

Springfield Township
Planning Commission – Business Meeting
Minutes April 19, 2010

Call to Order: Chair John Steckling called the April 19, 2010 Business Meeting of the Springfield Township Planning Commission to order at 7:30 p.m. at the Springfield Township Civic Center, 12000 Davisburg Road, Davisburg, MI 48350.

Attendance:

Commissioners Present:

Ruth Ann Hines
Bill Leddy
John Steckling
Neil Willson
Dean Baker

Commissioners Absent:

Frank Aiello
Roger Lamont

Staff Present

Mike Trout, Supervisor
Laura Moreau, Clerk

Consultants Present

Brian Oppmann

Approval of Agenda: Approved.

Public Comment: None.

Consent Agenda:

Commissioner Baker moved to approve the minutes of the March 15, 2010 meeting as presented. Support by Commissioner Willson. Vote on the motion: Ayes: Leddy, Steckling, Baker, Willson, Hines. Nays: None. Absent: Aiello, Lamont. Motion Carried.

Public Hearing: None.

Old Business:

1. Dixie Corridor Update-letter/memo from Dick Carlisle.

Mr. Oppmann stated that the memo was a status report showing that the Corridor Update would be expanded to include the Bordine's property and other property in that general vicinity. Now, Carlisle is working on a comprehensive plan and drawing which will include the Saturn dealership and Redico property. This plan and drawing will be available at next month's meeting. He stated that the drawing will not be as specific; it will be more general and will outline uses of the property.

2. Amendments to Zoning Ordinance #26-Temporary Signs.

Commissioner Steckling stated that last month there were comments proposed by Collin Walls and at that time the issue was tabled. Mr. Oppmann stated that Mr. Wall's comments and the responses to the comments were summarized in a letter from Dick Carlisle which was present in all of the Commissioners' packets. He stated that all of Mr. Walls comments were addressed. Mr. Wall's first comment was, "Would permits be required for temporary signs?" The intent behind this was to have the Township issue permits for temporary signs. He stated that to get a temporary sign permit, the requestor would come to the Supervisor's office and fill out a permit, just like a regular sign. The second question was "Why require notice to the property owner when temporary signs are removed when notice is not required for any other violating sign?" Mr. Oppmann stated that the purpose of the provision is to allow the applicant to receive a permitted temporary sign from the Township. When time limit expired, the Township would send out a letter informing the sign owner. This allows the Township to be courteous to someone who is following the rules. For illegal signs the Ordinance currently states that the Township can just remove the sign without any notice. The third comment was "How does the Township determine when the 14 day period starts? Does the person putting up the sign put the date on the sign?" Mr. Oppmann stated that the date of the permit date should be the date that the 14 day period starts. The applicant could negotiate a later start date if needed.

Mr. Trout stated that the Township should look for some way to put the date on the sign to make it easier for the Ordinance officer to identify.

Mr. Oppmann stated that there is a section in the Ordinance that requires that the Planning Commission approve signs as part of a site plan. He stated that temporary signs are excluded. Collin Wall's interpretation is that this is for developments that require site plan approval. Mr. Walls noted that there might be instances that a development has a temporary sign without site plan approval. It makes sense to add this to the provision. Right now new developments subject to site plan review under the provisions of Section 16.07 must include a comprehensive sign plan including ground, wall, and directional sign locations. Any signs, other than directional signs, not included in the comprehensive sign plan at time of approval are subject to Planning Commission approval. Mr. Walls stated that the Planning Commission should be approving these signs. Mr. Oppmann explained it has been added that directional signs and temporary signs are excluded so it will avoid any confusion.

Mr. Walls pointed out that there is a section on prohibited temporary signs in the Ordinance right now and portable signs are listed as prohibited. Mr. Oppmann agreed that this is a valid point that needs to be clarified. In the copy provided, under number 3, under Portable signs, it was added, "except those permitted in Temporary Sign section." Temporary signs are not included with the other portable signs. Mr. Walls' next point stated that the proposal allows temporary

signs on vacant property, but current Ordinance requires all signs to direct attention to business on a property and that this is the intent of the sign section. Brian Oppmann does not necessarily agree with the interpretation of this language. He stated that if you keep reading this section 16.07(2)(a), it states that “all signs must direct attention to a business or profession conducted on the premises, or to a commodity, service, entertainment primarily sold.... thereon.” He stated that it is their opinion that temporary signs could be permitted on vacant property. For example, if there was a transient sales permit for a road side stand, they would want to have a temporary sign associated with that use. He stated that he believes that this would be permitted. The last comment was “civic event and similar signs must be removed in three days” according to the new ordinance. Mr. Oppmann stated that the provision of the temporary sign section allows more days before it has to be removed. He does not believe it conflicts, but he agrees that it is different. Mr. Oppmann agrees that it makes sense to make sure all of the cross-references are correct in the sign section.

Commissioner Baker stated that he appreciates Collin Walls’ comments and that he took the time to put together the comments and suggestions. He also thanked Brian for taking the time to review them and making sure that we are consistent in our application.

Clerk Moreau questioned why the temporary sign provisions would not apply to a civic organization. She asked whether this would apply to a civic function, or just businesses.

Mr. Oppmann stated that the intent of the ordinance was civic event, meaning a Township function. He stated that he looked at the definitions, and the activities in this section refer to garage sales and civic functions; those are not activities that fall under the Temporary Signs. He stated that temporary signs are primarily for businesses. He stated that we regulate real estate signs in the ordinance and civic signs are regulated.

Supervisor Trout stated that regular civic signs are not regulated, but they are allowed for 3 days. He stated that these provisions are for anything that is over 3 days.

Clerk Moreau stated that a church function would fall under the temporary sign ordinance. She questioned if the Heritage Festival held by Parks and Recreation would fall under the temporary sign ordinance.

Supervisor Trout questioned if we should be more specific and define “civic activities”.

Mr. Oppmann stated that the ordinance regulates for civic organizations when the signs are taken down. He stated that Townships can have their signs up as long as they want. He stated that Townships are exempt from the Ordinance. He stated

that that the Ordinance is stating for civic signs once the event is over; they have to come down in 3 days. He stated that the temporary sign ordinance allows five days before they have to be removed. He stated that he could not remember exactly, the section was not right in front of him. He stated that Collin Walls was concerned because you are saying in one section that it has to be down in three days, but in temporary signs, it is not the same.

Commissioner Hines concurred that the Ordinance regulates that the sign can be up for an extended period of time, but it needs to come down within 3 days of the event.

Commissioner Leddy recommended that the types are defined in the beginning of the Ordinance and also add the words that say 3 days after the conclusion of the event.

Supervisor Trout stated that we could specify the civic events, and then list them.

Mr. Oppmann stated that he will look at the definitions and see if there is a way that they can be clarified. He stated that if you look at section 16.07.2.e(5) and read that, this is the area that classifies civic event signs. He stated that these are signs that are exempt from permit.

Clerk Moreau stated that she did not interpret it to mean that it has to be down within 3 days of the event occurring, but that it can only be up for 3 days. She stated that she will go back and read it again for clarification.

Mr. Oppmann apologized for his answer being confusing.

Commissioner Hines questioned if when the Ordinances get codified that the sign provisions would then be consistent.

Mr. Oppmann stated that the codification process will hopefully point out some of these inconsistencies and it will assist the Township in correcting them. He stated that it will also reorganize the Ordinance so that the sign section and the entire Ordinance reads clearly.

Commissioner Leddy moved to table the temporary sign ordinance and allow Mr. Oppmann to review and make necessary changes. Support by Commissioner Hines. Vote on the motion: Ayes: Leddy, Steckling, Baker, Willson, Hines. Nays: None. Absent: Aiello, Lamont. Motion Carried.

3. Safety path committee discussion.

Supervisor Trout stated that he provided a handout of the current progress on the Safety Path Committee. He stated that the first meeting was taking place on April

20th. He attached a draft agenda for the meeting and a tentative attendance list. He stated that everyone that was invited was attending the meeting. He stated that the purpose of the meeting was to look at ideas. He stated that he will show the presentation because the school administrators had not yet seen it. He stated that meetings would be scheduled for once a month and through these meetings, a plan could be formed. He stated that Commissioner Willson was the Planning Commission representative.

4. Davisburg lumberyard discussion.

Supervisor Trout showed a presentation consisting of 5 slides which summarized some of the issues present with the lumberyard property. He stated that the lumberyard and car wash were important factors, but he also wanted to look at the larger picture of Downtown Davisburg and the next step in the process. He stated that each slide could be an individual discussion, but he felt it was important to look at all issues. He stated that there are currently some properties that were operating faulty septic systems.

Mrs. Walls stated that there was property behind the storefront that was deeded to the store and everyone else was ordered to move their septic fields on their property. She stated that there was only one who refused.

Supervisor Trout stated that current easement documents could not be found for this area.

Mrs. Diana Walls stated that it was present in the title work. She stated that she could provide the liber and page.

Supervisor Trout stated that the current field should not be allowed to be in the current state of disrepair that it is. He stated that we could possibly give this property owner the option to tie into something bigger. Parking is also an issue in the Downtown area; possibly the lumberyard could be used for parking. He stated we should look at how this ties into Broadway. The initial plan is to tear down the storage buildings and save the third building. He questioned the Commissioners for their thoughts.

Commissioner Baker stated that he does not have a lot of knowledge about this piece of property. He questioned if it would be valuable to visit the site as a group. He questioned how much of the site could be used for sanitary use. He stated that there are many items that need to be addressed, but he would need more information to offer ideas and opinions.

Supervisor Trout stated that this is why he put a presentation together so that he could list the issues that should be touched upon, that nothing was left out.

Commissioner Hines questioned if the access to the property was only off of Andersonville Road, or does it go out onto Broadway.

Supervisor Trout stated that the property does not directly touch Broadway, but that two easement areas do allow the connection from Broadway to Andersonville; he provided a map of the area to further define roadways and frontage.

Supervisor Trout stated that the uses would be important for the property. Some possible uses could be a fire station, public works building, public parking or perhaps a mix of office and residential. He questioned if there was ever direct access from Andersonville Road.

Mrs. Diana Walls stated that yes, there was direct access off of Andersonville Road, and this was where the weigh station was located.

Supervisor Trout stated that questions needed to be answered about the car wash property regarding whether to operate it as a car wash and open to the public. There was a proposal from Broadway Auto to use the car wash as a prep area for their cars. The Township Board elected to wait and get more information about the septic system, well, and other utilities. He stated that this would be a short term lease and that the renter would be willing to do some aesthetic improvements and signage, but this was still undecided. He stated that many people seemed to use the car wash when it was there. He stated that there were a few options. He stated that the dumpster behind the buildings on Broadway is located in the roadway, perhaps an area could be created to house these dumpsters that was screened.

Supervisor Trout stated that we need to come up with more suggestions of how to do the overlay zoning and what would be allowed. He questioned if we wanted to look further down Davisburg toward Tindall to look at those homes being of more commercial type use, and would the parking issues be able to be addressed. He stated that pedestrian issues need to be addressed.

Supervisor Trout stated that he would like to put all of these ideas into plans that have alternatives and items that can actually be evaluated. He stated that the key factor was funding. He stated that he has been talking to SEMCOG and Carlisle Wortman to look at different types of grants and other funding opportunities.

Commissioner Leddy stated that we should have a master plan, or site plan for the property before it is leased because it could cause future problems. He said possibly it could be leased on a month-by-month basis, with the idea that it could change if the site plan was approved for that area.

Commissioner Willson stated that has not walked the property. He asked Supervisor Trout about specific details about the topography of the property.

Supervisor Trout stated that there are low areas, swampy areas that drain into the Mill Pond. He stated that we have begun clearing the open areas and the area will be further cleared on April 24th. Supervisor Trout invited the Commissioners to visit the property on that day. He questioned if we wanted to use the lumberyard as a base for Parks, or a Fire Station.

Commissioner Willson questioned how much of the property would be taken up by community septic.

Supervisor Trout stated that the drain field can be under parking areas according to the Water Resource Commission. He stated that we should work on balancing the site and determining what parts should be public and what parts for development areas.

Commissioner Hines stated that there is a very steep slope.

Commissioner Hines questioned why the Township wanted to buy the property.

Supervisor Trout stated to address all of the items that were listed on the first slide: sanitary, safety, parking issues, and to give the Township control over how that area would develop.

Commissioner Hines stated that the reasons behind buying the property could be the priorities of usage for the property.

Supervisor Trout agreed that numerous site plan alternatives need to be presented.

Commissioner Hines stated that we would need to come up with a priority list of what should be done there, and then figure out what to do with the property that remains.

Clerk Moreau stated that the Davisburg Clean up event on Saturday, April 24th is to clean up the area and make it safe.

Commissioner Baker questioned if there was a septic on site right now.

Supervisor Trout pointed out the septic area on the map. He stated that it is recently updated and supports only one bathroom. He questioned Diana Walls on the age of the system.

Diana Walls stated that she believes the septic was done ten to twelve years ago.

Commissioner Baker questioned if there was some type of sanitary system that supports the Downtown businesses.

Diana Walls responded no; each business has their individual system. She stated that they are all on their own property except the party store which is deeded an area on the Township property. She pointed the area out on the map.

Commissioner Baker questioned the car wash sanitary system.

Diana Walls stated that the car wash has its own system; a two tank system with a field. She said there are two holes on each side to take care of the sludge generated by the car wash.

Supervisor Trout stated that the car wash has its own well.

Commissioner Leddy stated that some alternative site plans should be formulated for this area. He stated that parking would be important; perhaps to have a retaining wall with parking along it. He stated that a drain field below it would be advantageous. He stated that there could be a smaller area for stores; possibly a pedestrian walkway. He stated that the Township should also look at the back of the storefronts along Broadway. The back of the storefronts could be improved and be brought up to the point where they could be rented.

Commissioner Steckling stated that the septic and sanitary would be the primary use of the property. He stated that he would be curious how much it would cost in terms of implementation and how much of that the business owners would be able to sustain. If there was a compelling municipal use for the facility; for fire department or parks and recreation he would consider this. He stated that he would be more inclined to defer the property to a private developer and let them take it over rather than take on an additional property that the Township owns. He stated that this is beyond our scope. He also stated that if the sludge pits from car wash are being dumped, it is class 2 industrial waste and is a concern.

Supervisor Trout stated that we have to determine the capacity that we need and what would need to be added for future use. He stated that we definitely need to look at the central business district as being a part of the septic.

Commissioner Steckling stated that we should not try to plan the treatment for too large a development. He stated that he believes you could add a lot of capacity without a lot of land; it had to do with how clean the discharge water could be and how much distance was available before the Mill Pond area. He stated that there are a lot of options available.

Supervisor Trout stated that he could share the presentation and he would provide an additional report. He stated he has numerous documents and studies; some very current and some very old which all has value. He stated that we need to have a plan for Davisburg and the property is a principal part of that plan. He stated that he will keep the Commissioners up to date on the property and he would be happy to walk the Commissioners through the property.

Commissioner Baker questioned the extent of the fire station property and its use.

Supervisor Trout stated if the fire station property could provide a spot for the community septic system; this was another option. He pointed out additional options for parking areas on the map.

Commissioner Baker stated that if the sanitary problems were addressed, the property becomes much more viable.

Supervisor Trout stated some optional areas for a walking trail.

New Business: None.

Other Business:

1. Priority Task List.

Supervisor Trout stated that he is currently looking at the Environmental Standards for Site Plan Review document from April 1994. He stated that it is full of useful information especially to update references. He stated that it is also applicable for the work that is being done on Dixie. He stated that it could be part of the information given to developers. He stated that it needs to be updated.

Commissioner Steckling stated that the first four items are completed. He stated that the multiple zoned parcels within the Dixie overlay district is still pending.

Mr. Oppmann stated that this is addressed as part of the Dixie Corridor study.

Supervisor Trout stated that churches in office zoning still needs to be addressed; it is currently not allowed.

Commissioner Steckling stated that two planning studies were looked at tonight. He stated that the signalization will be looked at soon for the Dixie Davisburg intersection item. He stated that motion language has been on the list for a while; he said he is still waiting for Mr. Oppmann to give the Commission some key words.

Supervisor Trout asked if Commissioner Steckling could send the sample language to him.

2. CIP

Supervisor Trout stated that several items need to be looked at in 2010. He stated that he is looking at putting a maintenance building to house vehicles and

equipment items. He stated that the Township is taking over all snow plowing this year. He stated that the Mill Pond area is full. This property is located at the civic center.

Public Comment:

Adjournment:

Commissioner Steckling adjourned the meeting at 8:30 pm.

Erin Mattice, Recording Secretary