

**NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP**  
**Township Board**  
**Minutes of Town Hall Special Meeting**  
**February 25, 2020**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 P.M. by Supervisor Chockley at 8350 Main Street.

**ROLL CALL**

Marlene Chockley, Supervisor	Present
Kathleen Manley, Clerk	Present
Lenore Zelenock, Treasurer	Present
Tawn Beliger, Trustee	Absent with notice
Janet Chick, Trustee	Absent with notice
Wayne Dockett, Trustee	Present
Jacki Otto, Trustee	Present

Also present:

Public Safety Director William Wagner  
Township Manager Steven Aynes  
Recording Secretary Lisa Lemble  
Members of the community

**TOWN HALL DISCUSSION**

Chockley invited everyone present to submit questions on cards to be put in a basket and pulled out to be read by Manley.

Questions:

- *How many voting (Board) members live outside the area served by sewers?* Four.
- *What benefits will residents on well and septic see from the tax for sewer plant improvements?* Only those on sewer will see an increase in fees. It is true that general obligation bonds, if used, could end up being paid for by all residents, but the Township has never defaulted on such bonds, so only those on the sewer system will pay for the improvements. Using revenue bonds the additional cost will be about \$103/year per customer; using general bonds the cost will be about \$92. Although I (Zelenock) am not on the sewer, I am in favor of using revenue bonds. I (Dockett) think only those on the sewer system should pay.
- *Will people now on well/septic who eventually connect to the sewer reap the benefits of the payment made now by those on the system?* Those who connect pay connection fees in addition to user fees.
- *Will those in Green Oak on the sewer Township also see an increase in fees?* Yes.
- *Is a public hearing required for using general revenue bonds.* Yes, there will be a hearing in front of the Township Board for either kind of bond.
- *Is upgrading of sewer lines included in the proposed bonding?* No, but upgrades will be needed sometime

in the near future, especially the line under US-23 at Barker Road.

- *Why are current residents paying for improvements to the sewer when this is needed for new development on the North Village property?* This is needed for existing customers, not for new development, and any new users must pay a connection fee.
- *Why didn't you send out a questionnaire to the public after deciding to use the North Village site for housing, rather than only for a park? Or why didn't you bring a change in the Master Plan to the public?* We had been working on the synthesis plan for North Village for three years with public meetings, surveys, etc., and it still includes a waterfront park. [Drawings showing the synthesis plan were presented]. We should work harder to get a development proposal that is closer to the synthesis plan (with more parkland and less area used for development).
- *What plans did the previous owner have for the North Village property?* The site was previously zoned for a shopping center, but it did not sell after being on the market for about 20 years. After the owner died, his widow approached the Township about buying it.
- *A total of 8-10 acres was supposed to be preserved for a park on the North Village site, and the area being committed to roads make much of what is proposed for park unusable for recreation. Five acres is not enough for the amenities originally planned (including a playground and dog park).* The use of the property is still under negotiation, but the Master Plan was adopted with the synthesis plan in it.
- *Sue Shink, County Commissioner: A meeting was held yesterday between the Township and the County. The County doesn't have the money to put into this park, but it can provide guidance and technical assistance. A grant application deadline is coming up on April 1<sup>st</sup> for funding from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, and there is particular interested in waterfront development. A consultant at the meeting thought the synthesis plan was a good one, and he suggested that the Township stick with that plan and find a developer who would respect it. She said if the Roxbury Development Group isn't interested, perhaps they could suggest someone else. The consultant also suggested getting a good appraisal of the property and working with a park planner.*  
  
Livonia Builders did not disrespect the Township's plan (Otto), and negotiations are ongoing.
- *Ken Dignan, Whitmore Lake school board: The school district is excited about additional housing, but when the Township was offered the property by the Van Curler family at a low price there was discussion about using the site to drive redevelopment of the downtown area. If the Township continues to work with Livonia Builders it needs to be emphasized to them that*

**Northfield Township Board Meeting  
Minutes of Regular Meeting  
Public Safety Building; 8350 Main Street  
March 25, 2020**

*commercial development needs to be part of the project. Livonia Builders does housing, and there are areas left at the front of the site for commercial development, but we can do better in our negotiations with Livonia Builders or find another developer who will present a proposal that is more in line with the synthesis plan.*

- *How many people present want to see a different plan for the North Village than what is proposed? Most of those present raised their hands. I'm a relative newcomer (1980) and I get the feeling that a lot of people want more of it to be park. I don't go downtown often because there is nothing there for me to do. There are two lakes with no public access. When there was public access lots of people came from outside the area to visit.*
- *Originally I was excited about the idea of senior housing for people in the community to retire into, but I do not like the proposed plan. When the property was originally purchased it was supposed to be a park—Northfield Community Park.*
- *There is no public access to the lake, and there is currently a division between those who live in the town and those in the rural areas, partly because there are no public amenities downtown. We need to re-engage the community with more public discussion (Zelenock).*
- *An Ann Arbor resident: It sounds like a promise was made to the Township residents about a park, and it seems appropriate to have more public discussion.*
- *The Township has had a reputation of being a difficult place for developers to work in. What is the Township going to do about that? The Township sent out a request for proposals, and the proposals that came in did not match the plan. The Township needs to stick to its plan (Zelenock). There were other proposals, as well, including one for senior housing, but they withdrew, and another for about 200 apartments. The Township also needs to address how a park will be paid for (Otto). The entire site should be retained for park (Dockett).*
- *No opinion has been sought from the DNR about whether the park plans will work. MDOT hasn't been consulted about whether the planned development,*

*roads, and parking will be allowed. The Washtenaw County Road Commission may not allow the proposed curb cuts.*

- *How would the community like to be notified about opportunities for public input? Facebook? Email? Website? The Township has a Township newsletter (and people can ask to be added to the email distribution list) and Facebook page. Postcards, email, and word-of-mouth are good.*
- *We are better off stopping the current proposal and getting what the Township planned for. A previous plan called for rerouting of Main Street as part of the redevelopment of the area; this was supposed to be a plan for improvement of business in the community. If there is a place for people for recreate they will come and spend money. There was supposed to be mixed use on the site with business near the lake and some housing further up.*
- *Can the Township provide an update on the marijuana application review process?*
- *Town Hall meetings are great, but they should be quarterly, apart from regular Board meetings, and for a longer period of time. I agree with you; we were not expecting this turnout (Manley).*
- *Has the Board looked out for any preparedness issues (weather, health, electrical, etc.). Nobody is prepared for anything (example: corona virus in China traveling through the rest of the world). We operate with the Washtenaw County emergency management plan (Chief Wagner). After the Dexter tornado several years ago a warning siren was added at Six Mile and US-23 (in addition to the one at Barker and US-23). The County is going to a County-wide notification system (expansion of Nixle). The State Health Department works hard on virus issues, and they are constantly planning for outbreaks.*
- *Has the Board ever addressed the issue of 5G technology on health of the community? Washtenaw County's broadband task force is working on this.*

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 7:02 P.M.

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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 March 17, 2020.

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Kathleen Manley, Clerk