

NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION Minutes of Regular Meeting March 18, 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	Present
Sam Iaquinto	Present
Larry Roman	Present
Mark Stanalajczo	Absent with notice

Also present:

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

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chockley asked that item 10A be moved to follow Reports.

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

5. FIRST CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Community Survey. David Gordon, 5558 Hellner Road, suggested that the scope of the community survey being considered include questions about farmland and open space preservation as well as the items included in the 1996 survey, and that a wide range of constituents be included in developing the questions. He also provided a copy of Ann Arbor Township's community survey.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

Chockley said she received an email from Susan Shink about the value of equestrian developments in the Township.

7. REPORTS

7A. Board of Trustees

Chick reported that on March 10th the Board:

- Hired two staff people (Assessing Assistant and Deputy Clerk) and made the position of Deputy Clerk fulltime.
- Approved a contract to convert Public Safety Building lighting to LED to save money.
- Approved the amendment to the zoning ordinance for manufactured housing and the library conditional use permit.
- Voted to be the body that prepares the Capital Improvements Project, rather than the Planning Commission.
- Approved a resolution in support of the US-23 project.

7B. ZBA

Has not met since the last Planning Commission meeting.

7C. Staff Report

Nothing to report.

7D. Planning Consultant

Nothing to report.

10. NEW BUSINESS

10A. Presentation: Huron River Watershed Council Americana Grant for Green Infrastructure Mapping.

~~Kristine Olson~~ Olsson of the Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC) handed out information about the Americana Grant and reviewed the steps the HRWC would take with Northfield Township for this mapping project:

- Conduct a workshop/charrette with Township officials and members of the public to identify the Township's green infrastructure.
- Identify plan elements (master plan, zoning ordinance) it would be good for the community to have.
- Work on the County's Bioreserve map by doing field assessments of areas of interest.

Olsson said there is no cost to the Township for this and the Township would not be obligated to do anything following the assessment. She explained that this is only an inventory of physical conditions in the Township, and it would then be up to the Township to decide to make decisions about potential use of land. She noted they have done this for Ann Arbor Township and are already working with Webster Township, and she will be giving a presentation to Salem Township. In answer to a question from Chick, Olsson said if Northfield Township decides to proceed with this, the

HRWC's available time to work with 2-3 Townships will be filled.

Chockley said this would be a valuable piece of work to have and asked if there would be any objections to doing this. There were none. Olsson said the HRWC would need to set a date for the workshop (about 2 hours) and that could be at a Planning Commission meeting or at a different time, and after that the Commission would meet with her to review recommendations.

- ▶ **Motion:** Chockley moved, Chick supported, that the Planning Commission work with the Huron River Watershed Council to take advantage of the Americana grant for the purpose of green infrastructure planning.
Motion carried 6—0 on a roll call vote.

8. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

9. OLD BUSINESS

- 9A. Master Plan Update—Discussion of past studies associated with a 2006-2007 residential development proposal denied in the southwest quadrant.**

Chockley noted that Fink had provided copies of documentation from a 2006-7 residential proposal—Stratton Farms—which was denied by the Township as an example of what a dense type of project would look like. Lewan noted it was proposed as a rezoning via PUD with some clustering of housing and about 56% open space. He said it included a traffic study and cost of service study—items Commissioners have been interested in seeing related to the request for amendment of the Master Plan from Biltmore Development.

In answer to questions, Lewan confirmed that main reason the proposal was denied was that it did not conform to the Master Plan at the time which called for one unit per 10 acres for that property. Chockley said she found it interesting that the projection was for over 8,000 residents, 4,000 of which would be senior citizens, so the developer knew even then that the population is aging and took into consideration the idea of planning for people to age in place. Lewan said it is interesting that 56% of the site was proposed as open space, which is the type of thing the Township would like to see in submittals now. Chick said it was useful to have this information. Iaquinto said despite being very active in the community he does not remember hearing about this proposal; other Commissioners said they also do not remember it. Iaquinto says this shows how self-serving the Planning Commission was at that time. Chockley said the cost information included addressed only revenue (taxes, Senior Center dues), but not expenses for providing services.

- 9B. Residential Densities—follow-up discussion to the March 4th presentation.**

Lewan briefly reviewed the presentation he made on March 4th about the development possibilities for an 80 acre parcel of land in various zoning districts. He called for questions; there were none.

10. NEW BUSINESS

- 10A. Presentation: Huron River Watershed Council Americana Grant for Green Infrastructure Mapping.**

[Heard following Agenda Item 7].

- 10B. Citizen Survey—Status of request for proposal.**

Lewan reported that a request for proposals was sent to seven research/marketing firms in the area asking for responses by April 3rd. He said the firm chosen will work with the Township to choose questions and prepare a fair, representative survey. In answer to a question from Iaquinto, Lewan said he estimated the cost at about \$10,000. Chockley said she wants this to be a comprehensive survey that asks questions in a non-leading way.

- 10C. Traffic Study—Discussion of available studies and request for additional information.**

Lewan said he put together as much information as they could find from available sources, including from SEMCOG, but they have not been able to get any level of service information from the Washtenaw County Road Commission. He said Rushlow's office has quite a bit of information that they will be adding to this.

Dignan said if the US-23 project proceeds it could have a dramatic effect on area roadways and would make any traffic study between now and then useless. Lewan agreed, but said the idea behind gathering this information was to find out what information is currently available without going to the expense of undertaking a traffic study.

Chockley asked whether there are any plans to replace the N. Territorial bridge over US-23. Fink said the US-23 (Active Traffic Management) ATM lane improvement project is not guaranteed to be done, and at a Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS) meeting today there was a lot of debate with significant opposition to it, and this resulted in them delaying their vote until April. He said replacement of the North Territorial and Six Mile bridges, the roundabouts on either side of the bridge on North Territorial, and the relocation of Five Mile Road are being planned separately from the US-23 lane improvement proposal because they are considered to be safety improvements, rather than traffic management, and will probably be done even if the US-23 project is not approved. He noted the North Territorial bridge is

being planned at only the current two lane width despite efforts by him and Rushlow to upgrade it to four lanes and include bike lanes, but MDOT did agree to put the infrastructure in place to allow it to be widened in the future.

Fink said he is a vocal supporter of the US-23 ATM project, and he believes it will be approved, but there is no guarantee. He said it is not a perfect project, but from a policy standpoint he tries never to allow "perfect" to get in the way of "good."

In answer to a question from Iaquinto, Fink said the traffic circles at Lee Road have allowed the system to handle a greatly increased amount of traffic. Rushlow added they reduce the risk for backups on the bridge and onto the freeway.

Regarding the issue of traffic planning for future development, Rushlow said rather than a traffic impact study for a specific proposal or area, a Small Area Forecast can be done using demographics and other data to identify stress points in systems to help determine what specific things should be planned for (paving, road widening, shifting traffic, etc.). He said other improvements and proposed developments also need to be considered, even things like the proposed WALLY line which could develop far in the future. Chockley said this type of thing seems more valuable in revising the master plan, and she asked whether zoning of the land in the area would be considered. Rushlow said those things should be considered.

11. MINUTES

March 4, 2015, Regular Meeting

Chockley and Chick made several corrections.

- ▶ **Motion:** Iaquinto moved, Chick supported, that the minutes of the March 4, 2015, regular meeting be approved as corrected, and to dispense with the reading. **Motion carried 6—0 on a voice vote.**

12. POLICY REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

Chick said at the last Township Board meeting the issue came up of what distance constitutes leapfrogging in reference to development. Lewan said

he found the actual policy the Board adopted several years ago and he can provide that.

13. SECOND CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Biltmore/Master Plan Amendment. David Gordon said it is disturbing that there has been no discussion yet about whether or how the public will be involved in developing the community survey that is being planned. He also said it would be interesting to know how much development would be possible in the Township without any rezoning.

Gordon said regarding the Stratton Farms development, the consideration of that development was all open to the public.

Craig Warburton, 450 W. Joy Road, said it is clear the Commission is modifying its Master Plan to meet the needs of one developer.

14. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS

High Speed Internet. Cousino asked if the Commission can have any influence on getting high speed internet in the Township. He said this is a big problem. Fink said he encourages the Commission to talk about it, but unless the Township wants to build infrastructure there is probably no influence the Township can have.

Dignan said anyone wanting to help a local family that lost a child in a tragic accident this week they can contact him.

15. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING

April 1, 2015, at 7:00 P.M. at the Public Safety Building was announced as the next regular Commission meeting time and location. Chockley noted there is a potential for requests from three applicants.

16. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 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 April 1, 2015.

Marlene Chockley, Chair

Mark Stanalajczo, Secretary

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