

Fort McCoy Joint Land-Use Study (JLUS) Public Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 15, 2011
6:00 – 8:00 PM
14345 County Highway B, Rolling Hills - Auditorium
Sparta WI 54656

Attendance:

Bob Andersen, Town of New Lyme Planning Commission
Mark Aumann, U.S. Representative Ron Kind's office
Alan Balliett, DPW, Environmental Div., Fort McCoy
Alison Elliott, Monroe County Zoning Department
Linda Fournier, Public Affairs, Fort McCoy
William Gleiz (?), Monroe County Publisher
Randall Heimke, Town of New Lyme
John Hendricks, Sparta Area School District
Doug Path, Monroe County Board and Village of Wilton
Violet Prihoda, member of the public
Brendan Smith, Volk Field
Dick Smith, Town of Lafayette
Cindy Struve, Monroe County Emergency Management Department
Wayne Tuchalski, Town of Little Falls Planning Commission
Tim Wilder, Town of Grant
Richard Yarrington, Monroe County Board

Staff:

Bryan Law, Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC)

1. Welcome and introductions

Richard Yarrington, Monroe County Board Supervisor, introduced himself and Bryan Law from the MRRPC, and welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Monroe County/Fort McCoy Policy Committee. Mr. Yarrington then turned the meeting over to Mr. Law, who asked those in attendance to introduce themselves. After going around the room and getting introductions from each attendee, Mr. Law moved onto the next topic.

2. Minutes from September 27, 2011, meeting

Bryan Law presented the minutes from the Policy Committee meeting of September 27, 2011. He asked those in attendance if there were any corrections that needed to be made. There were none.

3. Re-Cap of purpose and planning process for JLUS – Bryan Law, MRRPC

Bryan Law gave a brief review of the presentation from the meeting of September 27, 2011, for the benefit of any who were not in attendance at that previous meeting. Mr. Law explained that the purpose of the JLUS is to identify any potential incompatible land uses between the military installation and the civilian communities surrounding it, and plan for ways that both the military and the civilian communities can avoid such conflicts and maintain a mutually beneficial relationship. Mr. Law also explained the process by which the JLUS will be written. The Policy Committee was formed by inviting people from key stakeholder organizations and jurisdictions. Their ultimate job would be to approve the JLUS when it is completed. A separate Technical Advisory group (TAG) has been formed of people from the military and civilian organizations who have specific technical knowledge of topics that will be important to include in the JLUS. The Policy Committee is scheduled to meet three more times: in February or March to discuss the draft JLUS; in April or May to conduct a public input meeting for the draft JLUS; and in June or July to consider adoption of the final JLUS.

4. Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) process from last meeting – Bryan Law, MRRPC

Bryan Law explained the results of the SWOT exercise and the public comments gathered from the September 27, 2011, meeting. Mr. Law identified the following themes that emerged from the participants' input:

Strengths:

- Connectivity (infrastructure; openness of the fort; good relationship between fort and communities [joint training, mutual response agreements])
- Economy (attractive community to live, work, play, and raise kids; civic pride; buy-local effort; fort responsible for majority of economic activity)
- People (strong work ethic; well-trained; diversity growing because of the Fort)

Weaknesses:

- Infrastructure (civilian transportation through the fort is uncontrolled; interstate separates training areas at the fort; increased traffic, and thus increased noise and vibrations, from sand mining; location of power lines)

Opportunities:

- Fort McCoy as major economic driver (recruitment tool; raises profile of communities nation-wide; Fort is adaptable to new training configurations; joint training with Volk Field and civilian emergency responders)

Threats:

- Defense Department uncertainty (budget is decreasing, but by how much?; another round of BRAC?; Fort McCoy might be a target for terrorism)

- Economic pressures (agriculture is affected by aviation[livestock can react unfavorably to the noise, and organic farming might be affected by fuel dripping from aircraft]; as population grows, residential and business development pressures increase; increase in sand mining brings any number of transportation problems)

Mr. Law asked the Policy Committee for any further input or identification of overall themes for the SWOT analysis. None were suggested, but Mr. Law said that Committee members should feel free to contact him with any further input they might have.

5. Report on November 3, 2011, meeting of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) – Bryan Law, MRRPC

Bryan Law reported that the TAG met on November 3, 2011. This group went through a list of topics that are typically included in JLUSs, based on a review of several other such studies. At the meeting, Mr. Law asked the TAG to suggest any other topics that should be included, and especially sources of data for them. This list of topics was distributed to the Policy Committee, and is included as Appendix A of these minutes. Mr. Law reviewed the list for the Policy Committee, and asked if its members had input. One suggestion was that existing comprehensive plans in the area could provide much of the information for some topics, and that some townships had their own plans, while other townships' plans were contained in the Monroe County comprehensive plan. Another suggestion was that the topic about Ft. McCoy's economic impact should focus not just on what personnel from the installation spend in the surrounding communities, but also on the opportunities for economic expansion that the Fort makes available, particularly recreation, entertainment (concerts, etc.), and public use of the Fort's facilities (for hunting, skiing, etc.).

Mr. Law then noted that the next meeting of the TAG is scheduled for December 8, 2011. The TAG suggested that one way to get more support and participation from some of the townships would be to hold that meeting at one of the town halls. Mr. Law planned on trying to secure one of the town halls as a meeting place for the next TAG meeting.

6. Preliminary recommendations for JLUS – Bryan Law, MRRPC

Bryan Law presented a list of potential recommendations for the JLUS, based on the type of recommendations included in other JLUSs. Mr. Law explained that these recommendations were not definitely going to be included in the Ft. McCoy/Monroe County JLUS, and that other recommendations were not necessarily going to be excluded from it. This list was just to give the Policy Committee an idea of the type of recommendations that might result from the research undertaken for this study. This list also serves as a guide for the JLUS research. This list of Preliminary Recommendations is included as Appendix B of these minutes.

Mr. Law asked the Policy Committee for any considerations they would like to add to this list of potential recommendations. One suggestion was that the efforts to improve communication, coordination, or collaboration should include having a representative from the military as a non-voting,

informative member of planning commissions – and that this is required by state statutes now. Another suggestion was that the effect of explosives on humans and animals be included in the research for this JLUS. Another suggestion was that the JLUS make recommendations for preserving sensitive environmental areas from activities at Ft. McCoy. Another suggestion was that low-level flights over urban areas be studied, and recommendations made regarding them.

7. Questions and comments

A spirited discussion ensued about Ft. McCoy activities and their effect on undeveloped land surrounding the Fort. Some in attendance were unsatisfied with Ft. McCoy's willingness to collaborate with civilian communities, and characterized leadership at the Fort as being historically antagonistic to questions and scrutiny from outside the Fort. Others in attendance pointed out that this JLUS process was an attempt to foster more openness, cooperation, and collaboration between Ft. McCoy and its civilian neighbors.

Some general comments were made about trying to get more participation on the Policy Committee from the townships east of Ft. McCoy. Bryan Law said that every effort has been made to get them to attend, but that he could focus special attention on getting them to attend further meetings. Tim Wilder, from the Town of Grant, said that he would have attended the first meeting, but had not heard about it.

Another comment was made about how land use conflicts between military and civilian uses were similar to conflicts that arise out of residential encroachment on farmland. That is, as housing is built on more and more undeveloped land, more and more residents begin living closer to farms that have been operating for many generations. Some of these new residents, however, have an inaccurate concept of farming, and do not understand that living near agricultural uses means being subjected to higher levels of noise, odors, and dust than they anticipated. From time to time, these new residents make complaints about the agricultural activities that had never bothered anyone in generations past, simply because no one lived close enough to the activity to be bothered by it. In the same way, Ft. McCoy has been in Monroe County for over 100 years, but increasing residential and business development pressures could produce conflict in the future. This JLUS is intended to be a useful way to avoid such conflicts.

8. Next meeting date to review draft JLUS

The next meeting date for the Policy Committee was set for March 6, 2012, at 6:00 p.m. Alison Elliott said she would try to book the same auditorium for the next meeting.

Appendix A

Ft. McCoy/Monroe County Joint Land Use Study (JLUS)
Technical Advisory Group Meeting
November 3, 2011

Topics to Include in JLUS:

History and background on Ft. McCoy and surrounding areas

Source: Monroe County All-Hazards plan has good information for this section; also, look at comprehensive plans and other documents from local governments, Ft. McCoy, and other organizations

Demographics, economic data, and growth patterns in areas surrounding Ft. McCoy

Sources: US Census; Bureau of Labor Statistics, etc.

Study goals

Source: other JLUSs will provide guidance; goals for this JLUS will be project-driven and defined by the research and public input

Defining the planning area and existing conditions

Sources: DNR plan for Black River State Forest; Town of Grant plan for County forest; other comprehensive plans for the area (County, cities, towns); Ft. McCoy documentation

Description of Planning Committee and Technical Advisory Group

Source: members of both groups are welcome to provide descriptions of themselves or their organizations; otherwise, we will include basic information, such as name, title, and organization (most participants are from organizations that are obvious or self-explanatory)

Description of public input meetings and opportunities

Source: records we have kept, such as agendas, notes, etc.

Economic impact of Ft. McCoy on surrounding areas

Source: Ft. McCoy has good information on this; it will be useful to compare FY2012 to FY2002 and earlier, to see what the future might bring with reduced mission

Description of Ft. McCoy's current mission

Source: Ft. McCoy

Description of Ft. McCoy's anticipated future mission(s)

Source: Ft. McCoy

Inventory of Ft. McCoy's facilities, training areas, etc.

Source: Ft. McCoy; in addition to any internal information the fort is willing/able to provide, the Ft. McCoy Noise Plan will have good information on this

Description of undeveloped areas around Ft. McCoy

Source: area comprehensive plans, land use maps, etc.; Wisconsin Department of Transportation will have information on weight limits for highways in the area, and possibly some information on how frac sand mining will affect railroad and truck transportation – look into the 6-year plan for Monroe County

Description of Ft. McCoy's operational impacts on surrounding areas (for example: noise, vibrations, dust, etc.) – including proposed changes in the future

Source: Ft. McCoy; in addition to any internal information the fort is willing/able to provide, the Ft. McCoy Noise Plan will have good information on this

Description of compatibility issues concerning land use in civilian areas surrounding Ft. McCoy – including future trends

Source: area comprehensive plans, land use maps, etc.

Description of mitigation efforts the Fort and surrounding communities can undertake (for example, zoning that recognizes noise contours, accident prevention zones, Installation Operational Noise Management Plan, Sustainable Range Program, etc.)

Source: other JLUSs will provide guidance; recommendations for this JLUS will be project-driven and defined by the research and public input

Land use compatibility tools (for example: conservation of undeveloped land through easements or land trusts; land use guidelines; zoning ordinances; attenuation (sound-reduction) as part of building codes; disclosure of impacts to buyers or renters; impact of new infrastructure on development pressures; collaboration between military and local governments; clustering/transfer of development rights; noise mitigation;)

Source: other JLUSs will provide guidance; recommendations for this JLUS will be project-driven and defined by the research and public input

Other efforts at compatibility (for example: maintaining the Policy Committee after the JLUS is completed to improve communication and collaboration; updating comprehensive plans to include JLUS recommendations; improved communication to the public through websites, posters, brochures, etc.; several of these efforts can be formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding)

Source: other JLUSs will provide guidance; recommendations for this JLUS will be project-driven and defined by the research and public input

Identify areas of concern – those areas where incompatibility can be predicted if measures are not taken now to address them

Source: other JLUSs will provide guidance; recommendations for this JLUS will be project-driven and defined by the research and public input

In appendix, provide sample materials (for example: memorandum of understanding; comprehensive plan language; noise easement; real estate disclosure)

Source: other JLUSs will provide guidance; recommendations for this JLUS will be project-driven and defined by the research and public input

Appendix B

Preliminary Recommendation Categories for Monroe County/Ft. McCoy Joint Land Use Study (JLUS)

These recommendation categories are based on those that appear in other JLUSs and the themes that emerged from a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis conducted at the September 27, 2011, Policy Committee meeting. At this early stage of the process, fully written recommendations cannot be written, since the research phase has only just begun. But these recommendation categories can guide the research and data-gathering that must go into the JLUS process.

1. Air Safety Land Use Guidelines – Limiting the number, type, and concentration of structures near airfields and runways
2. Clustering or Transfer of Development Rights – Strategy in which residential areas, especially new subdivisions, are built with higher than usual density in a smaller part of the tract, while leaving a large area of land undeveloped
3. Communication – A formal mechanism is established which the military and local government can make information available to businesses and the public, and which the military can use to receive information from the civilian communities
4. Comprehensive Plan – Local governments would incorporate recommendations and other conflict-avoidance language from the JLUS in their comprehensive plans
5. Conservation and Noise Easements – Eliminate land use conflicts through voluntary real estate transactions
6. Coordinating Committee – Members of the JLUS planning process committees would remain in contact with each other several times a year so that both military and civilian organizations are aware of what the other is doing
7. Coordination – The military and civilian communities would share information on development, expansions, etc.
8. Infrastructure – One consideration about building new infrastructure should be how it would affect areas of possible land use conflict with the installation
9. Land Use Regulations (Zoning) – Legislation that limits or prevents incompatible land uses in specific areas
10. Memorandum of Understanding – Document that formalizes the good faith efforts at collaboration and communication among the parties that sign it

11. Noise Mapping – The military can provide the civilian communities with an accurate description of noise activities at the installation
12. Noise Mitigation – The military can move operations to a less noise-sensitive area, or can install structures that reduce the noise that travels off the installation
13. Real Estate Disclosure – Legislation that requires that buyers or renters of real estate be informed of possible impacts from the installation
14. Sound Attenuation – Building design that reduces sound penetration; would be part of building codes