

NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP

Township Board Special Meeting

Minutes

March 3, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Supervisor Chockley at 8350 Main Street.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE

Trustee Beliger provided a brief invocation and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

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

Also present:

Township attorney Mariah Fink
Township Manager Steven Aynes
Members of the community

FIRST CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Larry Roman, Nollar Road, Mary Devlin, 9211 Brookside, Christine Miles, 9096 Wildwood Lake, Barbara Griffith, DDA Chair, 438 Jennings Road, Faith Wheeler, 371 Grove, Margaret Riddell, 65141 W. Eight Mile, and Kristin Delaney, 8475 Main, commented on 75 Barker Road. Richard Dilbone, 7230 Hellner Road, commented on bonding for the equalization basin. Patricia Lavictor, 104 Emerald Circle, commented on communication plans. Ken Dignan, 9211 Hillcrest, commented on bonding for the equalization basin and 75 Barker Road. David Gordon, Hellner Road, commented on 75 Barker Road and communications plans.

BOARD MEMBER RESPONSE

Board members commented on:

- whether or not 75 Barker should be sold or razed, the proposals submitted, how much public parking can be accommodated on the site, what kind of approval for new uses would be required, and the offers submitted for the property.
- suggestions from the public regarding communications.
- bonding for the equalization basin.

ADOPT AGENDA

- ▶ **Motion:** Beliger moved, Chick seconded, that the agenda be adopted as presented.
Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.

AGENDA ITEMS

1.

Consider Purchase Offers for 75 Barker

Some Board members said offers contingent upon uses which would require Township approval should not be considered.

Developer Robb Munger, Allendale, Michigan, presented information about other renovation projects he has been involved in, including the Cobbs and Mitchell building in Cadillac for which he received the Michigan Governor's award for historic preservation. He said he is interested in redeveloping 75 Barker Road because he sees that people in the Township care about the site and the community, and he thinks redevelopment of this site could be a bright spot that jump starts other development in the downtown.

In answer to questions, Munger said his objective is for the parking to be public and he may add a building on the site, but he would need a property survey to know how much parking could be provided and whether there is room for another building. He also said he does not intend to sell the property after development, he may add a building on the site, he would maintain the parking that is designated for public use, and he is aware of and would follow the Township's strategic plan.

Board member comments included:

- They would want to know how much public parking would be provided before agreeing to sell.
- They are concerned about an additional building being added because of the loss of parking area.
- The building was built by community members and it should be retained rather than being razed.

Chockley noted there are four other offers for the property, all contingent upon use for marijuana businesses, and she invited comments about them.

Matt Ritz said his offer is contingent on the site being used for a marijuana business, and he noted they have submitted a marijuana business application for the adjacent Sandy Massage property, so perhaps there is an opportunity for using the properties together to provide the desired public parking.

Mariah Fink said she has reviewed the offers, and she recommended that a development agreement and a deed restriction governing public parking be part of any sale.

- ▶ **Motion #1:** Beliger moved, Chockley seconded, that the Board authorize the negotiation of a mutually acceptable contract with Mr. Munger by the Township Manager and Township Attorney for the sale of 75 Barker.

Attorney Fink clarified that the intent of the Board is to enter into negotiations with Mr. Munger, but not to accept his purchase offer as proposed. The Board briefly discussed what the value of the property is, whether the sale should be subject to any contingencies, and whether the property should be relisted to insure the highest price is received on behalf of taxpayers.

- ▶ **Motion #2:** Chick called the question. **Motion #2 carried 6—1 on a roll call vote, Dockett opposed.**

Regarding the original motion, the Board agreed that their understanding is that negotiations will address price, a development agreement, deed restrictions, a survey, and an appraisal.

- Motion #1 carried 6—1 on a roll call vote, Dockett opposed.**

2.

**Discuss Communication Plan for Announcements
of Special Meetings and Events**

The Board referred to Aynes' memo about notifying the public of matters of interest. Comments included:

- There is a difference between a general notification to the public about issues of interest, legally required notices for things such as bonding for the retention basin, and the postcard required by township ordinance prior to incurring expenses of \$250,000 or more.
- The cost of a postcard to all residents would be \$3,000-\$4,000.
- Residents need to take some initiative to be informed.
- An overall communication plan is needed specifying what notifications will be done for various types of events and issues.
- Regular mailings (e.g. taxes, assessments, newsletters) can be used to include information about other events of interest to the public.
- The Township website makes the "Reader's Digest" version of meetings available in the form of minutes, and anyone can sign up there to receive agendas and packets in advance of meetings.
- Yard signs have been used for clean-up events, Trunkapaloozas, etc.
- Confusion can be avoided by having consistent dates and times for regular events and meetings.
- The public is invited to submit suggestions for methods the Township can use to communicate better with residents.

► **Motion:** Beliger moved, Chockley seconded, to articulate a communication plan.

Additional comments included:

- The plan needs to specify what constitutes a major event, when notice should be given, and what type of notice (e.g. sending a postcard and putting up a street banner at a certain time regarding adopting the Master Plan).
- People are busy, so the Township should do more to keep the public informed rather than expecting them to monitor Township government activity.

Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.

► **Motion:** Chockley moved, Chick seconded, that Chick, Zelenock, and Aynes serve on a Communication Plan Committee and bring a draft plan to the Board for consideration. **Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.**

The Board discussed whether a special effort should be made to notify the public of the April 7th special meeting about the North Village property. It was agreed that the Communications Committee should bring information about options and costs to the Board.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Regular Township Board meetings in March have been shifted from the 10th and 24th to the 17th and 31st (to avoid conflict with the primary election on the 10th).
- A Town Hall meeting regarding the North Village property will be held on Tuesday, April 7th.
- Delinquent personal property taxes may still be paid at the Township Hall, but real property taxes must now be paid at the County.
- Property assessments may be protested on March 10th and 12th at the Board of Review.

SECOND CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Ken Dignan, Mary Devlin, Jim Nelson, 7777 Sutton, Margaret Riddell, Mary Tummins, East Shore Drive, and Gerry Herman, 8465 Earhart, commented on communications efforts. Patricia Lavictor commented on the 75 Barker Road property. Richard Dilbone asked about bonding for the equalization basin. David Gordon and Faith Wheeler comment on communications and 75 Barker Road. Kristen Delaney, 8475 Main Street, questioned the purpose of the meeting. Udo Huff, 7431 Whitmore Lake Road, commented on prayer at Township meetings and social media communications.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Board members commented on the retention basin bonding process, voting procedures, communication plans, and 75 Barker Road. They thanked the public for participating and urged everyone to vote.

Zelenock asked that Planning Commission involvement in planning for 75 Barker Road be added to a March agenda. Dockett asked that new audio/video equipment be added to a future agenda. Chockley suggested that the Public Safety Building heating and cooling system be added to an agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

► **Motion:** Beliger moved, Chockley seconded, that the meeting be adjourned.
Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 9:42 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 March 17, 2020.

Kathleen Manley, Clerk

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