

NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION Minutes of Regular Meeting September 3, 2014

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Roll call:

Janet Chick	Present
Marlene Chockley	Present
Brad Cousino	Present
Kenneth Dignan	Absent with notice
Sam Iaquinto	Present
Larry Roman	Absent with notice

Also present:

Township Manager Howard Fink
Planning Consultant Douglas Lewan,
Carlisle/Wortman Associates
Recording Secretary Lisa Lemble
Members of the Community

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chockley noted that the correct date of the minutes to be approved is August 20th, and action will not be taken on the items under Old Business. She asked that the presentation by Michael Moran be moved to follow the First Call to the Public.

- **Motion:** Iaquinto moved, Chick supported, that the agenda be adopted as amended.
Motion carried 4—0 on a voice vote.

5. FIRST CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Biltmore Request to Amend the Master Plan.

Chockley provided an update on this request. She said fiscal, traffic, sewer, and water studies are being arranged and any action the Commission takes on the request will be scheduled in advance and noticed on agendas. Lewan said he plans to have an explanatory handout about the formal process for amending the Master Plan available by the next meeting, and he noted that the process is still in the beginning stages.

Ed Wojtys, 6225 Hellner Road, asked about the traffic study being requested. David Gordon, 5558 Hellner Road, made comments in defense of the minimum five acre requirement in the AR district for preserving farming options and the need Biltmore will have for sewer service to the site in question.

Nowatzke Trucking Request. Dale Brewer, 11548 East Shore Drive, suggested that the Commission have the

Township's legal counsel review the motion in the August 20th minutes regarding the Nowatzke request prior to approving the minutes.

6. POLICY REVIEW & DISCUSSION

A. Presentation by Michael Moran, Ann Arbor Township Supervisor.

Michael Moran, Ann Arbor Township Supervisor, said Ann Arbor Township is concerned about the request by Biltmore Development to amend Northfield Township's Master Plan. He gave an overview of the history of interest in preserving farmland in the area since the 1990s. He said a cost of services study in 1999 comparing the cost of acquiring perpetual easements to the cost of providing services to homes developed on that land showed that it would be cost-effective to acquire the easements, even if the Township paid the entire cost. He said they also found that half of their residents were willing to pay up to \$100/resident for up to 20 years to preserve open space, and many were willing to pay more than that.

He said by 2003 the Township had adopted a purchase of development rights ordinance and by a 78% vote residents approved .7 mils for 20 years to purchase such rights. He said the first purchase of rights on a 250 acre farm was made in 2006, and since then the Township has preserved 11,000 acres in the area south of Joy Road at a cost of \$9.3 million in Township, City of Ann Arbor, and federal funds. He presented a map showing these areas, noting that much of it are just south of the area Biltmore would like to develop.

Moran said most of this land had been held in families for several generations and sale of the land was intended to provide retirement funds for those families. He said the Township started to see interest from younger people in starting small farms, but the high cost of land was limiting those efforts. He said in light of this an agreement with a developer was reached to allow a cluster development, and the developer gave 250 acres of adjacent farmland to the Township which the Township now runs as an education farm. He described some of the projects going on there, and noted that farms in Ann Arbor Township are allowed to have up to a 2500 sq. ft. commercial kitchen by right which allows a wider variety of uses.

Moran said the decade of time and \$9.3 million spent on this effort has made them act somewhat in alarm to the proposed Biltmore project directly on the north. He said Ann Arbor Township hopes Northfield Township keeps these efforts and the needs for these types of programs in mind, and even if some changes are allowed in the Township's study area that it at least the five acre minimum lot requirement is retained.

He also said Ann Arbor Township has concerns about traffic on Whitmore Lake Road. He noted Ann Arbor

Township responds to US-23 accidents very frequently, and at those times Whitmore Lake Road provides the only viable alternative north-south option.

Moran noted that both townships are members of the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS) which has models about traffic on Whitmore Lake Road under different conditions.

Regarding the proposed development on the north and south sides of Dhu Varren Road west of Nixon Road which had been referred to at past meetings, Moran said under a 2008 agreement with the City of Ann Arbor the City can annex that land or any of the land in that area south of M-14 which is separated from the rest of Ann Arbor Township by the major barrier of M-14.

Iaquinto said it is his understanding that these developments proposed for Ann Arbor Township will affect US-23 traffic. Moran said he has not seen any traffic studies yet about that, but he knows the City has concerns about the effect of that traffic on Dhu Varren Road. In answer to a question from Iaquinto, Moran said Ann Arbor Township will receive nothing in return for allowing those areas to be annexed.

Chockley said she drives by the education farm frequently and it is a very interesting project. In answer to a question from Chick, Moran said most of the area in the northern part of Ann Arbor Township is zoned agricultural. Chick said most of Northfield Township is zoned agricultural, and since developments cannot be placed on unpaved roads, Northfield Township does not have many options for where it allows development.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

Biltmore Master Plan Amendment Request. Chockley referred to a letter from Barton Hills about their concerns about this proposal.

8. REPORTS

7A. Board of Trustees

Chick reported that at the August 26th workshop meeting:

- Bids for completion of the Barker Road non-motorized path were opened.
- Candidates for the open Planning Commission position were interviewed.
- A presentation on the County-wide road millage was made.

7B. ZBA

No report.

7C. Staff Report

Nothing to report.

7D. Planning Consultant

Lewan reported that the required site plan pre-application meeting for the Nowatzke project was held

recently, and a pre-application meeting for an expansion of the Northfield Township Library will be held soon.

9. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

10. OLD BUSINESS

10A. Whitmore Lake North Territorial (aka Mixed Use South) Overlay District.

Lewan noted he had made minor changes as discussed previously by the Commission. Chockley questioned where building regulations, such as height limits, are addressed. Lewan said there are none other than those of the underlying zoning districts, but he agreed it would be a good idea to consider addressing that. He said, for instance, building heights greater than the underlying district could require conditional approval.

Chockley questioned whether it is appropriate to designate single-family dwellings as an allowed use within the boundaries of this district. Lewan said the intent of allowing those is to prevent any existing single-family homes from becoming non-conformities, but that new single-family development would not meet the goals of the district.

Chockley said she thought golf courses were going to be eliminated as allowed uses. There was also discussion about making sure that drive-up banks and restaurants would not be prohibited by the wording in the list of commercial uses. Lewan said the intent was to allow all uses allowed in the underlying zoning districts, but he will review the list of uses again.

In answer to a question from Chockley, Lewan said outdoor restaurant seating does not have to be a conditional use, but many communities designate it that way to allow more review.

Chockley said she thought "Showroom for sales of new cars and equipment" was going to be moved from permitted to conditional, and that mobile home and trailer court sales and repair were to be removed. Lewan said he will check on those.

In answer to a question from Chockley, Lewan said "drive-in facilities" are businesses where customers are served in their cars. He said this is common historically in many zoning ordinances, but perhaps it is not necessary.

Cousino asked if there is a definition for "agricultural services." Lewan said he will check on this. In answer to a question from Cousino, Lewan said "space vehicles and parts" is a listed allowed use in the RTM district.

Lewan clarified that existing uses within the district boundaries would not become non-conforming.

- 10B. Amendment to Article 34.0—Residential/Office
- 10C. Amendment to Article 40.0—Limited Industrial
- 10D. Amendment to Article 41.0—General Industrial
- 10E. Amendment to Article 20.0—Enterprise Service

Lewan noted that the very minor changes proposed in these sections are part of the continuing review of the text of all zoning sections of the zoning ordinance.

He presented a map showing the areas in the Township that are currently zoned RO, LI, GI, and ES, noting that there is very little land with these designations, especially RO and ES. He said it might be worth considering whether the RO and ES districts might be combined. Iaquinto said they seem harmonious and suggested combining the districts before sending proposals for these revisions to the Township Board.

Chockley asked how “A dwelling unit combined with an office, provided that the proprietor of the office resides in the dwelling unit” in 34.03.A.6 is different than a home occupation. Lewan said there are different requirements for home occupations. Chockley suggested alternate wording for the height regulation section.

Iaquinto noted that if the RO and ES districts are combined, it would be important to make sure the RO uses are included in the Whitmore Lake North Territorial (aka Mixed Use South) Overlay District.

11. NEW BUSINESS

None.

12. MINUTES

August 20, 2014, Regular Meeting

Chockley referred to concerns expressed during the First Call to the Public about the motion regarding the

Nowatzke request. Lewan said the Washtenaw County Road Commission (WCRC) will apply its own conditions for conducting the study. Iaquinto questioned whether the Nowatzke request could be forwarded to the Township Board without the minutes that contain the motion being approved. Lewan said the Commission only makes a recommendation to the Board.

Two minor corrections were made to other sections of the minutes.

- ▶ **Motion:** Chick moved, Cousino supported, that the minutes of the August 20, 2014, regular meeting be approved as corrected, and to dispense with the reading. **Motion carried 4—0 on a voice vote.**

13. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS

Approval of Conditional Use Permits. In answer to a question from Iaquinto, Chick said the issue of whether the Commission or Township Board approves CUPs will be discussed by the Township Board in September.

14. SECOND CALL TO THE PUBLIC

None comments.

15. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING

October 1, 2014, at 7:00 P.M. at the Public Safety Building was announced as the next regular Commission meeting time and location. Chockley noted the September 17th meeting will be canceled.

16. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 P.M.

Prepared by Lisa Lemble.

Corrections to the originally issued minutes are indicated as follows:

Wording removed is ~~stricken through~~;

Wording added is underlined.

Adopted on October 15, 2014.

Marlene Chockley, Chair

Kenneth Dignan, Secretary

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