

In Recognition and Appreciation. . .

This report is the culminant expression of a rather remarkable and successful experiment in citizen participation in government process. Initially proposed by Sangamon County Board resolution and eventually endorsed by 62% of the county electorate, the Citizens' Efficiency Commission (CEC) was charged to examine local governments at all levels with the end in view of identifying and recommending changes in process, structure and resource allocation that would result in more efficient and effective delivery of government services.

In itself, this charge is both daring and daunting in scope. Though the report will provide the particulars, it is appropriate to note here that local government in Sangamon County is complex, varied and often overwhelmingly confusing to citizens. In this context, 23 unpaid volunteers, selected by local governments, were tasked with unraveling the complexity, understanding the variety and reducing the confusion to find ways to make government better.

Collectively, we 23 members of the CEC found it easy to say what we thought might make government better, but found it very difficult to demonstrate clearly that our notions were correct. From the outset, it was clear that, were our recommendations to be taken seriously, they must be well formulated and well grounded in the best information and research available.

The Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission provided the professional staff and expertise required to conduct the research and ground CEC recommendations in solid information. In addition, the staff and its able leadership provided access to local government process and venues that, left to its own efforts, might well have been inaccessible to the CEC. But perhaps most importantly, the Regional Planning Commission staff brought with it an intractable commitment to quality in all its endeavors.

Justifiably, we Commissioners take pride in the commitment, work and recommendations that we present in this report. However, we note here that without Norm Sims, Executive Director of the Planning Commission, and his capable and imaginative leadership in this project, the recommendations presented in this report would have been considerably reduced in scope. Without Jeff Fulgenzi, Planning Commission staff assigned to the CEC, and his tenacious commitment to clarity, our recommendations would have been considerably reduced in impact. Without Amy Uden, Planning Commission staff assigned to the CEC, and her nimble understanding of various ways to improve efficiency, our recommendations would have been considerably less flexible and imaginative.

It is imperative that other jurisdictions considering efforts similar to that undertaken by the CEC understand that, in the absence of professional staff of the caliber made available to us, the effort is likely to produce only mediocre results if not outright failure.

We, the members of the Citizens' Efficiency Commission, recognize the efforts of the Springfield and Sangamon County Planning Commission leadership and staff and sincerely appreciate the value their work has given to ours.



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