

Springfield Township  
Planning Commission – Business Meeting  
Minutes February 20, 2012

Call to Order: Chairman Baker called the February 20, 2012 Business Meeting of the Springfield Township Planning Commission to order at 7:31 p.m. at the Springfield Township Civic Center, 12000 Davisburg Road, Davisburg, MI 48350.

Attendance:

Commissioners Present:

Dean Baker  
Ruth Ann Hines  
Bill Leddy  
Kevin Sclesky  
Beverly Shaver  
Neil Willson

Commissioners Absent

Roger Lamont

Staff Present

Collin Walls, Supervisor

Consultants Present

Brian Oppmann, Planner  
Randy Ford, Engineer

Approval of Agenda:

Chairperson Baker suggested moving #1 New Business item, DTE – Osprey Substation Site Plan Review, after the Consent Agenda.

**Commissioner Willson moved to approve the agenda as amended. Supported by Commissioner Sclesky. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Leddy, Sclesky, Shaver, Willson. Voted no: None. Absent: Lamont. Motion Carried.**

Public Comment: None.

Consent Agenda: Minutes of the January 16, 2012 meeting.

**Commissioner Shaver moved to approve the minutes of the January 16, 2012 meeting as presented. Supported by Commissioner Willson. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Leddy, Sclesky, Shaver, Willson. Voted no: None. Absent: Lamont. Motion Carried.**

Public Hearing: None scheduled.

New Business:

**1. DTE – Osprey Substation Site Plan Review**

Brian Oppmann summarized the review of the Site Plan provided by Carlisle Wortman. He stated that the site meets the setback requirements. He stated that the concerns had to do with landscaping provided and the screening that was going to be provided to the west and north. He stated that DTE has provided a landscape plan and it does not meet the ordinance in terms of number, but the Planning Commission is given discretion to permit less, especially considering the size of the site. It would be difficult to meet the quantities that the ordinance requires. Mr. Oppmann continued that there were also issues raised regarding tree height and size but these were relatively minor. They also noted similar issues in the greenbelt areas that would need to be addressed and made comments regarding native plantings that should be provided in the swales near the check dams. He stated since the major zoning issues were cleared up, the issues in the report are minor and the applicant should be able to address these.

Commissioner Shaver stated that the compound is described as being 150' X 125' in the Carlisle Wortman report but in documents from DTE, the same compound is being described as 85' X 100'.

Mr. Oppmann responded that the larger dimension was their original size and it has been shrunken down. He stated that this doesn't change anything in the report.

Commissioner Sclesky stated that when he was reviewing the documents, he noticed on the south side towards the residence there is a wooded area and he read that they are only saving 4 trees. He asked why could they not preserve some of these trees and use them to block the residence.

Mr. Oppmann stated that since they have to provide some grading and provide drainage swales it becomes necessary to cut significantly into the woodland area. If they could preserve more, these trees could be looked at in lieu of the trees that the ordinance requires.

Chairperson Baker asked Brian Oppmann about the opacity of the existing trees when you are looking toward the south from the site.

Mr. Oppmann replied that the opacity is challenging but he still thinks that lower pines are needed as well as some of the other types of landscaping that is proposed on the plan. He stated that deciduous trees are nice, but they do not provide the opacity that pine trees would.

Chairperson Baker asked if the pine trees would provide that.

Mr. Oppmann replied that they are asking for 8-10 feet trees and this is a relatively large screen.

Commissioner Willson asked if the large dirt berm that is present at the site lies on the DTE property.

Mr. Oppmann replied that this was on the other piece, not DTE's.

Commissioner Willson asked what its purpose was.

Mr. Oppman reiterated that this was not DTE's concern.

Commissioner Willson asked of all the trees that are shown, how many are being removed.

Gordon Yee, DTE, responded that 119 trees were being removed. They are black locust, which are viewed as invasive and White Mulberry which are not desirable because they are pollen producing.

Commissioner Willson asked what was happening to the existing tree line.

Gordon Yee, referenced a diagram showing the proposed plantings on the property. He stated that there is a staggered row of evergreens on the south property line 8-10 foot high consisting of Blue Spruce, White Spruce and Douglas Fir. He stated there are also some Crab Apple trees and two White Oaks at the corners. The mature height on the evergreens is 50 feet with a 25-30 foot spread.

Commissioner Willson asked if there were going to be power lines that were visible, because there was nothing there right now.

Tim Phillips, DTE, pointed out the incoming and outgoing power lines on a diagram.

Chairperson Baker stated that he will conclude with Mr. Oppmann's review, allow Mr. Ford's review and then give the representatives from DTE a chance to explain the project.

Mr. Randy Ford summarized his engineering report that was provided. He stated that there is a plan for retention and detention outlet. There is not a drainage outlet, there are a couple of leeching basins. There is a small driveway and the compound is composed of crushed aggregate. As part of the ordinance requirements, DTE acknowledged the increase of storm water runoff. DTE provided Randy Ford with a copy of a soils report and they established that the site is permeable and the swales provided will retain the run off. This is a good setup for handling the run off for this development. It meets ordinance and then some. The grading is being done and he has no concerns over impact on surrounding properties. They have a permit from RCOC for the curb cut. There is a drawing indicating new circuit feeds and there was some confusion over which lines were proposed to be underground and overhead; their intent needs clarification.

Mike Palchesko, Regional Manager of Government Affairs for Oakland County appeared on behalf of DTE. He introduced Tom Phillips, Supervising Engineer, DTE. He thanked the Commission for their time and for revising the agenda.

Mr. Phillips summarized that the substation is needed because they recognize the fact that Springfield Township residents have had marginally/good to poor electrical service. He pointed out all electrical feeds throughout Oakland County and their location relative to existing substations. There is one substation in Clarkston on the South Side of Ortonville Road at I-75. He pointed out areas in Springfield Township that are lacking complete and proper coverage through the existing equipment. Osprey Substation was part of their Master Plan. He stated that usually substations are needed to increase capacity; Osprey Substation will be fed by a pole lead of 40,000 volts that already exists on Dixie Highway. Overhead poles and wiring will extend through public road right-of-way which will go down Old Pond Road to the DTE property, adjacent to where their transformers will be. They have not decided which side of Old Pond Road, but he is recommending that they enter on the west side. There will be a cable pole which allows them to switch from overhead wire to underground wiring. The wiring will come down the cable pole, become encased in conduit and will go underground to the substation where it will feed the transformer. He stated that the energy will go through the transformer and be converted from 40,000 volts to 13,200 volts which is standard wire voltage. This will be directed into modular switch gears. There will also be a panel consisting of breakers and these have the capability to open and close for temporary problems. If there is a problem, it will open and stay open. Both circuits will leave the substation in one main conduit underground. One goes back to the pole, back up Old Pond Road and back to Dixie Highway. The goal of the substation is to get rid of the long wire miles which allow for more chances for trees to fall into the lines. They are taking the long feeders and cutting them up into more manageable lengths.

Mr. Phillips stated that the other circuit that exited out of the substation will come down Old Pond and eventually cross I-75 to create an extension into the Big Lake area to provide another means to feed in and shorten wire distances. He stated that by having the substation they also gain jumpering capability. He stated that if they do have a problem along Dixie Highway, the devices will sense there is a problem and through opening and closing circuits, they will now be able to backfeed an area that is experiencing problems. This lowers restoration time to minutes instead of hours. They do not have the jumpering capability today. The reason they are building Osprey substation is to increase reliability and to shorten restoration times. He stated that this is part of a two phase process; Osprey Substation is phase I and another substation proposed in Independence Township is phase II.

Commissioner Sclesky summarized that they would now have immediate feedback in case of a problem. The substation will allow them to backfeed to restore power to the residents while DTE can go service the problem. The distance between points of where the potential problem is will be shortened considerably.

Mr. Phillips concurred.

Mr. Ford asked if there were overhead lines to the rear of the property.

Mr. Phillips pointed out the existing poles on the diagram. The residence next to the substation will be first on the circuit. All homes down Old Pond will have greatly improved service.

Commissioner Shaver asked how long the business and the residence would be without power during construction.

Mr. Phillips answered none.

Chairperson Baker asked about the noise levels and decibel levels in and around the substation.

Mr. Phillips answered that they looked at similar transformers and the recorded db levels. Right at the transformer it would be about 67 db. This could be compared to a busy street or an orchestra. He stated that at 150 feet away, the db level drops to 40.3. This could be compared to a quiet conversation, a little more than a quiet library. With the landscaping proposed, this would be even less.

Chairperson Baker clarified that 67 db was at the transformer unit. He asked if the transformer would have cooling fans.

Mr. Phillips answered that the transformers will have cooling fans and the 67 db level given included the fan noise. He does not know exactly how many fans are required.

Chairperson Baker asked if there is ever a need to use cooling water or spray.

Mr. Phillips stated that in some other stations there is a need to use sprays and there are permanently mounted sprays complete with temperature sensing equipment. There would not be a need for cooling sprays for normal usage but he couldn't say that there would never be a need. There also is the capability to bring a portable fan and since there is no water at the site, the water would have to be brought in through a portable tank.

Chairperson Baker asked if they ever needed to bring a portable water source because of extreme load, does this create any issues in run off.

Mr. Ford stated that there is a lot of capacity in the swales; he does not have a concern.

Mr. Phillips conferenced with his DTE engineer to determine that they are leaving capacity available at this site. He stated that the excess capacity is meant for growth in the community and the jumpering capability.

Chairperson Baker asked if the shed that is currently on the property will be removed. Mr. Phillips answered yes, and the fencing will also be removed.

Chairperson Baker stated that there were recommendations made by the Township Planner and one of these was to increase the 8 foot trees to 10 foot trees. There were also recommendations to limit pesticides at the site and to use rip wrap around the site during construction to make sure that they were not having any excessive material movement. He asked if DTE was concerned about any of these items.

Mark Fairless, DTE, responded that they were planning on installing a silt fence.

Chairperson Baker asked if any of the Planner's recommendations regarding the number of plantings at this site were cause for concern.

Mr. Fairless responded no.

Chairperson Baker asked Mr. Oppmann if he still had concerns.

Mr. Oppmann answered that their concern wasn't in the number of plantings, it was the sizes and this can be overcome. He stated that the Planning Commission has discretion to approve it with a decreased number of plantings. He stated that their main concern was height and size.

Commissioner Sclesky stated that he read that there would be a mulch application around the plantings. He asked who was responsible for the maintenance of the landscaping after the initial one year time period.

Mr. Oppmann responded that ultimately DTE was responsible for the site.

Commissioner Willson asked about lighting at the substation.

Mr. Fairless responded that the light was on a switch; there will not be any lights that will be timed nor any lights at night.

Commissioner Willson asked how long it will take to build the substation.

Mr. Phillips responded that the project would be completed in three phases. He would like to begin construction of structures and landscaping this year. Next year they will begin changing wire where they need to and doing the connection work. He stated that in 2014 they will connect the transformers and switch gears and it will be put in service. The typical construction time is 3 years to build a substation.

Commissioner Shaver asked if the substation was built to accommodate growth for new development.

Mr. Phillips responded yes. It will be wired for future expansion and the original substation will be built to its maximum capacity. It will be built for 25 MVA capacity and the load currently is 14-15 MVA, so there is opportunity for growth.

Commissioner Leddy asked what kind of security was available on the site.

Mr. Phillips answered that the security was the fencing that was around the facility. It is a 6 foot chain length fence with 1 foot of 6 strand v-shaped barbed wire at the top. The total height is 7 feet.

Chairperson Baker stated that DTE was granted a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals on February 15, 2012 to construct the 7 foot fence. He stated that this seemed to effectively limit the access of the site.

Mr. Phillips answered that the gates are locked with a padlock device.

Chairperson Baker stated that this was a permitted use. If approved, the process of site plan development would end with the Planning Commission.

**Commissioner Sclesky moved to support the DTE Osprey Site Plan shown on Plan# 5A149-1. This is conditioned on the inclusion of a minimum 8 to 10 foot height requirement for the screening along the property line adjacent to the residence, the large evergreens in the greenbelt should be increased to 12 feet, Crab Apple trees are required to be a 2 ½ inch caliber, only organic fertilizers will be used as necessary, use of pesticides are not allowed and native plant materials are to be planted at the check dams and the swales. Further conditions of this motion include the Planning Commission waiving the Landscaping Ordinance requirement regarding the number of trees on the North, South and West sides of the property in lieu of what has been provided. Supported by Commissioner Willson. Discussion confirmed required opacity on screen along south property line was not waived. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Leddy, Sclesky, Shaver, Willson. Voted no: None. Absent: Lamont. Motion Carried.**

Old Business:

**1. Village Center – Ordinance amendments**

Mr. Oppmann stated that at the last meeting the general consensus of the Commission was one of approval for the Village Center Ordinance amendments. Carlisle Wortman added some language about signage and also provided a map showing the district. He stated that they considered alternatives to signage because having a ground sign really isn't feasible. This proposed ordinance amendment includes language permitting door, window, projecting signs and pole signs. He stated that the allowable sign square footage area is determined by linear feet of building frontage. He stated that all of the downtown business buildings average around 22 feet of frontage. He stated that the projecting signs would probably be the most popular.

Commissioner Hines asked how much signage the party store would get. She asked if you could have awning, window and door signage.

Mr. Oppmann answered that they could have approximately 44 square foot total. He stated that they can only have one wall sign on the building. The window and door area could only cover up to 25% of the total door and window square footage. He stated that they could have multiple signs to reach the total of 44 square feet.

Commissioner Hines asked if the window signage was included in that number.

Mr. Oppmann responded that they could not exceed 44 square feet for all of the various signage. He stated that the maximum was 100 square feet of signage. If a building had a linear frontage of 125 feet, the maximum signage they could have would be 100 square feet. He stated that no more than 10% of the awning could be covered with signage.

Commissioner Hines asked if they considered this idea when they were considering the other amendments to the sign ordinance.

Chairperson Baker answered yes, especially when they were considering the frontage of the buildings on Dixie Highway, but these buildings were so large that the square footage that they were allowed would present too many challenges. He stated that this really didn't apply to Downtown Davisburg.

Mr. Oppmann stated that you need to give the business owners some options in a traditional downtown setting.

Commissioner Willson asked if there were any multi-tenant buildings in Downtown Davisburg.

Supervisor Walls responded that there were several multi-tenant buildings if you considered the residential occupants.

Chairperson Baker asked about the distinction between section a. and section b. under Awning Signs.

Mr. Oppmann answered that this does need clarification, especially the word auxiliary.

Chairperson Baker asked if there was some discussion about the size of the awning and its purpose.

Supervisor Walls pointed out the section of the sign ordinance regarding the composition and size of awnings.

Chairperson Baker stated that it was a package approach for a unique district. He stated that he was in favor of this district defining the limitations of the hamlet. He stated that it needs some further clarification.

Mr. Oppmann stated that they provided a map to the Commissioners on which Supervisor Walls had outlined a residential piece that should be out of the village center district. Mr.

Oppmann stated that the piece along Andersonville Road that is marked on the map is zoned C-1 but is actually a house. It does not have to be included in the district.

Commissioner Shaver asked about the chances of the road being vacated. She suggested it being part of the district because it might be included someday.

Supervisor Walls stated that it was a dedicated road but due to the slope of this property, it makes it almost impossible to access it.

Commissioner Willson asked if it included the Fire Station.

Mr. Oppmann answered no. He stated that they need to be cautious when looking to expand this district in any direction. There are many residences that are on septic and small lots and the chances of converting these residences to businesses present many challenges. He stated that there is also the safety challenge of the large hill on Davisburg Road.

Supervisor Walls stated that there were safety issues in expanding the district. He asked why add more area to a downtown that is struggling now.

Commissioner Willson asked about the residential piece that is outlined on the map.

Supervisor Walls stated that the elevation change between Warfield and the old lumberyard property is significant.

Commissioners concurred.

Commissioner Sclesky asked about the limit of 6 inches for protruding signs.

Mr. Oppmann answered that the point was to have some uniformity with the signage. He stated that typically the signage in downtown areas seems to work out.

Chairperson Baker stated that it allows business owners to enjoy the business activities that other businesses enjoy. He stated that it meshes in with the historical nature of the area. He asked Mr. Oppmann to provide the updates and the clarity on certain areas for the next meeting.

Commissioner Shaver stated that they have used the roads for the boundary lines except for this residential piece that is marked in red. She stated that for future planning reasons, if they can use this road for egress and ingress, aren't they putting this residential piece in a commercial setting.

Supervisor Walls answered no more than it has been and if they look at the topography at this location, it would be difficult to include it.

Supervisor Walls stated that at the last meeting the Planning Commission had expressed that they wanted this proposal to be available to the property and business owners in Downtown Davisburg; he asked if they still wanted this to happen or if they wanted to wait until they are ready to set a public hearing.

Chairperson Baker stated that he would like prepare a document that is clear. He would like some of the design considerations to be considered further, for example the awnings.

Mr. Oppmann stated that he would bring this item back to the Commission at next month's meeting with recommended revisions made.

New Business:

**2. Access Management – Dixie Highway-Discussion**

Mr. Oppmann stated that there is an Access Management section in the ordinance. They looked at the current ordinance and also looked at the MDOT management guide book that gives framework for driveway placement, etc. He pointed out the current language is in black and they added more standards for driveway placement and they also gave discretion to the Planning Commission to waive some of these requirements based on an Engineering recommendation. Because of the speeds on Dixie Highway, there should be some standards in place. The overlay district points to sections 16.04 and 16.05.

Chairperson Baker asked if the added language was MDOT and/or RCOC language.

Mr. Oppmann answered yes, MDOT language was used.

Mr. Oppmann stated that this encourages shared driveways, cross access or shared easements to reduce the number of driveways. He stated that if the property was developed south of Kroger, there could be cross access between the two developments.

Commissioner Hines asked how they do that when it is done piecemeal.

Mr. Oppmann stated that it requires cooperation between the property owners. The Township can only encourage cooperation, it really has no control.

Commissioner Sclesky stated that they could use it for future developments.

Commissioner Hines asked if the Township could impose setback restrictions on individual developers to allow future access.

Mr. Oppmann responded no.

Supervisor Walls stated that they had a similar situation when Al Deeby Dodge was being developed and they were looking to place a driveway to the Bordine property. He stated that MDOT would not approve the additional drive since they already had access

on Dixie Highway. He stated that these situations are preferable to reduce the number of curb cuts and at the point of the curb cuts, it is desirable to have shared access.

Chairperson Baker asked about the Culvers and Ruby Tuesday development on Sashabaw.

Mr. Ford answered that they did this development as a PUD.

Commissioner Sclesky asked if there was a long term plan as to how this would look along Dixie Highway.

Mr. Oppmann answered that they considered a drawing for the Bordines property, but have not specifically looked at other parcels. He stated that it is difficult to do without a proposal coming forward.

Supervisor Walls stated that when the center lane was put in on Dixie Highway, they did considerable work to increase and improve access and then the RCOC did not approve much of the work that they did.

Mr. Ford stated that they are involved in the reconstruction of Dixie Highway from Telegraph Road to I-75 which is an MDOT project.

Supervisor Walls pointed out suggested amendments on page 1, Section C. He suggested stronger language for access controls. He stated that he doesn't see a statement encouraging common driveways in this current draft. He stated that under 2 b, there is a statement, but it should be stronger. He suggested that access control is a Planning issue and the Planner needs to be included. The last provision on page 3, 3b, he suggested adding language in which they would have to meet the spacing requirements in 16.04 c and they should reference this section.

Commissioners concurred.

Mr. Oppmann stated that he would bring it back next month with the recommended changes.

#### Other Business:

##### **1. Update Priority List**

Commissioners made updates and revisions to the current Priority List.

Commissioners discussed a memo and suggested ordinance language from Supervisor Walls which was provided to all Commissioners. This would eliminate the ordinance requirement for fire alarm systems in individual units of self-storage facilities. Supervisor

Walls stated that this requirement was unenforceable according to the Township Attorney, Greg Need. Commissioners have a discussion regarding the information received and the decision to take action.

**Commissioner Hines moved to schedule a Public Hearing at the first available date to strike the language requiring fire alarm systems in rental space self-storage facilities. Supported by Commissioner Shaver. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Leddy, Sclesky, Shaver, Willson. Voted no: None. Absent: Lamont. Motion Carried.**

Public Comment:

Diana Walls, 627 Broadway, asked if historical significance-type signs would be counted towards total allowable business signage in the Downtown Davisburg area. Commissioners responded that this was not their intent; Mr. Oppmann stated that he would address this when he edits the sign provisions for the Village Center Ordinance Amendment.

Adjournment:

**Commissioner Hines moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:27 p.m. Supported by Commissioner Shaver. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Leddy, Sclesky, Shaver, Willson. Voted no: None. Absent: Lamont. Motion Carried.**

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Erin Mattice, Recording Secretary