

Springfield Township  
Planning Commission Meeting  
Minutes April 15, 2014

Call to Order: Chairperson Baker called the April 15, 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  
Sally Elmiger, Planner, Carlisle Wortman, Associates

Staff Present

Collin W. Walls, Supervisor

Approval of Agenda:

**Commissioner Willson 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 March 18, 2014 Planning Commission meeting**

**Commissioner Hopper moved to approve the minutes of the March 18, 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. Dixie Corridor Utility Study**

Supervisor Walls summarized the process of creating the Dixie Corridor Utility Study. He stated the study was a culmination of information that could be provided to developers or property owners. It addresses a perception that the Township has dealt with for many years. Springfield Township decided not to acquire capacity in the Clinton-Oakland sewer extension in the 1960's. In 1972, the first Master Plan included policy statements like encourage the extension of sewers and zoning fit that policy. At that time, well over 50% of the Township was zoned for lot sizes less than ½ acre.

There was a study done by the WRC in the early to mid 80's regarding expansion of the sewer system which Springfield Township participated in to the extent of Dixie Corridor. At that time, the communities in the Clinton-Oakland system were not interested in the expansion. The 2000 Dixie Corridor plan first isolated the Dixie Corridor in terms of Planning. In early 2008 the Township began the update process of the Dixie Corridor Plan. The new Supervisor and Clerk got onboard on this process and an update was drafted and presented to the Township Board and the Planning Commission in 2010, but was never completed or approved. This Utility Study presented tonight actually came from a recommendation of the property owners and representatives from the Planning Commission and Township Board back in 2009 but it didn't get started until 2012. The intent of the work plan approved would be that Carlisle Wortman would do the planning studies and Hubbell, Roth and Clark would look at the sanitary and water system. Hubbell, Roth and Clark contracted with Dave Wardin to provide consulting for non-sewer wastewater treatment, also known as decentralized wastewater treatment or septic systems. A draft was received from HRC in the summer of 2013. It was decided then that they needed to change gears. Sally Elmiger was asked to meld all the pieces together into a readable document and this is the report before the Commission tonight. It was difficult for HRC to look at the options that weren't potable water. We used guidance from Steve McGee out of Groveland Township because he has experience with this issue and they have done it with a series of wells and dry wells. Development and zoning has been impacted for decades by a myth that sewers are the answer to every communities wastewater needs. The EPA has recognized that properly designed decentralized wastewater treatment can be safe, green, economically viable and a permanent solution. This should come across in this report. The sewer option is extremely expensive and politically challenging.

Ms. Sally Elmiger provided a brief overview of the report summarizing all of the different sections. The purpose of the study is to inform the next version of the Dixie Highway Corridor Plan. They did this by taking the main study area and looking at it in 3 different ways. The first is looking at utilities that would serve the entire stretch from I-75 to Davisburg Road. The second way was to look at it in zones; a Local Development Zone, a Bridge Valley Village Zone and a Regional Development Zone. They looked at the existing and future land uses that are identified in the Master Plan. They also looked at the development potential of the area. These calculations were taking densities that are typical for an area that is served by these utilities. Dick Carlisle recalled that in the development of the last Dixie Highway Corridor Update, he did a development potential calculation. He scaled the densities back just a bit primarily because the way that the

Township oversees development would not allow everything without consideration of the natural features. There are a lot of natural features on the corridor. She summarized the wastewater section and the water options presented in the document.

Commissioner Hines expressed that she was happy with the document. She asked what the expectation was for tonight.

Ms. Elmiger stated that the report does conclude with items for consideration by the Planning Commission: if they think that the Master Plan needs to be updated or amended, if they do make these recommendations, there are suggestions for modifications to the zoning ordinance that would allow for things like the interconnected individual wells or updating the overlay district to modify the densities allowed.

Commissioner Hines asked if this would be adopted by the Township Board.

Supervisor Walls stated that the intent is that this will be an update to the 2000 Dixie Corridor Plan. It can also be used as an independent report.

Commissioner Hines asked if they got any comments back from the Township Board members.

Supervisor Walls answered that Clerk Moreau has comments about the report but could not be here this evening because she was ill.

Commissioner Hopper stated that he was glad the reference to the storm water was in the report. If there have been advancements in the technology that would affect the Design and Construction Standards that were adopted, the Commission should be made aware and make adjustments. The good thing would be the consistency throughout the Township. He stated that the plan is great but it needs to be taken to the next step. This is a communication tool that should be incorporated into the Dixie Corridor Plan and then this can be incorporated into the Master Plan. He mentioned that the report is clear and easy to read and he hopes when they take it to the next step, that they hinge everything on the recommendations.

Commissioner Leddy stated that the report shows that there is development potential.

Commissioner Sclesky stated that the document was informational and showed the expectations for the corridor. He stated that a lot of the options that are in the report that do not even have to be there because this is not the direction that the Township is going to go. He stated that with the open land areas like Bordines, there is more potential for group well and group treatment centers similar to Kroger. This report can be shrunk down to only the viable options that can be adapted into the Master Plan. Developers can then see what has to be done for different properties. He stated that the report is very easy to read and he complimented Ms. Elmiger on her efforts.

Commissioner Leddy concurred. He asked about the Township cost.

Supervisor Walls answered that the report was written so that the developer assumes 100% of the cost of construction and operation. He stated that if that is not clear, it needs to be.

Commissioner Whiting stated that the report is very informative and she concurred with Commissioner Sclesky that they should keep a version for background information, but move the doable parts to the Master Plan.

Commissioner Hopper stated that he thinks of it as background information and it shows that they are not forcing a person to utilize an options and that everything has been thought out and considered. Eventually the options should be provided to future developers.

Ms. Elmiger stated that they could create an executive summary which summarizes the results so that if a developer wants all of the details, they could reference the entire document. She stated that the case needs to be made that it has been studied and it is not possible.

Commissioner Willson complimented Ms. Elmiger on her work on the report. He stated that a couple of years ago, they had grandiose ideas of development. In the report, it is mentioned that 50% or 2/3rds of the density is more realistic. He stated the tables on pages 45, 46 and 47 are important to get out to the public. He stated that the insertions of dollar costs are important attention getters.

Commissioner Baker complimented Ms. Elmiger on the document. It created clarity from a large amount of information that was anecdotal but that is now quantitative. This yielded some defined parameters that Dixie Highway could support in regards to future land use. They now know what is real and possible and this document has a lot of things to consider as they proceed with the Master Plan work. He concurred with the idea of an executive summary. He asked about the regional zone and asked if anything changes with the Clarkston Methodist Church in the old Saturn dealership.

Supervisor Walls stated that the reference to these parcels had to do with the land mass based on the potential development plans that were discussed and not the number of current users.

Commissioner Hines questioned the meaning of the Utility Service District boundary identified on the maps.

Ms. Elmiger answered that this is just identifying the study area and suggested changing it to Study Area because it is currently misleading.

Commissioner Hines stated that on page 23, the term batch reactors is mentioned and she asked the meaning of this term.

Ms. Elmiger replied that she would have to confer with Randy Ford.

Supervisor Walls answered that the batch reactor is more of a treatment plant option. It is a mechanical treatment plant.

Ms. Elmiger suggested adding a brief description to the document.

Commissioner Hines added that on page 21, under regulatory requirements, it is identified as being limited to 350 gallons per day per acre. She asked what type of facility would produce that amount.

Ms. Elmiger replied that this was a typical residential home consisting of 4 bedrooms.

Commissioner Willson asked that if he was a developer and he read through this and he wanted to put a big box store in, what this new reality would do to bring in or discourage development in the Township along the corridor.

Ms. Elmiger stated that it depends on market demand. For example, when the new Kroger went in, the market demand was high and it made sense.

Supervisor Walls stated that the Redico project was 60,000 square feet proposed with a Home Depot and Target and they planned on doing their own sewage treatment.

Commissioner Hopper stated that the Auburn Hills Meijers was the most expensive to develop. If a developer really wants it, they will find a way. He stated that the EPA standards change.

Supervisor Walls answered it would depend on what the specific uses are. The 3 or 4 restaurant uses that Redico planned couldn't have been properly planned. Mr. Wardin also stated that what generates the significant waste stream and cost is related to food service and dairy products. Mr. Wardin indicated that a typical Walmart store waste generation is less than a 3 bedroom house.

Commissioner Sclesky stated that a new business wouldn't have a water bill and that needs to be taken into consideration and would encourage a new business. The developer would need to know that they would get a return on their investment. He asked where they go from here.

Supervisor Walls stated that it will be used to finish the Dixie Corridor Plan.

Commissioner Hines stated that the Planning Commission would make this a part of the Dixie Corridor Plan.

Supervisor Walls concurred.

Commissioner Sclesky indicated that it could be used for additional development in other parts of the Township too.

Commissioner Baker asked about the map on page 37; he asked that the existing well be a different color so it is easy to distinguish. He stated that on page 36, he asked about the second paragraph under water sources for fire suppression, he asked what is the meaning of using the existing water until the fire department arrives. He asked if this meant that the Fire Department is bringing water with them.

Supervisor Walls answered that the Fire Department is hooking up to the water source when they get there.

Commissioner Baker stated that the way it is written it seems as if the residents or property owner are using the water source until the Fire Department gets there.

Supervisor Walls answered he believes that the average response time is 8 to 10 minutes.

Ms. Elmiger confirmed that she would correct this sentence to make sure the meaning is understood.

Commissioner Baker stated that on page 22, it calls out item #5, Regulatory process and this should match with the previous page.

Ms. Elmiger concurred.

Commissioner Baker stated that on page 2, the first paragraph indicates that there is some information placed "here" and he was not sure if it was at that place in the paragraph or if it was referencing the appendix.

Ms. Elmiger concurred and will correct so it is clearly identifying the appendix.

Commissioner Hines stated that the word "that" needs to be eliminated on page 4.

Ms. Elmiger concurred.

Commissioner Willson stated that on page 16, the abbreviation for department is "Dept".

Ms. Elmiger concurred.

Commissioner Hines stated that on page 16, it should be corrected to read the City of the Village of Clarkston.

Commissioner Baker stated that on page 32, suggested the addition of the title of the agreement mentioned.

Ms. Elmiger concurred.

Commissioner Hopper stated that the map on page #37, provide the site at Kroger where the Township fire trucks fill up. He stated that there is a well proposed at Bridge Lake;

another area that would be easy to access would be the water source behind the old Whoopee Bowl property.

Supervisor Walls answered that getting the water up the hill would be almost impossible. These sites were just meant to show coverage for these proposed dry wells.

Commissioner Hines stated that on page 30, “costs generated was used” should be corrected.

Ms. Elmiger concurred.

Supervisor Walls asked the Planning Commission’s opinion on the first two pages of the Appendix and whether or not they added anything to the report.

Ms. Elmiger stated that she spoke to Craig Strong about this and the possibility of a designer reading this document and having the specifics.

Supervisor Walls stated that his concern is that they have nothing to do with the report. The designer or architect should know the Building Code.

Commissioner Hopper suggested that it didn’t add anything and since the important sentence was at the top of page 36, these two pages aren’t needed.

Commissioner Hines pointed out an error on page 46, “construction of individual wells.”

Ms. Elmiger concurred.

Commissioner Hines stated that on page 1 of the Appendix, should be “filter out” sediment and the sentence two lines down is missing an “s”.

Commissioner Whiting stated that the term Utility Service District also should be removed where it appears in the Appendix.

Commissioner Baker stated that the Utility Study is to be interwoven in the Dixie Corridor Plan. This Plan will be referenced for use by prospective developers, Township officials and to help with the Master Plan. He stated that the Commission is in acceptance of the document after corrections are made.

Supervisor Walls stated that the Planning Commission would probably want to revisit the Dixie Corridor Update from 2010 with this Dixie Corridor Utility Study in mind to look at the future land use map in that report and make adjustments that they think are fitting. He stated that we can provide this document again. He stated that within that 2010 document there are a lot of excellent development ideas that should not get lost. He stated that they should also look at the densities in the document. He recommended that Ms. Elmiger and Mr. Lewan also take a look at the 2010 Update draft and make recommendations before the next meeting.

Commissioner Whiting asked about the Sub-Committee that they had proposed putting together and where that would fit in.

Supervisor Walls stated that it was his belief that the Sub-Committee was set up to look at the Strategic Plan which is not on the priority list right now. They need to finish the Utility Study and fold it into the Dixie Corridor Plan and then perhaps move onto the Strategic Plan.

Commissioner Whiting stated that she thought the Sub-Committee was looking at the Dixie Corridor.

Mr. Lewan stated that they are going to make some changes to the Utility Study based on the comments and they will bring it back. This is a separate document that will be used to finish the Corridor Study.

Supervisor Walls answered that it can be. His understanding was that it was never anticipated to be a stand alone document but that this information was critical to the Dixie Corridor Plan. But, it has come out so that it can be used alone and it has application far beyond the Corridor itself.

Commissioner Baker stated that they are working up in a foundational sense in that they could not do the Dixie Corridor Plan without the Dixie Corridor Utility Study which they are looking at tonight. This Study allows them to move forward and bring the conclusions of the Utility Study to be reflected in the Dixie Corridor Plan Update. This Dixie Corridor Plan Update document becomes foundational as they move forward to the Strategic Plan which is a part of moving them to the Master Plan. The Master Plan is the ultimate end of this. Once the Dixie Corridor Plan Update was completed, the Sub-Committee would use this as a foundational document where necessary to come up with helping define the strategic items that they thought were of most relevance for alignment between the Planning Commission and Township Board. They needed to have potentially more information and help from the Township Planner to help them see the Master Plan in a way they have not previously seen it with objectives, outcomes and ways that they would know when they have arrived at the plan that is present in the community 5 years from now. Prior to this, the collective understanding was that the Master Plan was a document that reflected history, present state with some demographic items and a plan for how they thought the next several years would be just because this is how things will morph without a lot of them playing constructive roles to fashion it a certain way. The Strategic effort was making sure that they had reached some kind of alignment as a group consisting of the Planning Commission and Township Board to make sure are they seeing themselves marching in the same direction. Now they put all of the rest of the items together to form up the entire Master Plan with those Strategic processes being alignment items that they are seeing in a similar way with similar priorities.

Commissioner Baker stated that they have not had a Sub-Committee meeting set yet because they are finishing the foundational items. They are ready so that when they have finished those milestone moments, it will be time for the group to engage.

Commissioners concurred.

Mr. Lewan stated to keep this going, the corrections need to be made and then it will go to the Township Board so the Commission has to decide if they need to see the document again before it goes to the Board.

**Commissioner Whiting moved to accept the Dixie Corridor Utility Study and with the recommended changes made, recommend it to the Township Board to be accepted and its concepts to be included in future planning and it is to be used to move the Dixie Corridor Plan Update in a forward fashion. Seconded by Commissioner Hines. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Leddy, Sclesky, Whiting, Willson. Voted no: None. Absent: None. Motion Carried.**

Old Business:

**1. Administrative Site Plan Approval - discussion**

Mr. Lewan stated that Supervisor Walls brought to his attention that there were inconsistencies with the Administrative Site Plan Approval in the ordinance. He provided a summary of the Administrative Site Plan Approval documents that were given to the Commissioners prior to the meeting. He believes that the ordinance should be clear and not needing interpretation and indicated that this was his goal with these changes.

Commissioner Whiting stated that she liked how it is organized and found it to be easy to understand. She stated on page 1, #3 she suggested adding “with the exception of” before “individual single family detached dwellings”, if that is the meaning intended.

Mr. Lewan concurred.

Commissioner Whiting stated that on page 7, 6.f. should read “shall be a minimum of 18 feet in width.”

Mr. Lewan concurred. He stated that he tried to address Collin’s comments and this will be reflected in the next draft. This is written as to not exempt uses that are not covered under GAAMP. It is not as permissive as the existing ordinance. There are certain agriculture uses that are exempt from general zoning. If it is the Township’s desire to not be as strict, he can amend the language to reflect that. Supervisor Walls indicated a concern that people that have some agriculture accessory to a single family home and wanting those items to be exempt.

Supervisor Walls stated that they always have been and he also wanted it to be in alignment with the definition of farm present in the ordinance.

Mr. Lewan added language to make those accessory uses permissible. He stated that these changes will be reflected in the next draft.

Commissioner Leddy asked about how enforceable the grading is if no site plan has been proposed. He recalled the property behind Bordines that was clear cut.

Supervisor Walls answered that this was not clear cut in anticipation of development according to what we were told.

Commissioner Baker stated that on page 5 on the existing language that refers to Township Clerk or his designee, he suggested making it gender neutral.

Commissioner Hopper asked if these amendments address all of the administrative review conflicts.

Supervisor Walls answered that it eliminated the first one and the third one and reduced the middle one. This list for the committee should include the committee's ability to determine that something is minor. This will give the committee jurisdiction and force them into agreement first.

Commissioner Baker stated that if the majority of the committee wants a full blown site plan review then that is what happens. He didn't see any language that the approval has to be unanimous or can it be the majority.

Mr. Lewan concurred. He stated that the Commission needs to consider what is allowed for administrative site plan; they are giving the authority to the Committee for these defined changes as outlined in the draft. He explained those situations that are in the draft that will be allowed to be approved by Committee.

Supervisor Walls stated that the parking provisions seem to be more restrictive than needed.

Mr. Lewan stated that he will rewrite this section because it was meant to be more permissive. An administrative review allows the Committee to ask either the Planner or the Engineer or both to review the site plan. He suggested that d. pertaining to moving the building around probably doesn't need to be there. He continued to review the items that the Committee could review administratively. He reiterated that this review was only for existing buildings or structures. Any brand new building would have to come before the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Baker asked about a horizontal grade elevation.

Mr. Lewan concurred; he suggested changing it to grade or elevation changes.

Commissioner Hines asked if a business would have to go through the review for change of use.

Mr. Lewan stated that it would depend on the use. If the parking area is changing or expanding, the answer is yes. If there is a substantial use change, then a review is necessary.

Commissioner Sclesky stated that this is an attempt to simplify the process.

Commissioner Baker stated that they had a process for the administrative review but there are currently 3 different methodologies and this was an attempt to align and create consistency.

Mr. Lewan stated that Supervisor Walls indicated that currently there is entirely too much interpretation on his behalf and these amendments were designed to correct this.

Commissioner Leddy asked if there was any provision so a neighbor could object to the administrative review.

Mr. Lewan answered no; these minor adjustments are seen to be objectionable and the Committee can always send it to the Planning Commission.

Supervisor Walls stated that the Committee is using the same criteria.

Commissioner Baker stated that it is not that the administrative review is a new thing but this is an attempt to make it much more understood and aligned.

Commissioner Hines asked why the Ellis Barn did not qualify for an administrative review.

Supervisor Walls answered because it was a Special Land Use. Mr. Lewan concurred.

Mr. Lewan stated that he will make corrections based on the comments made this evening and he will bring the document back next month.

Old Business:

**1. Priority Task List**

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

Adjournment:

**Commissioner Willson moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 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