

Springfield Township  
Planning Commission Meeting  
Minutes October 18, 2016

Call to Order: Chairperson Baker called the October 18, 2016 Business Meeting of the Springfield Township Planning Commission to order at 7:30 p.m. at the Springfield Township Civic Center, 12000 Davisburg Road, Davisburg, MI 48350.

Attendance:

Commissioners Present:

Dean Baker  
Ruth Ann Hines  
Dave Hopper  
George Mansour  
Linda Whiting

Commissioners Absent

Jason Pliska  
Kevin Sclesky

Consultants Present

Doug Lewan, Planner, Carlisle Wortman, Associates

Staff Present

Collin Walls, Supervisor  
Erin Mattice, Administrative Assistant

Approval of Agenda:

**Commissioner Hines moved to approve the agenda as amended removing Old Business Item 1, Angona Site Plan. Supported by Commissioner Whiting. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Whiting. Voted no: None. Absent: Pliska, Sclesky. Motion Carried.**

Public Comment:

None

Consent Agenda:

**1. Minutes of the September 20, 2016 Planning Commission Meeting**

**Commissioner Hopper moved to approve the minutes of the September 20, 2016 meeting as presented. Supported by Commissioner Hines. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Whiting. Voted no: None. Absent: Pliska, Sclesky. Motion Carried.**

Public Hearing:

None

Old Business:

None

New Business:

1. Discussion Session – Planning Priorities

Commissioners reviewed the list of priority topics provided in the packet.

**Lighting Ordinance Provisions:**

Commissioner Hopper stated that Kroger and McDonalds site plan brought some issues to the forefront regarding lighting. Most recently, with the Kroger site improvements, the lighting has improved, is safer and easier to get around at night. He suggested that they specify the type of lighting, color, etc. He stated that the AMA said that anything over 3000 lumens for road lights is detrimental. They feel that it causes lack of sleep. He stated that LED lights are better for safety, energy efficiency and maintenance. The LED lights are a benefit.

Commissioner Hopper stated that in the Dixie Highway Design Guidelines, there are lights shown that are not allowed per the ordinance. He pointed out the Civic Center lights which also are not allowed because they can be seen beyond the property boundary. He likes the lights and thinks they are appropriate but suggested that to meet the Design Guidelines, they don't want to make the developer go to the Zoning Board of Appeals. He stated that they also should look at the color of the light and he mentioned the CCI (Color Corrected Index).

Commissioner Mansour asked if a new development wanted a particular type of light, could it be part of the site plan approval?

Commissioner Hopper answered he hoped so. The Design Guidelines specify general parking lot lighting which shows the same type as Kroger. The majority of this lighting is going to be along Dixie and they have to incorporate the acceptance of these types of lights into the ordinance. He wonders what the color of the lighting is at Kroger. Developers like 4000 Lumens but at that level, you start to get blue color and that is what the eyes do not like. He suggested that Doug look at the ordinance and allow this type of lighting. He also suggested that they insist on LED lights for new projects.

Commissioners agreed that this should go on the priority list.

**Septic Systems within 100 feet of water:**

Chairperson Baker acknowledge the receipt of a memo from Collin Walls regarding the Township Board's suggestion that the Township retain a consultant to provide tools and

possible ordinance language to allow the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals to evaluate septic systems that are proposed to be less than 100 feet from a body of water which is the current ordinance standard. Chairperson Baker provided history and background from his position on the Zoning Board of Appeals in reference to the requests that have most recently come in regarding new and replacement septic systems. There is a need for more guidance regarding industry standards for engineered systems that are available.

Commissioner Hines stated that the County standard is 50 feet from a body of water. If the Township adopted that, would they eliminate the requests.

Chairperson Baker answered no; there will still be requests inside the 50 feet.

Commissioner Whiting stated that on the Kieft Engineering site, they offer a lot of options that are available beyond the traditional system.

Chairperson Baker stated that they learned about the Israeli system and other systems when they were looking to develop the old lumber yard property. He agreed with the idea of retaining a consultant to help with this.

Commissioner Hopper asked how detailed the plans need to be that are presented to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Chairperson Baker replied that the Zoning Board wants a drawing with credibility and this is required before any decision can be made. Some applicants also bring consultants with them to the meeting.

Commissioners and Supervisor Walls discussed information that should be reviewed before a decision could be reached for one of these systems.

Commissioner Hines asked if they do not think that the County standards are appropriate.

Commissioners discussed the need to protect the bodies of water.

Supervisor Walls stated that the State guidelines are 100 feet but there may not be a county in Michigan that follows this. The Sanitary Appeal Board does not provide the review and scrutiny that our Board of Appeals does and the Board of Appeals is struggling with recent requests that have been presented. The technology has changed considerably in recent years and the ordinance really does not reflect the availability of the new technology and its effect on water sources.

Commissioners discussed the Independence Township ordinance regarding septic setbacks and having differing setback requirements for new and replacement systems.

Commissioners agreed that this item should go on the priority list

Commissioner Hines asked Chairperson Baker if there are other issues that the Zoning Board deals with that should also be on the list.

Chairperson Baker confirmed that many variance requests are setback variances and accessory square footage increase. Occasionally they get signs but these are unique and individual cases.

### **Review Dixie Highway Overlay District:**

Supervisor Walls stated that if a development is in the Overlay District and they choose to use the option, part of the plan can be built so that they do not have to go to the Board of Appeals. Based upon the Mills site plan, once you get into it, the Overlay District is supposed to be of assistance to both the Township in his opinion and the applicant and currently it does not offer enough incentives. The process itself is so cumbersome following the Dixie Overlay District is often more difficult than just doing a straight site plan.

Commissioner Mansour confirmed that the incentive would be for the developer to move more easily through the process.

Supervisor Walls agreed.

Commissioner Hines asked if the Dixie Highway Design Guidelines were part of this.

Supervisor Walls answered that it could be. He stated that both the Overlay District and Guidelines cover the property that fronts Dixie Highway from I-75 to Davisburg Road.

Mr. Lewan suggested incorporating some of the Dixie Guidelines too as incentives.

Commissioners agreed that this should be on the priority list for review.

### **Review Maximum Heights – Section 40-572:**

Commissioner Hopper explained that the Fire Department and the Township Board are initiating an ISO review Township-wide. They hired a consultant called ISO Slayer and he recommended that if there are buildings that are more than 32 feet high at the eave line, to get the ISO lowered, the Township should purchase a ladder truck. A standard ladder truck is about \$750,000 and some communities have said if a building wants to exceed the recommended height, they will have to buy the community a truck. The problem with this is the community has to pay for the maintenance and upkeep on the truck. It was suggested that if a development wanted to exceed the 32 feet, they would have to have the building sprinkled. These changes need to be looked at and incorporated into our ordinance. Currently C-2's maximum height is 43.5 feet, M-2 is 43.5 feet, E-1 is 43.5 and VC is 34 feet.

Supervisor Walls clarified that the eave that you measure for the height is in the front.

Mr. Lewan clarified that sprinkler system can overcome this requirement.

Commissioner Hopper stated that The River exceeds the height but it is sprinkled so it doesn't count.

Supervisor Walls stated that when it was a warehouse, it still counted. Now that they are putting people in it instead of furniture, they don't need the same fire rating.

Commissioner Hopper stated that they have to look at this in the ordinance. The entire Township should not have to buy a ladder truck for one building.

Chairperson Baker asked if a building that is sprinkled gets inspected by the Fire Department.

Supervisor Walls answered yes, sprinkler systems are more inspected than any other element in the building.

Commissioner Hopper stated that all of the sprinkled buildings are inspected annually by the Fire Department.

Supervisor Walls stated that there are options in the construction industry for fire prevention and Craig Strong, Building Official, is very good at determining and presenting those options. We don't have a large problem right now because many new buildings that they have are sprinkled.

Commissioner Hopper suggested that they limit new buildings to 32 feet with a caveat that if they exceed this height, they will have additional construction requirements. He confirmed that this was 32 feet to the eave.

Commissioners agreed that this ordinance amendment should be added to the priority list for further discussion and amendments.

#### **Sign ordinance – Content neutral:**

Mr. Lewan stated that there was a court case last year that indicated that sign ordinances had to be content neutral; you cannot differentiate between commercial signs and real estate signs, etc. The sign ordinance should clarify a certain sized sign in a certain district. This comes into effect particularly with temporary signs because political signs and garage sale signs are types of signs. This case began with a temporary church sign. Content neutrality is the goal but complete content neutrality is difficult.

Supervisor Walls suggested that anyone that is attending the upcoming planning conference should attend the sign ordinance class offered and that they collect the handouts and bring them back to inform the other commissioners.

Mr. Lewan stated that he is attending the conference on Wednesday, October 26<sup>th</sup> and he will gather the information as needed.

Supervisor Walls stated that Greg Need is serving on a committee that was formed to look at this topic in depth.

**Review Dixie Design Guidelines for possible ordinance revisions:**

Mr. Lewan stated that they already discussed this when reviewing the third topic and agreed that this was a part of that and needs to be done.

Supervisor Walls stated that the Design Guidelines do not meet the setback requirements and this needs to be corrected. They need to examine the ordinance impact for the Dixie Design Guidelines.

Commissioners agreed and discussed the Design Guidelines.

Commissioner Mansour stated that the Design Guidelines talk about a pitched roof. He does not see a pitched roof design in commercial, it is more of a flat roof. He sees the pitched roof more with office building designs. As long as the front soffit is set at 32 feet, they are fine.

**Stormwater:**

Commissioner Mansour stated that currently after you develop a subdivision or commercial building there are no requirements to maintain the storm structure. Those storm structures get filled with debris and plant material but there are measures to make sure those are maintained. He suggested that they put this in the forefront.

Mr. Lewan commented on Northville Township who has a yearly inspection of all storm basins.

Supervisor Walls agreed that it is a good idea. He stated that they look at site plans and construction plans for new development projects and they show theoretical home locations in which an engineer put them there for a reason. However, a builder actually builds the home where he thinks it would look better, then there are issues with drainage. There isn't an ordinance that the building department can use to be able to look at a plan and say, no this is not what was approved and there are ramifications.

**Blight:**

Commissioner Hines stated that Commissioner Pliska brought up blight and although it is not part of the zoning ordinance, she asked if the Planning Commission could address this and send a recommendation to the Township Board.

Commissioners and Supervisor Walls discussed the many definitions of blight.

Commissioner Mansour stated that they would have to be specific in their language.

Supervisor Walls concurred. The Commissioners have to decide what it is that they find offensive so they can restrict their discussion instead of having a broad topic like blight.

Mr. Lewan offered that they could add language like construction debris and trash/debris should not be present.

Commissioner Mansour stated that for him, it is health and safety and also aesthetics.

Mr. Lewan concluded that he will create a list of these items and add language which he will provide to the Supervisor's office for distribution. He suggested that he could provide a training session for the Commissions on a subject of their choice. He provided examples of training sessions that he has done and he recommended this on an evening that they did not have a busy agenda. He stated that MAP has some good stock programs that he could provide for the Commissioners and he suggested the topic of Medical Marijuana.

Commissioner Mansour asked if they should add ordinance language so that if a developer wants to put in a private road, he has to make sure that there is money designated for future road improvements for that private road.

Chairperson Baker asked if the Township could get involved in this.

Supervisor Walls stated that it is not a bad idea but routinely as soon as the development is turned over to the homeowner's association, they determine how that money is spent. They could require it and make sure that it is in the setup, but he doesn't think they have any way to control it.

Supervisor Walls stated that he hears that the site plan process is too long and one reason is the fact that they require detailed engineering plans to go to the Commissioners and the consultants. Many communities do not require these prior to approval. He stated that they should look at all of the process to see if they can make them more efficient.

Mr. Lewan stated that Oakland County is pushing the one-stop initiative to make the process quicker.

Commissioners agreed that they should look at the processes.

#### Other Business:

##### **1. Priority Task List**

Commissioners reviewed and made updates and revisions to the current Priority Task List.

Public Comment:      None

Adjournment:

**Commissioner Hines moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:01 p.m. Supported by Commissioner Whiting. Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Whiting. Voted no: None. Absent: Pliska, Sclesky. Motion Carried.**

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Erin A. Mattice, Recording Secretary