

**NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
Minutes of Regular Meeting  
March 4, 2015**

**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 (left at 8:55 P.M.)
Larry Roman	Present
Mark Stanalajczo	Present

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 asked that Approval of Minutes be moved to follow Policy Review.

- **Motion:** Iaquinto moved, Chick supported, that the agenda be adopted as amended.  
**Motion carried 6—0 on a voice vote.**

**5. FIRST CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

**Planning Process.** David Gordon, 5558 Hellner Road, said there should be some political protection between the Planning Commission and Township Board, urged open communication between Commission members and the public, and said the *Courant* is not an appropriate place for publication of Chockley's letter concerning development.

**6. CORRESPONDENCE**

Chockley reported that she received letters concerning growth in the Township from Mr. Kleinschmidt and Cecilia Infante.

**7. REPORTS**

**7A. Board of Trustees**

Chick reported:

- The Board preliminarily reviewed the employee handbook.
- The Board will discuss at their next meeting whether the Board or the Planning Commission will produce the updated Capital Improvements Plan.
- She informed the Board that the Commission will probably be requesting funding for a full review of the Master Plan.
- At a retreat on February 26<sup>th</sup> the Board determined their top goals.

**7B. ZBA**

No report.

**7C. Staff Report**

Nothing to report.

**7D. Planning Consultant**

Lewan reported that slow progress is being made on the detailed engineering for the Nowatzke project, and he held a variety of meetings about other items.

**8. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

None.

**9. OLD BUSINESS**

- 9A. Planning Commission Annual Report.** Chockley referred to the revised report she had prepared.

- **Motion:** Stanalajczo moved, Iaquinto supported, that the Annual Report to the Board of Trustees be approved as presented.  
**Motion carried 6—0 on a roll call vote.**

- 9B. Planning Commission 2015 Priorities.** Chockley referred to list of priorities and their rankings by Commissioners, and said the Commission will begin working on them.

**10. NEW BUSINESS**

**10A. Master Plan Update and Revision Issues.**

Lewan reviewed his memo regarding tasks and issues that have developed recently.

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Regarding the task identified by Lewan of addressing the Commission's request to Biltmore for three studies, Iaquinto said third parties were not required to produce any studies for the two Master Plans that were developed during his time as a Commissioner. He said he is willing to make a motion to retract those requirements.

Chick noted the Township is doing a sewer study, which was one of the three items requested from Biltmore. Regarding the traffic study, Lewan said he provided information to Biltmore about commissioning a traffic study centered on impacts on Whitmore Lake Road and its intersection with North Territorial. In answer to a question from Fink, Lewan said he does not know if the Washtenaw County Road Commission (WCRC) is willing share their level of service analyses.

Stanalajczo said the Biltmore request has pointed out problems with the current Master Plan, but he does not think it is appropriate to undertake a Plan revision at the request of a developer, so he is also not in favor of requiring a developer to undertake specific studies.

Chockley said the 1,500 homes Biltmore suggested might be built would generate ~~50,000~~ 15,000 vehicle trips, so considering a traffic study would be appropriate, and the Commission asked Biltmore to provide this to avoid having that expense borne by the Township. Lewan noted that Scio Township commissioned a traffic study for the I-94/Zeeb Road intersection, and that type of study could be done for the Territorial and Whitmore Lake Road intersection. Chockley said she agrees the fiscal impact study is not as important, but the sewer study is critical.

Fink said Chick is correct that traffic impact studies for Master Plan reviews are not inappropriate, but they are out of the ordinary, and he asked what the goal of such a study would be and what would be done with the information. He said an analysis of this area would not be the same as for the study done in Scio Township, and without knowing where the traffic outlets from the Biltmore site would be a true analysis will not be possible. Stanalajczo said a study of current conditions would not be useful for the 5, 10, and 15 year points in the future as the a buildout of 1,500 homes unfolded, but if the Commission wants it the cost should be covered by the Township.

Cousino said the entire issue of amending the Master Plan was not being considered prior to the Biltmore request, and it is obvious that there would be serious impacts with the addition of 1,500 homes to the area. Chick said it is not wrong to consider a Master Plan amendment. Chockley said although Biltmore was free to request an amendment to the Master Plan, the Commission was not required to agree to do so.

Roman said he agrees Biltmore should not be required to study traffic in the area, and he noted there is apparently a lot of information which could be provided to the Township from the County, State, and private sources.

Cousino said Biltmore would not be considering this development without the possibility of the sewer extension that is being considered along North Territorial. Fink said since it is not clear whether either the Whitmore Lake sewer assessment district (SAD) or the Biltmore project will happen; they need to be considered independently. Cousino said the area being considered by Biltmore was left in the Master Plan as agricultural because it was not served by sewer, so he questioned whether Biltmore would have considered making their request without the SAD having been proposed. Fink agreed that SAD probably created the momentum, but it is possible that other connection points for the Biltmore development could be provided at a similar cost.

Cousino said a 1,500 unit housing development would constitute a 50% increase in the number of homes in the Township. Stanalajczo said what the developer wants is irrelevant; the Commission needs to visualize what the community should look like in the future, and all types and densities of development need to be accommodated in order for the Plan to be defensible.

Lewan recalled that there was support last year from both the Commission and the Township Board to move forward with a sewer study based on Biltmore's request. Iaquinto said it seems that there is strong interest in having a traffic study for this area. Cousino said it would be helpful for the Township to have whatever data and studies the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the WCRC already have. Lewan said he can investigate that.

Fink said the sewer capacity study being prepared now will not address any specific issues related to the Biltmore development. Roman said he understands that, but the information resulting from the study, including capacity, will still be useful in analyzing this request.

Chockley questioned whether—if the sewer study shows a capacity for only another ~~1,500~~ 1,250 homes—the Township would want to commit to dedicating sewer service for all of those homes in one place. She said she thinks the Master Plan is a great one, and the Biltmore area was designated as low density because of the agricultural use and environmental impacts. She said Biltmore could get up to a 150% density bonus—equivalent to one unit per two acres—with the current zoning. Stanalajczo questioned whether sewer service could be denied because it could result in all of the sewer capacity being used up. Fink said he doubts it, but he does not know. Cousino said there is already land zoned for higher densities within the existing

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sewer districts, and he questioned what would happen if no sewer capacity was left for those properties. Fink said it would not whether it would be appropriate to hold back capacity for development that may or may not ever occur. He said that is a policy issue that the Board will have to address when the sewer service study is done.

Cousino questioned how the issue of leapfrogging development applies to the Biltmore request. Lewan said the Master Plan indicates sewer service should not be extended to allow leapfrog development. Fink said the end of the line in the proposed SAD would end 500-1000 feet from the next property, so what constitutes leapfrogging becomes a matter of policy and interpretation.

Chockley said she would like to get as much traffic study information as possible without the Township spending a lot of money. Lewan said there should be quite a bit of information available from the County, and he and Fink should be able to have that by the next meeting. Chockley said the Commission would also like to have the sewer study as soon as it is available.

Chick asked about the scientific survey of residents Lewan suggested in his memo. Fink highly recommended that any survey be done scientifically to insure that is representative of the community—random and sampled across multiple variables (geographic, income level, etc.). Chockley asked Lewan and Fink to work on getting quotes for this type of survey. Stanalajczo said if such a survey is done there would not be a need for visioning sessions which would be skewed by the input of those who decided to participate.

Regarding the studies requested from Biltmore, Lewan said there seems to be consensus that a cost of services study will not be required, and while a traffic study could still be requested, further consideration of that can be delayed until after publicly available information is reviewed.

[Iaquinto left at this point].

**11. POLICY REVIEW & DISCUSSION**

**Workshop Presentation: Site Plan Options allowed by the Zoning ordinance for Residential Zoning Classifications.** Lewan gave a slide presentation regarding density comparisons for zoning categories. He presented maximum densities for a sample 80 acre parcel assuming the best conditions (soils, natural features, etc.).

Zoning	Lot size	Layout	# Lots
ARMin.	5 acres	Conventional	13
AR1	acre typically	Open Space	30
LR2	acre min.	Conventional	32
LR1	acre min	Yield-Open Space	55
LR½	acre typically	Open Space	55
LRmin.	33K sq. ft.	Yield-Open Space	81
LR¾	acre typically	Open Space w/sewer	81
MDR¼	acre	Conventional	188

Lewan presented a land use map of the US-23 corridor between Ann Arbor and Brighton provided by the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG). He said it shows denser residential development around Whitmore and Horseshoe Lakes, then again more residential as Brighton is approached.

Chockley said the Huron River Watershed Council has received a grant to help communities prepare maps of Townships' green infrastructure. She said they offered to do this for Northfield Township and it could aid in the work of reviewing the Master Plan. She said they would start work in the spring and complete it by September. She said she will ask them to make a presentation to the Commission about this.

**12. MINUTES**

**February 18, 2015, Regular Meeting**

Chockley made several minor corrections.

- **Motion:** Stanalajczo moved, Chick supported, that the minutes of the February 18, 2015, regular meeting be approved as corrected, and to dispense with the reading. **Motion carried 7 5—0 on a voice vote.**

**13. SECOND CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

**Master Plan.** David Gordon, 5558 Hellner Road, said the cost of the last Master Plan was about \$35,000 and he questioned whether the top priority of the Commission would be amending the Master Plan if Biltmore had not made their request. He said none of the people in the proposed development area are in favor of it. He said he would like to see more presentations at Commission meetings about preserving open space, promoting farming, etc.

**14. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS**

Roman asked for information to be given to the Commission about the alternative infrastructure options for the limited Master Plan study area, and said he hopes any traffic study will be based on the proposed MDOT improvements to US-23. Cousino recalled that Biltmore specifically stated that they chose the site because it is in the Ann Arbor Public Schools (AAPS) district, and he questioned whether that will still be an attraction in light of AAPS seemingly opening up to enrollment from outside the district.

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Chick said everyone involved in developing the current master plan was very happy with it, and until the end of the process the expanded Master Plan study area was designated for higher density, but was changed at the end of the process to provide a buffer area to match agricultural preservation efforts being made by Ann Arbor Township. She added it is very good that the Township is doing a sewer study because the information is needed regardless of the Master Plan review.

**15. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING**

**March 18, 2015**, at 7:00 P.M. at the Public Safety Building was announced as the next regular Commission meeting time and location.

**16. ADJOURNMENT**

- ▶ **Motion:** Chick moved, Roman supported, that the meeting be adjourned.  
**Motion carried 7 5—0 on a voice vote.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:39 P.M.

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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 March 18, 2015.

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Marlene Chockley, Chair

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Mark Stanalajczo, Secretary

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