

**Springfield Township  
Planning Commission -- Business Meeting  
Minutes of January 21, 2008**

**Call to Order:** Chair Roger Lamont called the January 21, 2008 Business Meeting of the Springfield Township Planning Commission to order at 7:30 p.m. at the Springfield Township Civic Center, 12000 Davisburg Rd., Davisburg, MI 48350

**Attendance:**

**Commissioners Present**

Roger Lamont  
Dean Baker  
Ruth Ann Hines  
Frank Aiello  
Bill Leddy  
Laura Moreau

**Commissioners Absent**

John Steckling

**Staff Present**

Nancy Strole

**Consultants Present**

Dick Carlisle  
Sally Elmiger

**Approval of Agenda:**

- **Commissioner Aiello moved to remove from the agenda and move to the February meeting: Old Business Item 2 (Shepard's Hollow/Colombiere Zoning, and New Business Items 2 (By-Laws Review), 3 (Dixie Highway Corridor) and 4 (Resource Conservation Potential Map Changes). Support by Commissioner Baker. Vote on the motion: Yes: Aiello, Baker, Hines, Lamont, Leddy, Moreau. No: none. Absent: Steckling. Motion carried.**

Chairperson Lamont mentioned that when the Commission decided it wanted to address these meeting items, it didn't set target dates as it used to do through its "Priority List," and he recommended that the Commission return to its practice of using a Priority List to set meeting dates for future agenda items.

**Public Comment:**     None

**Consent Agenda:**

Commissioner Aiello requested that the minutes from the December 6, 2007 meeting be amended as follows: On page 3, second paragraph, the second-to-last sentence should read: "Commissioner Aiello asked if a developable acre is the same as a developable acre in Troy, for example." Page 3, middle of third paragraph, the sentence should read:

"Commissioner Aiello said Carlisle/Wortman is the expert and he would look to them for guidance."

- **Commissioner Aiello moved to approve the Consent Agenda with the aforesaid changes. Support by Commissioner Hines. Vote on the motion: Yes: Aiello, Baker, Hines, Lamont, Leddy, Moreau. No: none. Absent: Steckling. Motion carried.**

- a) Approval of Minutes as amended: December 6, 2007  
Approval of Minutes: December 17, 2007
- b) Election of Officers for 2008: Roger Lamont, Chair  
John Steckling, Vice Chair  
Dean Baker, Secretary
- c) Communications: Receipt of Ordinance 26 and Zoning Map adopted changes.

#### **Old Business:**

##### **1. Master Plan Update**

##### **a) Commercial Market Analysis Information.**

Dick Carlisle explained that the Commercial Market Analysis in the Master Plan grew out of an analysis that Carlisle/Wortman did in the late 1980's that was part of an economic development plan that the Township had Carlisle/Wortman do, the focus of which was to retain existing businesses in the Township and to attempt to attract businesses in keeping with the character of the Township. The Township's philosophy was that its primary obligation regarding commercial development was to meet the needs of its residents. Over time, those needs may have changed as the population has grown, but the Commercial Market Analysis tool as applied here was only to estimate the supply of commercial acreage necessary to meet that demand, and we have continued to use that same methodology over the years. Carlisle stated that this methodology is an accepted, tried and true method in terms of translating spending power based on household income and then translating that into dollars spent on consumer goods and the amount spent on certain categories, such as food and household goods.

The dollars spent by the number of households in a given Trade Area are then translated to commercial acreage. Used as a planning tool to determine how much commercial acreage a community can support, the Trade Area has been limited to the geographical area of the community, while recognizing that it is a wash regarding spending outside and inside the community -- that as many dollars are imported as exported.

This provides a base amount of information and gives an indication of how much additional commercial acreage is needed to satisfy residents' needs, or whether there is a surplus. Then it becomes a tool for decision-making. For example, some communities have decided that they will become regional centers for commercial use, rather than just serving residents' needs.

Carlisle said he is reluctant to expand the Trade Area beyond Springfield Township, because we would then have to look at what the supply is in all those other areas. It can be done but currently is outside the scope of what has been done for this Master Plan. What we can do is refine our explanation to more carefully explain the purpose of this tool. We also could expand on the narrative by explaining some of the regional trends. This would provide the informational basis on which the Commission can then discuss policy.

Chair Lamont summarized Supervisor Walls' memo to the Commission dated January 21, in which he explained what is within the current scope of Carlisle/Wortman's work on the Master Plan update.

From a planning standpoint with regard to determining commercial acreage, Carlisle said the Commission needs to look at any existing constraints on development, such as lack of sewers. The character of the community, both physical and natural, also needs to be considered.

Commissioner Baker asked whether the formula that yielded the 82 acres account for the fact that Springfield does not have sewers. Carlisle said that the acreage is based on the number of households and spending on consumer-related goods.

Chair Lamont asked if land area needed for infrastructure is included in the 82 acres. Carlisle said, yes, it's accounted for.

Commissioner Aiello noted that there is an implicit policy choice in the formula which arrived at 82 acres, since it is planned to sustain residents' needs only. If we make a policy decision that we want to be a regional draw, we should offer more than 82 acres, and if we want to be more conservative, we should think about less. And maybe that's just how we use this tool. Carlisle said that Commissioner Aiello is correct regarding how this planning tool should be applied, and that the Master Plan narrative should include more extensive discussion to clarify how the tool is an indicator.

Commissioner Aiello asked if there was a metric to indicate if a region could sustain a particular development. Aiello said he thought the Commission should explicitly state in the Master Plan whether it wants to be more aggressive or conservative regarding commercial development. Carlisle suggested that the Master Plan make it very clear regarding the assumption and purpose of this planning tool and include more qualitative information (such as about regional trends) rather than simply include more quantitative analysis. Carlisle explained how the City of Troy had successfully used this

commercial market analysis formula as a planning tool in the 1980's, and to adjust their zoning based on that.

Commissioner Hines noted that most residents work outside the Township, and therefore shop outside the Township. She asked if it was realistic to think that Township residents could support 82 acres of commercial, explaining that no one is going to come from Independence Township to shop in Springfield. Is it realistic for Springfield to think it could become a big commercial draw, when it already exists a short drive away? Commissioner Aiello added that the Township wants long-term sustainability for commercial, while developers may view site development with a short-term horizon.

Sally Elmiger noted that the last Master Plan concluded that the Township could sustain 82 acres of commercial development, but there are 200 acres zoned for commercial. Yet there has not been a big influx of commercial development during this period. If the market forces are really there, Elmiger said, one would think that there would have been much more commercial development than what has occurred.

Dick Carlisle noted that Dixie Highway has historically been the main transportation route through the Township and is why we have commercial clusters there. Interchanges also attract commercial development. The scope of analysis can therefore be limited to the two interchanges and a few areas along Dixie Highway. There are also some physical constraints along some portions of Dixie Highway that make commercial development nearly impossible. Therefore, if the Commission were to consider expanding its commercial base, the ability to expand would be quite limited. So this is the type of information we should expand upon in the Master Plan narrative.

Commissioner Moreau said she didn't think we should have a policy that explicitly stated that the Township planned to be more aggressive or more conservative regarding commercial development. She said she thinks the current policy language that states "commercial, office and service uses should be primarily confined to meeting the needs of the Township residents" is appropriate. Commissioner Aiello stated that his suggestion on being more explicit was based on legal considerations and the ability to successfully defend the Master Plan. Commissioner Moreau said that Master Plan policy language is general and not meant to be exact.

Carlisle noted that municipalities must plan for a demonstrated need, and the commercial market analysis can help in that regard.

Chair Lamont asked whether the southern end of Dixie Highway, which has seen some proposals, might be planned differently.

Commissioner Baker suggested that, to fulfill Master Plan obligations to address commercial status, the Plan should include additional narrative explaining the background of the analysis that results in 82 acres: how that was arrived at and compare

it to existing commercial zoning. He noted that the Dixie Highway Corridor Study was an effort to address these planning and policy questions.

Chair Lamont noted that some communities have ordinances requiring bonds for large square footage buildings when constructed, to prevent abandonment of existing buildings and maintenance of existing buildings, and he suggested that the Township might want to look at that. He also suggested that Dixie Highway at I-75 should be defined or characterized as a different Trade Area than the rest of the Township, and that we should be proactive planning for the Dixie Highway/I-75 area.

Commissioner Leddy inquired about implementing a planning technique similar to transfer of development rights. Carlisle said, in that regard, it would help the Commission to identify existing improved/unimproved properties that are currently zoned commercial.

Commissioners discussed whether, due to work patterns, it was easier for residents to shop outside the Township or whether residents shop outside the Township because the services aren't available within the Township.

Chair Lamont stated that the Commission needs to identify those areas where there will be increased demand and be prepared, and to continue to identify those places such as the retail hub at the Dixie/Davisburg intersection for local shopping.

Carlisle indicated that he has sufficient direction from the Commission to revise the Commercial Market Analysis section.

**b) Background Studies**

The Commissioners and Sally Elmiger recommended language changes, most minor, on pages 14 and 16 in the Background Studies Summary; and on pages 88, 89, 103, 107, 113, 117, 118, 121, 128, 133, and 139 in the Background Studies section. Elmiger will make the changes.

**c) Revised Existing Land Use Map**

Sally Elmiger said that she made all the changes to the Existing Land Use Map that were discussed at the previous meeting. Commissioner Leddy questioned whether the Colombiere property should be revised to reflect the existing institutional area. Sally Elmiger said she would change that area to institutional. Commissioner Baker inquired about the utility line property cutting across the northwest section of the Township, which appears to be disconnected. Sally Elmiger and Clerk Strole will check. Sally Elmiger said that, now that the existing Land Use Map is agreed go, Carlisle/Wortman will compute total acreages and incorporate that information.

## **New Business:**

### **1. Master Plan Update**

#### **a) Transportation Plan**

Sally Elmiger said there are no changes proposed to the Transportation Plan. There also are no changes proposed to the National Functional Classifications map. There are, however, proposed revisions to the Pathway Plan.

Commissioner Moreau noted a typo on page 56. She also questioned the current accuracy of the statement on page 54: "The popularity of non-motorized transportation has grown significantly in recent years." Commission members discussed whether the statement was meant to refer to recreational use, or to transportation use for work or errands. Chair Lamont recommended leaving the statement as written. Since it doesn't specify a particular purpose (such as recreation or to commute to work), it could include a variety of purposes for using non-motorized transportation. The Commission agreed.

Commissioner Hines noted another typo on page 56 of the Pathway Plan.

#### **c) Pathway Plan**

Sally Elmiger pointed out that the Priority Pathways identified by the Planning Commission in 2005 are not reflected in the current Master Plan Pathway Plan. She said that the Priority Pathways should be shown in the Master Plan map, and she suggested that a distinction be made between Priority Pathways and General Route pathways. She also said that the Master Plan map Pathway Plan map should include the County's current Regional Pathways map. The Commission agreed with her suggestions.

#### **b) Natural Areas Plan**

Commissioner Aiello suggested updating the Natural Areas map to incorporate the Greenways Plan, which was developed by the Planning Commission and others, with the assistance of Oakland County Planning. Sally Elmiger agreed it should be considered. She will obtain the maps and provide them to the Planning Commission to review and compare to the existing Natural Areas map.

Clerk Strole pointed out that the 24 Natural Areas identified in the 2002 Master Plan need to be reviewed and some may need to be deleted, because they have since been developed. She pointed to the Shepard's Hollow Golf Course as an example. Sally suggested, and Clerk Strole concurred, that reference to the Upper Clinton Subwatershed Plan should be included in the Master Plan. Regarding the Long Lake Natural Area, Clerk Strole said she would provide Sally Elmiger with updated information to include in the Natural Resources section of the Background Studies.

**Other Business:**

Commissioner Aiello asked Clerk Strole whether the Township's Native Plants CD could be made accessible on our website, as he thought it would be great if we could. Strole said that we do have a link on our website to the EPA website, which put our information on its site. But EPA could not include on its website the CD's search function, which is what makes the information so useful and appealing. The EPA web posting was done in 2001, and Clerk Strole said she would check to see if advancements since then would enable us to post the CD with the search function on our website.

**Public Comment:** None

**Adjournment:**

Hearing no other business, Chair Lamont adjourned the meeting at 9:55 p.m.

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Nancy Strole, Acting Recording Secretary