The Land Use Bulletin

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INTRODUCING PAT CANCILLA, FRIEND AND DIRECTOR FROM SOLON, IOWA

✿ Our Family has always been interested in the environment and in older things. We had moved to Iowa from Los Angeles to escape the congestion and sprawl and were fortunate enough to find our idyllic, historic farm on the Iowa River between Iowa City and Cedar Rapids. The farm is 90 acres and lay in a mix of agricultural land, woodland and hills along Coralville Lake. We were wonderfully isolated with Federal Land on two sides of the farm and active agricultural operations on the other two. We felt fortunate indeed, to be in such a rural setting. To complement our environment, we had an 1890 farmhouse that had been used for hay storage to restore and a well preserved corn crib dated at 1909 and a peg and beam constructed barn dated 1913. We were at peace.

✿ Then we discovered that farms next to us were being platted for residential development. In a few years we moved from farms to a semi-urban community with 6 developments touching our farm. How could this be happening? We discovered that when Coralville Lake was established by the Corps of Engineers in 1960, the supervisors had blanket zoned 15,000 acres of agricultural land to residential suburban. The entire North Corridor in which we lived was targeted for development without consideration of the natural environment, preservation of agricultural operations, supporting infrastructure including roads and schools, or the effects of this type of sprawl on water quality or incorporated municipalities.

✿ The seeds were laid for one of the first sprawl communities in Johnson County or possibly the State of Iowa. To compound the problem, in 1978 the supervisors had passed a visionary comprehensive land use plan. It dealt with problems of urban sprawl, agricultural operations, and the preservation of the environment and the rural ambiance. But no ordinances to implement the plan were passed. Nothing was done except to continue development in a random way.

✿ Over the years, we have continued to study the problem and to work with agencies such as the board of supervisors, the zoning commission and the health department to address some of our concerns, to enhance communication, and to preserve the environment and the rural qualities of the area. I am on the board of directors of Environmental Advocates, a member of the Sierra Club and a promoter of conservation lectures and programs. This led me to become a founding member and a member of the Board of Directors of **1000 Friends of Iowa**. The mission of this organization is similar to mine.

✿ Over the years it has been heartening to see a greater awareness develop regarding the effects of urban sprawl, the need to preserve our farmland and the environment, and the plight of some of our urban areas. Through organizations such as **1000 Friends of Iowa**, I feel I am contributing to a greater understanding and to constructive solutions for difficult but important issues that affect us all.

Pat Cancilla

The mission of **1000 Friends of Iowa** is to educate the citizens of our state about the long-term benefits of halting urban sprawl, conserving and protecting our agricultural and natural resources, and revitalizing our urban neighborhoods.

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❖❖❖❖❖ STATE LAND USE COMMISSION UPDATE ❖❖❖❖❖

The State Land Use Commission is scheduled to meet four times over the next two months as it prepares its final recommendations for the 1999 General Assembly. In September, the commission completed a series of ten town meetings held across the state. For the most part, the town meetings were very well attended, with a wide range of issues and concerns being raised.

❖ At the final town meeting in Spirit Lake on September 24, several speakers commented on the recent Iowa Supreme Court ruling regarding the 1982 law providing nuisance suit protection to farmers in designated agricultural areas. While this issue and the related issue of large hog confinements are somewhat beyond the purview of the commission, they certainly involve questions of competing land uses and are likely to receive attention in the next session of the Iowa Legislature.

❖ Another recurring theme at several town meetings was the impact of highway expansion on businesses and farmland. A speaker from Sheldon indicated that 80% of the residents of his city want the DOT to expand Hwy 60 through town so the business district can remain vibrant and healthy. Yet the DOT insists on a bypass. The village of Seney, thirty miles down the road from Sheldon, wants a bypass. But the DOT insists on running the road through town, removing all four of Seney's businesses and 1/3 of its houses.

❖ Adequately addressing the wide range of concerns presented at both the town meetings and at the commission's regular meetings in Des Moines will no doubt be a challenge in which compromise and balance are essential.

❖ Through the Land Use Bulletin, **1000 Friends of Iowa** will keep members abreast of relevant discussions and policy initiatives.

PASSENGER TRAINS TO BOOST IOWA ECONOMY

by Thomas Mathews, Vice-President 1000 Friends of Iowa

The Midwest Regional Rail Initiative, which will establish a passenger rail network including a route from Omaha through Des Moines and on to Chicago, is great news for Iowa's economic development. **1000 Friends of Iowa** strongly supports the rail plan.

Transportation investment is one of the main determiners of how our cities develop. Urban sprawl is not only destroying Iowa's rich farmland and natural areas; it is also causing the decay of our inner cities. In recent decades we have invested heavily in highways, while allowing passenger rail and public transportation to decline. This over-dependence on automobiles has resulted in urban sprawl—spread-out, low density urban areas, where everyone has to drive a car to get anywhere.

In the past, most cities in Iowa were served by passenger trains which brought people, and development, into the downtown areas. Now few cities in Iowa have had passenger rail service for decades. The Midwest Regional Rail Initiative will change that, without taking any farmland out of production—the existing corridor of the Iowa Interstate Railroad line will be upgraded to allow trains to run at up to 110 miles per hour. This rail route will once again be a major carrier of both passengers and freight and will help reduce the congestion on nearby Interstate 80. Also in winter weather that closes airports and makes highways dangerous, the trains can run safely.

The Midwest Regional Rail Initiative is an opportunity to invest in energy-efficient, safe transportation that benefits all Iowans.

ITS NOT TOO LATE TO GET A FARM TOUR

Riding on a combine was a definite highlight of the farm tours being given by 1000 Friends board member, LaVon Griffieon and her husband, Craig. Although the combine has been put in the shed for another year, 1000 Friends members are still encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to visit a working farm sitting precariously close to Ankeny's subdivisions and Polk County's unincorporated development.

Let the Griffieons tell you about their farm and get a rural perspective on land use. Tours will continue while the good weather lasts, so call LaVon at (515)964-0876 to reserve a date.

If you missed combining, you may still get to experience chisel plowing. (And if you don't know what chisel plowing is . . . all the more reason to book a tour!)

(funded by a grant from the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture)

1000 FRIENDS TO RECEIVE KELLOGG FOUNDATION FUNDING

When 1000 Friends board members Ed Fallon and LaVon Griffieon met with a representative from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation last month about developing a video, they never imagined the results would turn out so positive.

"I'd hoped we could perhaps interest them in partially supporting the video," Ed said. "Well, they agreed to fund 100% of the cost . . . and then some."

Richard Foster, the Kellogg Foundation's vice president for programs, indicated the Foundation would fully fund production of a video depicting the impact of urban sprawl on an older neighborhood in Des Moines. LaVon and Ed, who have given about 100 presentations on this issue over the past year, see this new video as an excellent companion to an earlier video they have used extensively in talks across the state. That video was funded by the Kellogg Foundation four years ago and shows the impact of urban sprawl on agriculture.

"This new video will allow audiences to actually get a glimpse of what we're talking about," said LaVon. "While rural Iowa's land use problems are far different from the problems facing urban centers, a common solution is needed. It's going to take mutual understanding of our dependence on each other to make the solution work."

W.K.KELLOGG FOUNDATION

A THREE YEAR COMMITMENT

In addition to funding the video, Kellogg committed $50,000 a year for three years to help 1000 Friends of Iowa direct a targeted urban revitalization project in Des Moines' inner-city. The funding would run from the fall of 1999 through 2002, and it is hoped that this money can help leverage additional resources. Over the next year, specifics of the project will be worked out. The first step is to convene a planning committee of interested stakeholders, and Kellogg will provide an additional $15,000 for this work.

CONSIDER BECOMING A FOUNDING FRIEND

We invite you to become a Founding Friend. Our primary organizational goal over the next year is to enroll 1000 members who each contribute $100 or more and are recognized as Founding Friends. Your contribution is tax-deductible. Please join today.

SOMETHING NEW - A GIFT MEMBERSHIP

This holiday season, buy a special someone something priceless — a brighter future for Iowa! Buy a **1000 Friends of Iowa** gift membership, and we'll send you a special card to give at the holidays announcing your gift.

Clip and mail with your check, payable to **1000 Friends of Iowa**

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I want to join:

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Organization	__ $100	Steward	__ $2500
Founding Friend	**__ $100**	Other	_____

Enclosed is my check totaling $ _____

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1000 Friends Hosting Meeting to Learn about "Growing Smart"℠

APA Is Helping States Reform Their Planning Laws

Stuart Meck, Principal Investigator with the Growing Smart℠ project developed by the American Planning Association, will be meeting with KFOI members and other interested Iowans on November 11 at the Wallace House in Des Moines to talk about land use concerns.

there are no "one size fits all" answers to land use issues

Because every state and region has different needs and problems, there are no "one size fits all" answers to land use issues. In October 1994, APA launched Growing Smart℠, a major initiative to develop new model legislation governing planning and the management of change. The APA calls it "a one-stop shop for key legislative and background materials."

Growing Smart℠ was designed (1) to develop alternative approaches to legislative reform rather than recommending one model code to be adopted by every state and (2) to establish an ongoing capacity to provide useful and timely information to decision makers grappling with the complex issues of statute reform.

If you'd like to know more about the Wallace House visit, call Marcia Martin at 515-279-7058.

To learn more about Growing Smart℠, the APA is sharing much of its information on its WEB site (http://growingsmart@planning.org).

Listen to WHO?

Now, before grammarians everywhere challenge that headline, that's where "Winzenburg on the Weekend" is — on WHO Radio (AM-1040), and that's where LaVon Griffieon will be on Saturday, November 28 at 11:30 a.m..

LaVon will join Steve Winzenburg, host of the WHO Saturday morning radio show, to talk with him about what it's like raising four kids who are the sixth generation of a farm family on a farm threatened by encroaching urban sprawl.

1000 Friends of Iowa encourages everyone to tune in on that busy Thanksgiving weekend to listen to LaVon and get a better understanding of what it's like to be producing the food for which we've just given thanks.

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