniques used by the planning commission and its staff to inform the citizenry as to the commission's work program, services offered and benefits to be achieved from planning. It is more and more becoming an acceptable tax-supported function as it becomes apparent that an understanding public is essential to effective implementation efforts. It is almost axiomatic that citizens will fear and distrust, and therefore not support, those concepts and ideas about which they are poorly or not at all informed.

Many efforts at good public relations have been made by various commissions. A listing of some of the most common and apparently most successful would include:

- Citizen's advisory committees wherein area leaders widely representative of the several interest groups of the area are appointed to review, discuss and hopefully support planning efforts being undertaken.
- Media coverage, including regularly scheduled local radio and television features as well as the timely news reporting about commission activities.
- Periodic newsletters prepared by the staff on a monthly or bi-monthly basis, simply reporting to a very wide audience what the staff considers to be interesting and important about commission activities of the recent past or near future.

- Public speeches, usually to service clubs and similar groups on various aspects of the planning program. It is emphasized here that various commission members should make themselves available for such speeches as well as the staff. Commission participation will make possible an appearance before more groups; and it will also inform the public as to the commission view of various activities as well as the staff view.
- Popularized reports prepared in brief form are useful in providing general planning program information to lay citizens. Such reports must be carefully written and printed; but if such care is taken they can be very effective.
- Public meetings, workshops and conferences can be used to appeal to many citizens. Such meetings should not be considered as official public hearings; but should be used as forums to present and discuss ideas related to the planning program.

Effective citizen participation is much more elusive than effective public relations. Citizen participation requires, as the name suggests, that the citizens take an active working role in the planning program. They must work; they must use part of their leisure time; they must study; they must discuss; they must stand and be counted; they must criticize positively as well as negatively; and they must not be primarily motivated by personal aggrandizement. These are the elements of good and meaningful citizen participation; and they are so demanding that it is little wonder that the desired participation is very difficult to obtain except from a minute portion of the citizenry.

In the past twenty years many devices have been developed to try to achieve the desired participation rate. Few, if any, can be said to be

successful; but two of the more successful are noteworthy. These are the PAC (project area committee) concept; and the concept which provides a funded and staffed program for going to the neighborhoods to seek participation.

The PAC concept was developed by the federal government in the late 1960's as a part of its urban renewal, housing and model cities programs. It requires that there be a committee of citizens, usually elected by their peers, which must be involved in all project decisions. The members of this committee are expected to voice their opinions on any elements of planning or implementation which appear to them to affect their area and the citizens which they represent. The PAC group cannot compel the local governing bodies to accept their recommendations, but they are given every opportunity to have full, complete and fair hearings. This technique is not perfect, but it has proved vastly more successful than many less formal and less structured techniques.

The second technique which has been reasonably successful involves the development of materials and presentations to take into the neighborhoods. In essence, this involves a staff with adequate budget for preparing presentation materials and for conducting information meetings in the neighborhood areas. The elementary school district is frequently used as the geographical concept of a neighborhood; and the PTA often becomes the vehicle to call and conduct the meetings. At these meetings, the staff presents parts of the planning program and solicits discussion and criticism from the citizens present.

It should be noted that the same technique can be followed in rural areas by utilizing the Extension Service personnel who are so very adept at arranging meetings and who are also very capable of making a valuable, substantive contribution to the discussion. The aim of giving information

and soliciting critical comments remains the same.

Whatever technique is used, it cannot be stressed too much that a successful planning effort depends upon the best citizen participation it is possible to obtain. The plan is for the people. The people will have to pay for it through tax dollars. They must have an understanding of what is being done, why, what its effects will be and what it will cost. They must have a genuine opportunity to contribute to all important proposals. Any plan proposal which fails to recognize these truths faces a dim and problematic future.

CONSULTANTS

There is no firm formula to use to determine when a consultant should be retained, how they should be selected, and what they should cost. Certain rules of thumb are available in this consideration. First, consultants should not be used in place of a minimum ongoing staff. They should be used to perform work in addition to that which the minimum staff can perform. Second, consultants should not be used to perform the routine day to day kinds of activities which should be expected of the minimum staff. Rather, they should be used to perform those specialized kinds of services which the staff is too small or improperly trained to perform. Third, consultants, should normally be used when there is an especially heavy work load which is expected to be temporary and not of a permanent nature.

The selection of consultants has been much discussed by the various professional societies, and guidelines for selection have been developed by all of them. When regional planning commissions wish to retain planning consultants, it is suggested they follow the procedures recommended by the American Institute of Planners as reproduced, Appendix M.

It is especially emphasized here that professional societies typically prohibit their members from taking contracts which appear to have been let on a bid basis or on the basis of the lowest dollar cost. The intention is that the consultant would be selected on the basis of his qualifications to perform a specific piece of work, and that after he has been selected an appropriate compensation would be negotiated between the consultant and his client. If an agreement cannot be negotiated with the first choice, then another consultant should be selected and the same negotiation procedure should be started again.

PLANNING ASSISTANCE FUNDS

701 Funds - A major source of financial assistance for regional planning is that available from the Department of Housing and Urban Development through the Community Planning Assistance program. These are traditionally referred to as "701" funds, because they were authorized by Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954, and subsequent amendments.

"701" funds can be obtained for comprehensive planning and management assistance through the Planning Division of the Kansas Department of Economic Development. These funds are provided to regional organizations on the basis of a maximum of two dollars of federal money for one dollar of local money. It is distributed to regional commissions on the basis of a priority ranking after a proposed expenditure for regional planning assistance is approved by HUD as a part of the STATE's annual work program. A listing of the major factors considered in establishing funding priorities is included as Appendix N.

Other Funds - While "701" funds do indeed provide a major source of funding for planning assistance, it must be recognized that these funds are too limited to provide all the funds required to meet all demands for assistance. It is obvious that "701" funds are not adequate at any time to provide all the planning assistance funds regional commissions will require for their total planning program over a period of years. Further, such funds cannot be used for certain kinds of detailed planning (such as engineering construction drawings, architectural plans, etc.) with which planning commissions may become involved, or for economic development promotion. Therefore, regional commissions need to look to other sources for planning assistance funds.

FmHA Funds - The Farmer's Home Administration has provided funding for water-sewer planning, but the funds are limited both in quantity and in terms of the geographic area in which they can properly be used. Currently, the entire program is in a state of flux as noted earlier, but when the Rural Development Act is funded by the Congress, this program should once again be of major benefit to many communities in the rural multi-county regional areas. When federal funds were no longer available because they were frozen by the President, recommendation was made to the Governor that some state revenue sharing funds be appropriated for water-sewer purposes. The 1973 session of the legislature subsequently appropriated \$1,000,000 to be used for rural water districts; but none was established for planning.

EPA Funds - Regional commissions in Kansas are almost all concerned with planning for solid waste management to meet the recent mandate of the state legislature. Funding to assist in such planning is available, in some instances, from the Environmental Protection Agency. EPA does have some specific staffing requirements which it imposes on regional commissions using EPA funds; but if these conditions are met, funds can be made available for both the general solid waste planning and the engineering studies required to implement that plan.

HEW Funds - Comprehensive health planning is assisted by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. These funds, administered through the State Department of Health, can be utilized by commissions meeting specific organizational and membership requirements for establishing and continuing a total comprehensive health planning program.

EDA Funds - Areas which have been designated as "depressed" areas with major economic problems can become eligible for economic development planning assistance. Such funding, as a 100% grant, would come from the Economic

Development Administration, again if the commission is properly organized and has the proper membership composition. Designation of such areas in the future is questionable because of the uncertain status of EDA.

USDA-RC&D Funds - The United States Department of Agriculture, through its Soil Conservation Service, funds selected RC&D projects. USDA does not make grants to a commission for these purposes; but rather provides staff and necessary support for the conduct of a program designed as a plan and an action statement related to conservation and development of natural resources. Such a program can provide a very valuable input to a regional planning work program.

LEAA Funds - Funds for Criminal Justice planning are provided to the state criminal justice planning office and are expended by that office on the basis of decisions made by the Governor's Committee on Criminal Administration. Grants can be and are made to regional planning commissions to perform an approved scope of criminal justice planning at the regional level; and these results can be of great value in the total regional work program.

Funds for Aging - Regional planning commissions may be designated as sponsoring organizations of Area Agencies on Aging by the Administration on Aging Section of the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services. This makes such regional commissions eligible for certain planning funds from the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Summary - A regional commission thus must consider possible funding for planning assistance from multiple agencies. The work program of the commission will indicate the work which is needed to be done; and this will dictate the agencies to whom application for assistance can properly be made.