

Port Washington — The Ozaukee County Board on Wednesday approved a comprehensive plan that's supposed to help direct the county's development through 2035, but not before some supervisors took a few shots at the state Legislature that mandated the document.

"This was largely a waste of paper," Supervisor Joe Sopko said.

"This is lousy legislation that forced us to do something that we were going to get around to doing eventually," Supervisor David Barrow said.

In 1999, the state Legislature passed the so-called Smart Growth legislation that requires local governments and counties to develop and adopt multi-jurisdictional comprehensive plans. The plans are required to address nine land-use issues and tailor all ordinances to the plans. The elements to be addressed are economic development, intergovernmental cooperation, housing, transportation, utilities, community facilities, and agricultural, natural and cultural resources.

Ozaukee County is the first county in southeast Wisconsin to approve its plan, said county Planner Andrew Struck, who helped oversee the process.

Fourteen Ozaukee County municipalities participated with the county in developing the plan, which was paid for with state grant money. The City of Cedarburg was the lone municipality to opt out of the countywide plan, choosing to do its own independently.

Development of the plan took five years and involved more than 100 volunteers and dozens of public hearings, surveys and other research.

Among the research findings was that 74% of Ozaukee County residents support developing a fund that would pay for preserving woodlands, wetlands and river corridors. About the same number said the county doesn't need any more high-priced luxury homes, while almost half said the county's stock of affordable housing needs to increase.

The plan's recommendations include passage of a county "right-to-farm" ordinance that would protect farmers from nuisance lawsuits and outline a grievance procedure for complaints against agricultural operations.

Supervisor Tom Richart, chairman of the County Board's Comprehensive Planning Board, which oversaw the plan's development, said the process was worthwhile and cost-efficient.

"It was a cooperative effort among all the towns, villages and cities in the county and created some efficiencies in the planning process," he said.

Richart called it a summary of all the community plans in the county, "which will help us in the future with our economic development."

Before the vote, several supervisors complained about the state mandate to pass the plan but acknowledged that they would vote for it since, in effect, they were required to by the state.

Despite the grousing from some supervisors, the plan was approved 28-1, with Barrow casting the negative vote as a protest.

Copyright 2008, Journal Sentinel Inc. All rights reserved. (Note: This notice does not apply to those news items already copyrighted and received through wire services or other media.)

DAN BENSON, Staff, 'After some grousing, Ozaukee adopts Smart Growth plan - State-mandated document called 'waste of paper'', *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (online), 5 Apr 2008 03 <<https://infoweb-newsbank-com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/apps/news/document-view?p=AWNB&docref=news/11FDF17489524AA0>>

Copyright, 2008, Journal Sentinel, All Rights Reserved.