

Springfield Township
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes February 18, 2014

Call to Order: Chairperson Baker called the February 18, 2014 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:

Dean Baker
Ruth Ann Hines
Dave Hopper
Bill Leddy
Kevin Sclesky
Linda Whiting
Neil Willson

Commissioners Absent

Consultants Present

Doug Lewan, Planner, Carlisle Wortman Associates

Staff Present

Collin W. Walls, Supervisor
Laura Moreau, Clerk

Approval of Agenda:

Commissioner Hines moved to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Leddy. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Leddy, Sclesky, Whiting, Willson. Voted no: None. Absent: None. Motion Carried.

Public Comment: None

Consent Agenda:

1. Minutes of the January 21, 2014 Joint Planning Commission and Township Board meeting

Commissioner Willson moved to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2014 meeting as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Whiting. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Leddy, Sclesky, Whiting, Willson. Voted no: None. Absent: None. Motion Carried.

Public Hearing: None

New Business:

1. Administrative Site Plan Approval

Supervisor Walls stated that he discovered after he did his first administrative review of a site plan under the most recent amendment, that there already was an administrative review in the ordinance when the recent amendment was adopted. He does not know what prompted the 2011 amendment, but there are 3 separate administrative review provisions in the ordinance. There is duplication and conflict present and Supervisor Walls suggested that no one person should have the authority to revise a site plan. This is allowed by one of the site plan administrative reviews present in the ordinance. He stated that he was not comfortable with it and he did not do it until after he had it reviewed by both the Township Attorney and Township Planner. He requested that this item be placed on the priority list and the Planning Commission take a look at this item. They recently did a review using the PUD Committee and it worked very well.

Commissioner Baker stated that there are 3 methods of administrative review that need to be brought together and have the necessary checks and balances placed. He concurred and suggested that they put it on the priority list to look at how to align and consolidate these references. He asked if there was a site plan committee right now.

Supervisor Walls answered that the committee was decided upon for both the PUD and Site Plan Committee by the Township Board. It consists of either the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Planning Commission, either the Clerk or Supervisor from the Township Board and Dave Hopper who can represent either. From this group, they should be able to get 3 people to participate.

Mr. Lewan stated that the idea of administrative review is common in most communities and it allows the Zoning Administrator to review minor changes without going before the Planning Commission. There is some benefit for keeping some administrative review in the ordinance but admitted that it currently is very confusing. He stated that enabling legislation supports administrative review. He agreed that the current language needs to be tightened up and the idea that it will go to a committee instead of an individual person is how he will direct his review.

Commissioner Leddy asked is there language that defines the committee.

Supervisor Walls answered that it is in the minutes of that Township Board meeting.

Commissioner Hopper reviewed the current administrative review language. He stated that 10,000 square feet is not a minor change.

Supervisor Walls stated that the most illogical is the 2011 amendment but the others need work too.

Commissioner Baker stated that there is agreement that there is a need to visit the conflicting sections of the ordinance and make modifications and alignments. He stated

that they need to narrow down what body would be responsible for the administrative changes.

Commissioner Hines asked if they were going to leave it to Mr. Lewan to provide language. She asked if they were going in the direction that some changes could be reviewed by the Zoning Administrator and others would be handled by a committee.

Commissioner Baker stated that they should take into account that the current Zoning Administrator which is the Supervisor, does not want to be individually responsible for approval, so they should go in the direction of approval by a committee. This should be the recommendation.

Supervisor Walls stated that in a committee there is more than one set of eyes looking at the revisions and this is what he recommends.

Mr. Lewan stated that he would bring new language back to the Commission.

Old Business:

- 1. Strategic Plan Update**
 - a. Target Areas for Public Comment**
 - b. Sub-Area Map**
 - c. Date for Public Visioning Session**
 - d. Launch date for MI Community Remarks web page**

Mr. Lewan stated that at the Joint meeting a lot of different concerns and ideas were discussed. He used this information and tried to come up with target area statements with descriptions and questions. The purpose of the Joint meeting was to identify target areas of concern. He stated that now the Planning Commission can comment on the target areas that he came up with. He stated that the major topics will be used as primary topics for the public to comment on. These would be used both through a public visioning session and also through the MI Community Remarks website. He would like to organize the public visioning session so people can float between topics allowing them to comment on each comment. The Community Remarks website is a virtual visioning session so residents who cannot make the visioning session can still provide comments. The questions are leading questions for the residents who will be commenting. This is phase 1 of the Strategic Plan and part one of the Future Land Use Plan. He stated that these are typical topics but are different than what they used before. The topics are more economic development oriented. In the past, the general topics were more oriented toward Natural Feature Preservation.

The first topic is Residential Land Use Population and the response question is, "What goals with regard to residential growth should we be following?" The next topic is Community Vitality and the response question is, "Should the Township be conveying our quality of life as a way to spur new opportunities for the community?" The next topic is Sewer and Water opportunities which is a work in progress as they continue with the Dixie Highway Utility Study with the question being "What approach should the

Township take in addressing the provision of sewer and water service?” This item will probably expand quite a bit when they get the Utility Study back. The fourth topic is Development and Redevelopment Opportunities and the question is, “with the understanding that municipal services are not available to these areas, what growth is realistic? What types of growth would be beneficial to Springfield Township residents?” In this section, he divided the Township into several areas, Dixie Highway-South, Dixie Highway-North and Downtown Davisburg. He mentioned the uniqueness of each of these areas. The next topic is Recreational Opportunities and two questions are associated with this topic, “What facilities do you use and/or would like to see provided/improved?” and “Should the provision of pedestrian non-motorized transportation remain a priority? If a priority, where should we concentrate our efforts?” The topic of non-motorized transportation seemed to be an important topic at the Joint meeting. The next topic is Land Use Issues/Opportunities and the input question is, “Provide input on future direction or preservation for these areas.” He stated that the connection to the map that is mentioned in the draft should probably be eliminated. The next topic is Natural Feature Preservation and the question is “What is important to you, and how can the Township’s effort address you Natural Feature Preservation concerns?” The last topic is General Land Use or Planning Comments or Concerns and the question is, “In addition to these topics, are there other planning/land use concerns that should be addressed by the Township to help ensure our future success?” He stated that after Planning Commission comment and review, they will use these as topics for feedback on the Community Rewards website and would also be used for the visioning session. He asked if they could save the map he provided for the second half of the discussion of this meeting.

Commissioner Sclesky asked Mr. Lewan about the website, what it looks like and whether or not it is user friendly.

Mr. Lewan stated that the Commissioners can view a sample at the Carlisle Wortman website which is cwaplan.com. The Commissioners can also go to the Scio Township website in Washtenaw County which is another community that he works in and has set up this tool for their use. The web address is sciotownship.org and there is a link on the home page for the Community Remarks tool. He described how the website works and how a resident uses it. He stated that whenever a new comment is posted, it is sent by email to Carlisle Wortman and they can remove it if it is ridiculous. He stated that the feedback is beneficial because people can remark on their own or can also remark on another person’s comment. He stated that it is not difficult to use. The idea behind the sub-area map is they can organize the feedback by area.

Commissioner Sclesky asked what the population was in Scio.

Mr. Lewan answered about 20,000. The community is also doing a newsletter and mailing it out to residents letting them know about the website.

Commissioner Sclesky questioned the use of time, money and resources to only get a small number of residents commenting.

Mr. Lewan stated this idea is a way to provide feedback from people who can't get to the visioning session and it is in the budget that was approved by the Board.

Commissioner Hines asked how they are going to let residents know that this is happening.

Mr. Lewan answered that this has not been determined yet, but for it to work, they have to get the word out.

Commissioner Sclesky suggested using the website and the cable station.

Commissioner Whiting stated that she likes the idea of the visioning session and the website because they will attract different age demographics. She suggested getting the information out electronically and also using the cable station and perhaps a newsletter.

Mr. Lewan explained that it should go out in something being sent from the Township and should also be located front and center of the web page. They have also done a physical display in the Township hall and provided cards which are available at the front desk providing website information.

Commissioner Hines asked when the change in assessment notices go out.

Supervisor Walls stated that it is probably already at the printers waiting to be printed and stuffed.

Commissioner Leddy asked when he hoped to have the website going.

Mr. Lewan stated that once the categories are set up, it is very quick and easy to get up and running.

Commissioner Baker asked how long they typically leave the website open for comment.

Mr. Lewan answered a month or so.

Commissioner Hines asked when he is proposing having a visioning session.

Mr. Lewan answered sometime in March and he would recommend keeping the website open after so that people who could not make the visioning session could make comments. He stated after all of the input, he puts it all together to come up with some general goals and policies. The primary goal of getting public comment is finding out what is important to the public and melting that into goals and policies.

Commissioner Hopper stated that he is looking at Independence Township's site and they have 4 target areas.

Commissioner Sclesky asked if he worked with Independence Township.

Mr. Lewan replied no; Dick Carlisle works with Independence. Mr. Lewan stated that he spoke with Collin about the Sewer and Water opportunities section. There is some good sense to get close to the Dixie Highway Utility Study before they launch this. They probably should carefully review what comes out of the Utility Study first. He would like the consensus on the other topics.

Supervisor Walls stated that the initial draft of the Dixie Utility Study is supposed to be to him by this week and the draft for the Planning Commission and the Township Board should be available by the middle of March.

Mr. Lewan stated that they are probably looking at April for the visioning session and to launch the website.

Commissioner Baker confirmed that they would use both means; a visioning session and the response website. He stated that Mr. Lewan is also looking for confirmation that these would be the topics that they would be talking about. He suggested that residential land use seemed to suggest development. On the next page, where it says development and redevelopment he is thinking commercial, but it doesn't say that. He suggested that they use the word commercial to make it more defined.

Commissioner Whiting concurred, it needs to be specific.

Mr. Lewan suggested that the title could be Commercial Development and Redevelopment.

Commissioners concurred.

Commissioner Whiting suggested that they add something in the first section, perhaps residential growth and housing?

Mr. Lewan agreed.

Commissioner Whiting asked if there was any advantage to combining Natural Feature and Recreation and is there any advantage to having fewer target topics.

Mr. Lewan stated that they could be together and there is something to be said for having fewer topics. He asked the Commission what they thought.

Commissioner Leddy explained that those two are not necessarily the same.

Clerk Moreau stated that the Parks and Recreation Department just completed their Master Plan Update and they went through getting public input and comment and they have their recreation goals for their parks. She worries that this could cause some confusion that the Township Board and Planning Commission are asking for the same input that was just received. It might send the wrong message that they are going to

improve park facilities which they are not. The other part including safety paths should be left in because it is more concerned with safety paths and not with park facilities.

Commissioners concurred.

Mr. Lewan agreed; he stated that he didn't want the whole section to be just about paths.

Clerk Moreau stated that it is concerning safety paths and linkages between Township areas.

Clerk Moreau stated that to illicit public response, the Parks used an online component and information in the brochure that is put out twice a year.

Mr. Lewan stated that the Master Plan should have some reference to Parks, but he will work to target this more to safety paths.

Commissioner Hopper suggested changing "the Township" to "your Township" under the target area, General Land Use or Planning Comments or Concerns. It might elicit more response.

Supervisor Walls suggested clarifying the reference to a number of topics in the same target area.

Mr. Lewan concurred and suggested adding the words "listed above" after "topics."

Commissioner Hines suggested that Mr. Lewan use the wording Natural Feature Preservation throughout that section; it should be the same throughout.

Mr. Lewan concurred.

Commissioners discussed the target area called Community Vitality and the meaning of this target area.

Mr. Lewan explained that this target area was created by realizing that the Township has a lot of great things to offer for either a business or a residence coming to the community and the question becomes how they convey all of these great things to help spur new development. This would bring employees to the community which would create other opportunities.

Commissioner Hines asked if they should be marketing the Township.

Commissioner Whiting asked if it would be appropriate to do two questions so that it could be seen as addressing residents finding out about the place they live and also seen to convey the benefits to others outside of the Township.

Commissioner Baker stated that they don't need to tell the residents about the quality of life in the Township in which they live. The question is do they want to use this question for residents to talk about economic development.

Mr. Lewan stated that he would try to rework this question.

Commissioner Whiting suggested adding the word services.

Commissioner Baker wondered how the map mentioned in the section land use issues/opportunities and how it would tie in.

Supervisor Walls suggested taking the sentence out that references the map.

Commissioner Leddy suggested using the Land Use map.

Mr. Lewan stated that they are limited as to what they can put on the website. The major topics will be listed and they can have a "for more information, click here" and they can link other information. They can have some mapping but it is better to have the front page being only the major topics.

Commissioner Baker asked about the visioning session. He asked if each of the major topics would be on a flip chart with an individual there available to speak about the topic.

Mr. Lewan agreed; it would be the Planning Commissioners that would be the facilitators. There will be a couple leading questions that each can use to illicit a response.

Supervisor Walls asked about the Development and Redevelopment Opportunities section and if Mr. Lewan would look to restructure the question after the Dixie Utility study is received. He urged Mr. Lewan not to say that there were no municipal services offered because there are services offered, just not the typical sewer and water that are usually thought about.

Mr. Lewan agreed.

Commissioner Leddy stated that in the section, Residential Land Use and Population, it is said that there is not growth, but the question asks what goals they have regarding growth. It seems to not make sense. He suggested changing the wording.

Mr. Lewan agreed. He suggested quality housing or development.

Commissioner Sclesky asked how they were going to get the next draft with changes.

Mr. Lewan stated that this item will be on the March agenda and he will have the document with changes available then. Because they are delayed with the Utility Study, they have some time and he proposed that they look at it again at the March meeting.

Commissioner Sclesky asked about the map.

Clerk Moreau stated that she was interested to talk about the map. She asked if the goal was to do anything more with the Dixie Corridor Plan before they determine if they want to ask about that too. She is interested to see what comes out of the Update and what impact that might have on the visioning session and the topic questions. It seems that through the Township Board discussion and the strategic plan goals was about the Dixie Corridor and the how they translate rural character to the Dixie Corridor. They have been talking about it since 2008 and gone in different directions. They are asking some good questions and she likes the idea of the visioning sessions, but her concern is that the Dixie Corridor Plan is going to be left behind. They should take into consideration what the Plan standards look like in terms of signage, landscaping and buildings and what the vision looks like. Clerk Moreau is worried that the progress that they have made working on the Dixie Corridor Plan is going to be left behind. She asked the Planning Commission and Mr. Lewan for their thoughts.

Mr. Lewan stated that he was anticipating that those comments would be discussed under the Development and Redevelopment Section. After listing to Clerk Moreau, he realizes that this is not specific to those types of issues and offered to add additional language that talked about the corridor and what the vision is. Or they could create a completely separate topic.

Clerk Moreau stated that she is wondering if it is a completely separate topic. They had a visioning session with Dick Carlisle in 2008 and looked at building façade and signage and had the opportunity to react to it. They were very close to determining exactly what the vision was for Dixie Corridor. She questioned if this would be appropriate to put this before the residents for their reaction to the goals for the Dixie Corridor. She also asked if they are abandoning this plan because the plan had been in the time of slow growth to really work on and finalize the design standard for the Dixie Corridor. She stated that she would like to know if this was still a goal.

Mr. Lewan stated that the Strategic Plan timeframe and how he set this up is geared towards the entire Township and an update of the Master Plan. There is a section on Dixie Highway and they could add more specifics for the public comment portion. The result of this will be a whole pile of public comments and they can take those and organize those how they want to. The intention for Dixie Highway can be very specific but this is very early in the process. As they get further along in the process, they can add more specifics as needed.

Chairperson Baker stated that the Dixie Corridor Plan update is on the Priority Task List and the last meeting is listed on January 10, 2014. He stated that they have seen numerous items on this topic. His impression is that this project is still ongoing and still continues and they are waiting for more feedback from CWA on this item. The agenda item that they are dealing with tonight is the Master Plan and public input that they direct. This is not meant to derail the other effort called the Dixie Corridor Plan.

Supervisor Walls stated that the portion of the Dixie Corridor report prepared by the Engineer didn't fit with the Planning portion and CWA is in the process of merging the two. The project has grown because of the availability of options for sewage treatment, nonpotable water options, fire suppression and this led them to a review by the Building Official. He stated that they do not need fire suppression if the building is designed to meet the code parameters. This analysis will be in the report. There will also be a section on options for low impact development. This will included storm water and how to design without worrying about fire suppression. He stated that the draft should be provided sometime this week with a general draft being available for Township Board and Planning Commission sometime in March. These are components that will have an impact on two of the topics that are being presented tonight.

Chairperson Baker stated that they do have simultaneously the Dixie Highway Corridor update.

Mr. Lewan stated that this will not address the design criteria and questions that Clerk Moreau had.

Clerk Moreau asked about the map and if they were thinking about the Dixie Corridor in a different way. There are sub-areas that are split by Dixie Highway and this does not make her think of planned mixed use near the gateway by I-75 and some of the other districts that have been discussed previously. If they are trying to get feedback on such an important area, this map did not achieve that. She is less concerned about what is happening in the different residential sub-areas.

Mr. Lewan stated that the intent of the map is to break up the Township in digestible chunks that may have a relationship to each other that they could use for Public Comment or for the future Land Use plan. In his opinion, all of these areas have similarities or are divided by a physical thing. He referred to the sub-area map that he provided to the Planning Commission. The current Master Plan has a sub-area map consisting of 13 sub-areas and this is too many. The Big Lake Sub Area is divided by Andersonville Road and has large lots and Big Lake as a natural feature. The Shiawassee Sub Area has the Shiawassee Basin Preserve as its natural feature. Davisburg has their own Davisburg Sub Area. Hogback Sub Area would be a rural sub-area in the center of the Township divided by Andersonville Road. Edgar Sub Area was defined by Edgar Road. The Lakes Sub-Area has 4 major lakes as their natural feature and this area is defined by Dixie, maybe they should call it the Dixie Sub Area. Dixie Highway is the important feature of the Lakes Sub Area. If they look at the lots, there is a lot more residential area than anywhere else in the Township. They could divide this Lakes Sub-Area in to 3 sub-areas, this is a possibility.

Commissioner Hines stated that she is tired of Dixie Highway being its own special thing. It is part of the Township and impacts everything that is there but it shouldn't be separate.

Commissioner Sclesky stated that most people moved here for the rural setting. He stated that Clerk Moreau had a highlighted map that she was working on today and he asked her if she wanted to share the map with the Commission.

Clerk Moreau stated that she would share the map with the Commission and she concurred with Commissioner Hines that Dixie Highway didn't necessarily have to be separate.

Supervisor Walls stated that it sounds as if they are talking about two maps. One for the Master Plan and they are talking about a survey from the residents about economic development. The map that should be associated with the website should be relative to the questions that they are asking. He reviewed the map that Clerk Moreau handed out and explained that the highlighted areas had to do with development and redevelopment that is referred to in the survey.

Clerk Moreau stated that she tried to identify common pieces of those different districts and this is the direction that they had been going at one time. There wasn't as much focus on the north part of Dixie Highway.

Commissioner Hopper stated that the residential areas along Dixie are both defined by Dixie and they should not be separate. He concurred with Supervisor Walls that they are asking the economic questions and most of those front along Dixie Highway because this is the key to the development of the rest. He likes the idea of fewer sub-areas. He asked if they could do sub-areas that were not contiguous.

Mr. Lewan answered yes.

Commissioner Hines stated that she feels like they only plan for Dixie Highway.

Commissioner Whiting stated that they talk about Dixie because this is where they are encouraging business. She asked if they could put a sub-area called Dixie Highway right in the middle of the Lakes Sub-area.

Mr. Lewan answered yes. He sees some logic in providing more detail on Dixie Highway since they were asking them to comment on it.

Commissioner Hines asked why they were asking for public input on Dixie Highway when they are already going to determine what they wanted the signs to look like and what they wanted development to look like. She asked if they wanted to make this a focus if they were going in a certain direction anyway.

Commissioner Whiting stated that they could ask general questions about Dixie Highway and see what feedback they get back.

Commissioner Leddy stated that everyone in the Township should be able to comment on Dixie Highway.

Commissioner Baker stated that he does not see the target questions and the Sub-Area map being linked at all. They are separate items. You don't need a map to answer the questions. The target questions are step number one and the map is step number nine and they seem to be trying to put them together and it is a struggle. They are both valuable, but they are not connected.

Mr. Lewan stated that he was looking ahead to the Future Land Use map and he did not intend for them to go together.

Commissioner Sclesky concurred.

Mr. Lewan stated that if they were going to link it to the questions, there has to be stronger linkage. They would have general maps available for the public visioning session. He stated for the next meeting he will try to put together some ideas that might link their discussion to the map.

Clerk Moreau stated that if the map is more feature or area driven it would be more specific to the thoughts and concerns that they are looking for.

Commissioner Baker stated that Mr. Lewan will take their comments into consideration and bring the document back in March for review.

Commissioners discussed the date for the Public Visioning Session and they decided that it could be on their regular Planning Commission meeting date in April and decided that they will not launch the Community Remarks web page until they finalize the target questions/issues.

Old Business:

1. Priority Task List

Commissioners reviewed and made updates and revisions to the current Priority Task List.

Adjournment:

Commissioner Hines moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:47 PM. Supported by Commissioner Whiting. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Leddy, Sclesky, Whiting, Willson. Voted no: None. Absent: None. Motion Carried.

Erin A. Mattice, Recording Secretary