

NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP Township Board Retreat Minutes February 27, 2015

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE

The workshop was called to order at 4:10 P.M. by Supervisor Engstrom at 1111 Six Mile Road.

Fink led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Marilyn Engstrom, Supervisor	Present
Kathy Braun, Treasurer	Present (arrived 4:23 P.M.)
Angela Westover, Clerk	Present
Janet Chick, Trustee	Present
Wayne Dockett, Trustee	Absent
Jacki Otto, Trustee	Present (arrived 4:18 P.M.)
Tracy Thomas, Trustee	Present

Also present:

Township Manager Howard Fink
Township Attorneys Paul Burns and Brad Maynes
Recording Secretary Lisa Lemble
Members of the community

FIRST CALL TO THE PUBLIC

No comments.

INTENTIONS

The Board reviewed their intentions about what they expected to accomplish at the retreat.

GOALS

The Board listed possible goals to work on, then each person indicated their top five:

Highest priorities:

- Develop appropriate fiscal priorities
- Framing the development debate more concretely and specifically. "Growth," "no growth," "smart growth," etc., all mean different things to different people

Other high priorities:

- Schools
- Economic development—acquisition or disposition of real property, what to do with 75 Barker Road, Van Curler property, etc.
- Foundation for infrastructure (sewers)

Lower priorities:

- Administrative
- Consolidation of government services
- Regulatory priorities
- Maintaining existing facilities (e.g. Public Safety parking lot)
- Making sure the necessary infrastructure is in place—utilities, administration, etc.
- Review Police and Fire

PRIORITIZING/ GOAL RELATED PROJECTS/ ACTION ITEMS

Develop appropriate fiscal priorities

The Board discussed how \$400-500K (the balance in excess of 85% of annual expenditures) could be spent:

Votes	Est. cost
5 Board Room construction	\$100-150K
6 Parking lot for Community Center	\$100-150K
Create reserves for infrastructure maint	***
0 Community Garden	3K
People's Express service	\$20K****
4 Property acquisition.....	5K
1 Buying down debt.....	*
5 General Parks & Rec (ball fields, etc.).....	\$10-20K
0 Roads	essentially unlimited**
0 Reduce taxes.....	?
4 Salaries of elected officials	Put in budget
1 Downtown development incentives	10K

* Township has little debt, and debt that is bonded has a prepayment penalty. The Township can, however, give money to the Fire Department to pay down its debt on their fire truck.

** Millions could be spent. It would be good to have all main roads paved because they are cheaper to maintain than dirt roads. There is no funding available from the State; Michigan is 50th of 50 states in road funding. Going to the Road Commission with \$1M in funding from a millage changes the conversation. Consider creating a Roads Reserve

*** Should be in the budget each year. Will be an action item.

**** Currently in legal review.

@ The Township probably cannot give money to the public schools or do work on their behalf.

Framing the development debate more concretely and specifically

Fink cautioned that the Planning Commission needs to allow the Planning Commission to operate as an independent body, and whatever they send to the Board the Board can adopt or not. However, it is totally appropriate for the Board to say it wants the Commission to work on certain things, e.g. reviewing the Master Plan, revising zoning districts, without giving instructions about specifics.

The Board discussed zoning and development mechanisms and pressures in general.

A member of the public asked what the goal of more development is. Responses included:

- It is not clear whether residential development pays for itself or not, but it probably is at the bottom of the list of net positive tax producers. However, people create the demand for uses that do become a significant net positive.

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- More residential and shopping opportunities for the people who are already here are desired.
- The Township is too spread out; it would bring people together.
- We want to remain Northfield Township while being more desirable.
- There is a sense that rather than just staying the same we are losing ground in desirability, housing values, etc., while areas around are doing better.
- When residents become successful and want to buy a more expensive house they move out of the Township. (Brain drain).

Action items:

- Do a legal analysis of the master plan amendment request.
- Prepare a land conditions map showing large percable parcels.
- Research models of good development following community disagreements about growth.

- Consider allocating funds for a full review of the Master Plan.

It was also agreed to consider making the Deputy Clerk a full-time position.

SECOND CALL TO THE PUBLIC

No comments.

ADJOURNMENT

- ▶ **Motion:** Engstrom moved, Westover supported, that the meeting be adjourned.
Motion carried 6—0 on a voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:03 P.M.

Submitted by Lisa Lemble.

Corrections to the originally issued minutes are indicated as follows:

Wording removed is ~~stricken through~~;
Wording added is underlined.

Approved by the Township Board on April 14, 2015.

Angela Westover, Clerk

Official minutes of all meetings are available on the Township's website at http://www.twp-northfield.org/government/township_board_of_trustees/