

Springfield Township  
Planning Commission Meeting  
Minutes August 18, 2015

Call to Order: Chairperson Baker called the August 18, 2015 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  
Bill Leddy  
Kevin Sclesky  
Neil Willson

Commissioners Absent

Dave Hopper  
Linda Whiting

Consultants Present

Doug Lewan, Planner, Carlisle Wortman, Associates

Staff Present

Collin W. Walls, Supervisor  
Laura Moreau, Clerk

Approval of Agenda:

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

Public Comment:

Trustee Vallad informed the Commission about an upcoming event for Citizen Planners. A focus group is being formed to meet and talk about their experiences. Trustee Vallad stated that he is attending with Commissioner Hopper. The event is to be held on August 27, 2015 in the Oakland County complex from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm.

Consent Agenda:

**1. Minutes of the July 21, 2015 Planning Commission meeting**

**Commissioner Willson moved to approve the minutes of the July 21, 2015 meeting as presented. Supported by Commissioner Leddy. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Leddy, Sclesky, Willson. Voted no: None. Absent: Hopper, Whiting. Motion Carried.**

Public Hearing:

None

Old Business:

**1. Ordinance Amendment – Dealership Parking**

Mr. Doug Lewan summarized his memo dated August 7, 2015 which was given to all of the Commissioners. This changes the number of auto vehicles sales and service spaces from currently 1 per 200 square foot to 1 per 250 foot. Also, it changed the number of spaces needed to two per service stall. He broke the parking section into two sections, Required Parking and Display which includes standards for the required number of spaces which is employee parking, customer parking and cars that they might use for display. These spaces need to meet the setback and screening requirements. He summarized the changes that were made to this section since the last meeting. He also stated that there was also discussion about the separation of storage vehicles and required parking and how this might work together. For vehicle storage, they are trying to allow a spot somewhere on a property where the dealer would not necessarily have to meet the same dimensional standards as a typical parking space; this will help to reduce the need for off-site parking. He stated that in #2 under B., he alludes to allowing this off-site parking. If someone is trying to use a parcel or part of a parcel that is not an actual dealership, then they would have to place the cars further back and he used 100 feet but that can be changed. This off-site parking would need to be reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission. Part of the current zoning ordinance allows for some hard surface waiving by the Planning Commission and he added it in this section if they meet certain criteria.

Mr. Lewan stated that after he sent the memo out to the Planning Commission dated 8/7/2015, he received some changes from Supervisor Walls. He made these changes to the document and distributed an updated version of his memo to all Commissioners. Supervisor Walls changed “Requiring parking is exclusive” to “Requiring customer and employee parking is exclusive”. He also added, “Off-street auto/vehicle sales and service facilities, parking, display, storage and screening shall be in accordance with Section 40-681(4).”

Supervisor Walls corrected “Requiring” to “Required”.

Mr. Lewan explained that on page 2, #2, “Where vehicle storage is the principal use of the property” is changed to “Where vehicle storage is allowed separate from a sales and service facility.” He stated that he did not specify a district in this section but could add it if the Commission wanted to.

Commissioner Sclesky asked why the comment “there will be no parking in the greenbelt” wasn’t included from the last meeting.

Mr. Lewan indicated that this was covered by one of the subsections and he read the section.

Commissioner Leddy asked about Section B.4. He asked if they should include the opinion that permeable surfaces are preferred. He stated that if they are going to have an off-site parking area, they do not want a large asphalt parking lot, they would prefer crushed limestone.

Commissioner Sclesky asked if they would have to get Planning Commission approval, then they could address it then.

Mr. Lewan confirmed that this section could apply to either on-site or off-site parking areas.

Commissioner Hines offered that this could be part of the site plan review process.

Mr. Lewan confirmed yes; it would be part of site plan review and the Commission could guide the applicant to pervious surfaces.

Commissioner Leddy agreed.

Chairperson Baker agreed with having the language in there and then the Planning Commission would be the final approval.

Mr. Lewan stated that he could add language to guide them with one sentence, but still indicate that the final review would take place in front of the Planning Commission.

Chairperson Baker asked if they could direct them towards a design criteria that specifies surface requirements and preferences.

Mr. Lewan replied that he will look in the Design and Construction Standards.

Supervisor Walls stated that he does not know if it is in there.

Mr. Lewan stated that if he doesn't have something, he will contact Randy Ford for suggestions.

Commissioner Leddy stated that it would depend on the consistency of the ground.

Commissioner Sclesky concurred and cited the example of Al Deeby getting cars stuck in the mud in the storage lot between the dealership and Bordines.

Commissioner Willson asked how this helps the dealer who has incoming shipment of cars that far exceed his ability to store them.

Chairperson Baker stated that he makes arrangements to put those vehicles in some other place. If a shipment is arriving that exhausts his ability to provide storage then he would review the ordinance and determine that they need to establish an off-site storage that meets the needs during this time.

Supervisor Walls asked where the language is for this; if the intent is to make it industrial zoning where it is allowed it is not written in the language.

Commissioner Willson stated that the dealer needs an escape valve and he doesn't see it in here.

Commissioner Hines stated that if a dealership has a 5 acre parcel, can the dealer store as many cars as he can fit on the lot.

Mr. Lewan replied yes. He stated that there is a 10 foot setback to pavement and there are landscape requirements and detention requirements that are going to use some of the area. He stated that site design factors would have to be considered but they can use as much of the site as he can use.

Commissioner Sclesky asked if they should reach out to the dealerships to ask them what would be their storage area "Plan B" if they got inventory that they get excessive inventory.

Mr. Lewan replied that "Plan B" would still require foresight because they would have to go through site plan review. If they have an immediate problem, this does not help them.

Commissioner Sclesky asked if there was something the Township could help them with so this does not occur.

Chairperson Baker confirmed that there was no guidance currently on automobile storage at car dealerships in the ordinance.

Mr. Lewan concurred.

Commissioner Willson stated that if someone walked into a dealership, there would immediately be an argument over what storage is and what is for sale. He explained the prepping procedure for cars making them ready for sale. He suggested that the long row of cars to the left of the Deeby dealership in the front are cars ready for sale. He stated that it is a problem to have cars in storage in such a tight area, it makes it difficult especially in the winter.

Clerk Moreau asked if it was any more of a problem than if the car was down the road at another site.

Commissioners discussed parking storage needs of automobile dealerships.

Chairperson Baker asked if they should use language to guide the dealership to off-site locations for storage.

Commissioner Willson stated that the dealer would prefer as close as possible, paved and lighted. If there is a business that is closed down on Dixie Highway, do they want to allow a dealership to park cars there? Can they lease the property from the owner? Do they want them hidden?

Commissioners discussed off-site parking.

Commissioner Hines asked how this was going to impact Al Deeby dealership.

Supervisor Walls stated that it is not going to until he submits a plan. He will have to do that because Deeby's use of the adjacent lot is finite. Deeby must find a way to expand his operations if the business is going to survive.

Mr. Lewan stated that if the site is being used, there is a provision in the ordinance that says once parking is designated as parking for the business, it can't be used for anything else. So, if a business was using a parking area for parking, they could not start using it for car storage. Car storage is a use and it requires site plan approval; it is not customer parking or employee parking.

Supervisor Walls stated that he is now defining car storage as something different than parking. Under the current ordinance, they don't have that separation, it is all parking.

Chairperson Baker asked if the dealer has any idea what inventory is coming, or if the cars just are delivered without warning.

Trustee Vallad stated that they would have to look at all of the franchise agreements but they do know that they are coming.

Commissioner Hines asked if the area behind the Waypoint Church could be leased to be used for parking.

Supervisor Walls stated that the church could come back to the committee and asked for an amendment to the PUD.

Commissioner Hines asked if Dixie Baptist Church could lease their parking lot to be used for car parking.

Mr. Lewan indicated that they would have to amend their site plan in some form. They might be able to use it if the Church could prove their circumstances have changed and they no longer need this large parking lot. It is a process and cannot be used to solve an emergency overage of cars that need to be stored.

Supervisor Walls stated that in both cases, Deeby and Szott, it wasn't that they didn't have notice, they didn't have options.

Chairperson Baker stated that if a dealer wanted to store vehicles on a site that is not included in their original plan, the Township will have to give them guidance on where to seek that site by providing setbacks, zoning and other items. If the site that they choose is dedicated to parking for the facility then even though it meets the other requirement, they could either need site plan or a variance.

Mr. Lewan stated that if the site plan amendment was to use designated parking spaces that were originally put in excess of the ordinance requirements, then he could see that the excess spaces could be used for car storage. The reason is because they are not required parking spaces. If the request brings their available parking spaces below what the ordinance requires to be dedicated to parking, then it would require some type of variance. Mr. Lewan indicated that right now, dedicated car storage is not mentioned anywhere in the ordinance.

Commissioners discussed which zoning the car storage parking should be allowed.

Clerk Moreau asked if there was thought in determining a maximum number for sales area. They have the minimum for customer and employee parking and she thought that the goal was not to have a sea of parking. She suggested having a maximum number of cars that are prepped and ready for sales that are visible and accessible and more directly oriented to the road and building. Anything beyond that maximum would need to be more screened, on-site or off-site. She suggested having a good number for display vehicles that meet the standards for parking spaces.

Commissioner Willson stated that the maximum is really determined by the size of the property and the dealers are aware of how many cars they should have on site to make a certain number of sales. Deeby doesn't have enough property but he is using every inch he has to keep his inventory and if you restrict that, you could be restricting his ability to do business.

Clerk Moreau replied that she is not interested in restricting it to the point that she is handcuffed.

Commissioner Hines asked what the intent is in that proposal.

Clerk Moreau replied that the intent is to provide enough sales area that is reasonable and anything that is beyond that is more screened and set back. She stated that she understands the dealerships get a large inventory that they have to deal with but that doesn't mean it has to turn into a mass parking lot area to be viewed by the rest of the Township.

Commissioner Willson stated that Deeby looked pretty well ordered usually. There is customer parking in the front and everything else in the back.

Clerk Moreau disagreed. She stated that when you are driving along Dixie Highway and you see cars lined up from middle of the the Bordines parking lot all of the way to the end of the Deeby site. She stated that it is a massive parking lot.

Commissioner Hines replied that it is a car dealership and you expect that because that is the use. It isn't a recreational park.

Clerk Moreau stated that she objects to the amount of frontage along Dixie Highway that is devoted to parked cars.

Commissioner Hines suggested that the maximum number of cars on display that Clerk Moreau referred to is for new dealerships coming in.

Clerk Moreau replied that any big store coming into Springfield Township needs to understand that it is not our goal to have parking front and center. She realizes that Deeby has cars for sale and display and a reasonable amount should be allowed which can be visible from the road and which would allow them to conduct business.

Commissioner Hines stated that a maximum number other than what the ordinance allows she disagrees with because that is the use that they zoned it for.

Trustee Vallad stated that the site plan was approved for a specific use which has changed.

Commissioner Hines stated that only allowing a dealership to have a certain number of cars prepped and ready to sell is not appropriate.

Clerk Moreau stated that there are restrictions on all commercial uses. She would like to know from the dealers how many spots they need for active sales that would allow them to do their work and then provide for storage on site in a specific area. She doesn't think the Township has an obligation to have parking spots for every vehicle that shows up when inventory is bursting at the seams.

Commissioner Hines asked if Clerk Moreau was trying to determine a maximum number of display vehicles, a maximum number of total vehicles or a maximum number of storage vehicles.

Clerk Moreau replied that she was specifically talking about display vehicles and anything beyond that is provided for in a vehicle storage area. She referred to the old Saturn dealership as a good example with the display vehicles in the front and the storage area in the back. She suggested that the Deeby area for sales right now is too small and doubling that area would be a good estimate, not counting the area in between Bordines and Deeby. Anything beyond this area for sales belongs in an area that is delineated as storage.

Chairperson Baker stated that they are trying to refine the site to determine where storage is appropriate. When site plans are brought to them, they should point out what parking will be devoted to storage, what will be devoted to employees and service and the remainder of spaces will be devoted to sales. They could evaluate it during the site plan review process. He asked if they wanted this freedom to evaluate each individual situation or if they wanted numerical limitations based on something like acreage or frontage. There is an expectation that he has that a dealer would not go from setback to setback and cover every inch of greenbelt with car parking. They need to determine what the suitable use is and not limit the dealer.

Commissioner Hines asked if they needed to make standards for auto dealers that were different from regular commercial standards. She stated if some other business can do things on the property, the automobile dealer should be able to have the same amount of impervious surface.

Commissioners, Supervisor Walls and Mr. Lewan discussed the storage of items in different zoning districts and whether or not they should add ordinance language to clearly define storage for auto dealerships.

Mr. Lewan stated that if they added M1 as off-site storage zoning district, this could be considered a safety valve.

Commissioners concurred.

Mr. Lewan confirmed principal permitted use in M1 would be added and the business would still have to go through site plan.

Commissioners concurred.

Mr. Lewan stated that Clerk Moreau also brought up the location of display vehicles. The only standard in the language now is that they cannot be in the greenbelt. He pointed out in B.2. added language such that storage of vehicles that aren't part of a dealership should be setback 100 feet from the right of way so it gets the car storage back

Commissioner Hines stated that if it is industrial zoning, why do they care.

Mr. Lewan stated that they could make it 100 feet on thoroughfares but less in internal lots.

Supervisor Walls stated that he does not like the looks of Bordines with all of the cars, but he doesn't get to make decisions based on what he likes. All we currently say in the ordinance is parking. If you add this 100 foot change, we are saying that cars have to be back 100 feet but another business can have building and landscape materials 35 feet from Dixie Highway. The point is, if we are going to require things being a further distance from the road, it needs to be consistent. There are businesses that are allowed in C-2 that don't require extra setback requirements.

Chairperson Baker and Mr. Lewan confirmed that even though storage is listed as a principle permitted use in M1, it still requires a site plan.

Supervisor Walls asked if they could store at Holly Greens Storage or Savoie.

Mr. Lewan replied that in theory they probably could. If there was a site plan approved with the area considered to be approved as storage. He confirmed that he would add M-1 as a permitted use and he would remove the 100 foot setback requirement.

Commissioners agreed.

Supervisor Walls asked if the parking use would be able to be approved by the administrative site plan review.

Mr. Lewan used the example of Dixie Baptist Church and asked the Commission if they wanted to make an option for the dealership to go to the administrative site plan review committee.

Supervisor Walls confirmed that this would not be a minor change; administrative site plan review committee is supposed to evaluate minor changes only. He was thinking of an existing industrial site that wanted to make their extra parking area available to a dealership for storage.

Mr. Lewan confirmed that this would be going from parking to storage and could probably be evaluated through the administrative site plan review committee if the site had excess parking.

Chairperson Baker confirmed that this provision could not be used to store junk.

Clerk Moreau suggested that it can be changed to say “auto vehicle inventory storage.”

Commissioners concurred.

Mr. Lewan answered that he thinks this section covers it; he will add additional language as suggested.

## **2. Dixie Design Guidelines**

Mr. Lewan summarized the latest draft of the Dixie Highway Design Guidelines document dated August 14, 2015. He confirmed receipt of the comments from Commissioner Whiting and Commissioner Hopper.

Clerk Moreau stated that on page 9, the distance between the posts, it was 12’ and now it is 8’.

Mr. Lewan continued his summary of the Dixie Highway Design Guidelines document. Regarding the fencing detail, the idea is not to require the fencing detail because of the expense, but to provide property owners with incentive to put this in. A business could reduce their setback to 25 feet if the business was to include this site element.

Supervisor Walls suggested including an overhead picture showing the fence.

Clerk Moreau suggested showing some shrubbery and plantings too, not just the fence.

Commissioner Leddy suggested having the curvilinear sidewalk on the overhead.

Commissioner Willson asked about the distance from the sidewalk to the roadway so that he feels he is safe while using it.

Mr. Lewan stated that there are some recommended distances for both separation and for the feeling of safety. He will look into this.

Clerk Moreau suggested that the fencing should move closer to the building.

Mr. Lewan concurred.

Mr. Lewan continued with the summary of the document with sign details. He added that the Crossroads sign should be replaced because it does not fit, top center, page 14.

Supervisor Walls and Clerk Moreau concurred.

Mr. Lewan stated that he will change this because they are trying to get to a dark background with light lettering, it is more visible for vehicles and the backlighting is more effective.

Commissioner Hines asked if they are going to run into a branded sign that can't be the light on dark background.

Mr. Lewan stated that the business would complain about it, but they would conform.

Commissioners confirmed that frequently there are variations in logos that would allow them to conform.

Mr. Lewan stated that it might come up but they would have to deal with those situations individually.

Commissioner Sclesky asked if they were tending to recommend more stone on the base of the signs instead of brick.

Clerk Moreau stated that the committee agreed on brick or stone.

Chairperson Baker concurred.

Mr. Lewan stated that page 14 indicates that architectural elements of building can be reflected in sign detail including color and detail.

Mr. Lewan continued with the summary of the document, Dixie Highway Design Guidelines.

Commissioner Hines agreed with the tree plantings in the parking lot diagram. Frequently plants and shrubs that are planted in the islands are not maintained.

Clerk Moreau indicated that the picture titled “bioswale” should be depicted to look like a bioswale.

Mr. Lewan concurred.

Mr. Lewan continued his summary of the document, Dixie Highway Design Guidelines.

Clerk Moreau asked about the inclusion of the information from Independence Township showing the typical site configuration versus what is preferred. She and Supervisor Walls had asked for a similar type of diagram to be included and she doesn’t see it. She stated that it would make sense as an appendix or within the body.

Mr. Lewan concurred.

Mr. Lewan stated that they were planning on just allowing the 25 foot setback if the businesses put in the desired fence but then he took this out of the document. He stated that there was concern that they were giving away too much. Then, he added the reduced setback in as a planned development option. He stated that in a number of cases, the developer would come in front of the Commission with a Planned Development Option during site plan review. He stated that the Commission could review it at that time and decide if the inclusion of the desired features like the fence was enough to automatically grant the 25 foot setback without variance.

Supervisor Walls suggested that they use the fence detail with landscaping as incentive.

Commissioner Hines asked why the fence is so valuable.

Mr. Lewan answered that it is a unifying element of the corridor.

Clerk Moreau stated that the committee was not trying to create a border; they were trying to create an accent within landscape which can be used to unify the corridor. They are now allowing the narrow end of the building to come closer to the road and the parking and landscape in between buildings. With the required architectural style and building materials, it’s a good trade-off to allow the building closer to the road with the fence detail and landscape.

Mr. Lewan pointed out the Canton Township wall along a thoroughfare. Canton Township is building it whereas in this case, the developer is putting in the fence and the landscaping and they should give them something for putting in those unifying elements.

Commissioner Hines stated that this is a great document to show developers exactly what they want.

Supervisor Walls commented on dark colors when printed.

Commissioner Sclesky confirmed the comments provided by Supervisor Walls and indicated that it looks entirely different pulled up on a computer screen and when printed. The colors are very different depending on the method you are using to look at it. He really likes the diagram on page 23 with the examples of the buildings and the look.

Commissioner Leddy asked what is hanging from the light poles.

Mr. Lewan confirmed that they are banners.

Mr. Lewan asked all of the Commissioners to email him with any comments, corrections, etc.

Clerk Moreau stated that she would like to develop the sign appendix a little bit more. She suggested having notes next to each showing what is favorable about each. She suggested removing the sign example with the curved part at the top.

Commissioner Willson stated that this is beautifully done and the pictures tell the story including the architecture, signage and stone and brickwork. He stated that they just need to get the font and colors straightened out.

Mr. Lewan explained that all of the colors given are described as some type of key and they want to include the key.

Clerk Moreau stated that they should look at a proof before they run copies. She is leery of putting color numbers because then instead of given a range of colors, they are specifying a certain shade only and that is not their intent.

Mr. Lewan concurred. He stated that eventually this document will be on the website but they leave out the color page because everyone's computers are different.

Clerk Moreau suggested that they put a disclaimer on the bottom that they would need to see the Township for the correct color page.

Mr. Lewan concurred.

Supervisor Walls suggested that page #3 is over the top; it is more than a little excessive of the ordinance standard. He stated that page 27, says “properly well lit”; the word well should be omitted.

Chairperson Baker suggested that they should remove the phone numbers from the sample signs.

Mr. Lewan agreed; he will remove them.

Clerk Moreau confirmed that she received favorable comments from Treasurer Dubre and Trustee Hensler regarding the document.

**Commissioner Hines moved to forward the Dixie Highway Design Guidelines to the Township Board for their review and action after edits as discussed. Supported by Commissioner Willson. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Leddy, Sclesky, Willson. Voted no: None. Absent: Hopper, Whiting. Motion Carried.**

Supervisor Walls added that all edits and comments should be forwarded to Mr. Lewan in the next two days.

Mr. Lewan confirmed that he will aim on providing the finished document by August 28, 2015 to the Township to be included in Township Board packets.

New Business:

None

Other Business:

**1. Priority List**

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

Public Comment:

Trustee Vallad stated that the emphasis in this document is on the big open parcels and he encouraged the Commissioners to look at the properties and see how they would be redeveloped. He wonders how the newly developed parcels are going to mesh with the older developed parcels. He suggested that this is something to talk about going forward.

Mr. Lewan stated that these design standards also have small picture implications because all of the design guidelines are not going to be able to be met on every single site but the document gives them flexibility.

Chairperson Baker stated that they have tried to create a set of fairly clear design expectations that a developer would use no matter where their site is in this area. They are looking for the developer to provide the innovative approach.

Clerk Moreau agreed with Chairperson Baker. She stated that it is not their responsibility to come up with layouts on all properties; they have no way of knowing what is going to be developed first. This is a vision.

Adjournment:

**Commissioner Sclesky moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:10 p.m. Supported by Commissioner Willson. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Leddy, Sclesky, Willson. Voted no: None. Absent: Hopper, Whiting. Motion Carried.**

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Erin A. Mattice, Recording Secretary