

Springfield Township  
Planning Commission – Business Meeting  
Minutes February 21, 2011

Call to Order: Chairman Commissioner Steckling called the February 21, 2011 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:

Ruth Ann Hines  
Bill Leddy  
John Steckling  
Beverly Shaver  
Dean Baker  
Neil Willson

Commissioners Absent:

Roger Lamont

Others Present:

Denny Vallad, Trustee

Staff Present

Mike Trout, Supervisor

Consultants Present

Brian Oppmann, Planner

Approval of Agenda: Approved as presented.

Public Comment: None.

Consent Agenda: Minutes of the January 17, 2011 meeting.

**Commissioner Willson moved to approve the minutes of the January 17, 2011 meeting with the following amendment, add Commissioner Lamont under “Commissioners Present” as he was present at the meeting of January 17, 2011. Support by Commissioner Leddy. Voted yes: Leddy, Shaver, Hines, Steckling, Baker, Willson. Voted no: None. Absent: Lamont. Motion Carried.**

Public Hearing:

Chairperson Steckling opened the public hearing at 7:32 to hear public comment on the following amendments.

- 1. Amend Section 18.07.4.b.(6)-Site Plan Review.**
- 2. Amend Section 18.07.4.c.-Administrative Approval.**
- 3. Amend Section 16.24-Transient and Seasonal Display of Products or Materials Intended for Sale.**

Chairperson Steckling closed the public hearing at 7:33. No public comment was presented.

New Business:

**1. Amend Section 18.07.4.b.(6)-Site Plan Review.**

**Commissioner Hines moved to send the Amended Section 18.07.4.b.(6)-Site Plan Review to the Township Board for consideration and approval. Support by Commissioner Shaver. Voted yes: Leddy, Shaver, Hines, Steckling, Baker, Willson. Voted no: None. Absent: Lamont. Motion Carried.**

**2. Amend Section 18.07.4.c.-Administrative Approval.**

Chairperson Steckling stated this amendment allows the Township Supervisor, or his designee, to make certain approvals administratively. The change would allow minor revisions to a site plan, not require a variance of any kind and are somewhat small in nature and consistent with the plan. This amendment also allows the developer to change parking and storage buildings.

Commissioner Hines asked Chairperson Steckling if he felt that the change is consistent with the Commission's intent.

Chairperson stated yes. He stated that the Commission trusts the person in the approval seat to have discretion and to be mindful of the pros and cons and keeping in the spirit of the Ordinance. He stated that it is never possible to cover all of the bases, but this amendment covers the little things. He stated that it is better than what they had and we have already encountered some circumstances where the Supervisor would have been able to use this for the benefit of both applicant and the Township.

Commissioner Hines asked who the "Township" is that is quoted in the amendment. She asked why it didn't say Supervisor.

Brian Oppmann stated that there is a general definition of "Township" in the Ordinance which includes the building inspector, Supervisor, or his designee. All personnel are lumped together in the same definition, "Township." He stated that it is sufficient for this amendment.

**Commissioner Hines moved to send the Amended Section 18.07.4.c.-Administration Approval-Administrative Approval to the Township Board for consideration and approval. Support by Commissioner Leddy. Voted yes: Leddy, Shaver, Hines, Steckling, Baker, Willson. Voted no: None. Absent: Lamont. Motion Carried.**

**3. Amend Section 16.24-Transient and Seasonal Display of Products or Materials Intended for Sale.**

Commissioner Shaver stated that there would always be someone who would come up with the exception, but this is about as clean as they are going to get it.

**Commissioner Hines moved to send the Amend Section 16.24-Transient and Seasonal Display of Products or Materials Intended for Sale to the Township Board for consideration and approval. Support by Commissioner Shaver. Voted yes: Leddy, Shaver, Hines, Steckling, Baker, Willson. Voted no: None. Absent: Lamont. Motion Carried.**

**4. CIP discussion and approval.**

Supervisor Trout stated that the Township is not required to have a CIP because we have no public utilities or wastewater treatment plans. He stated that they have had one in the past which Carlisle Wortman had created the narrative for based on the priorities that the Township Board established. He stated that he has taken some things off and he has made it more realistic. He stated that the items that he highlighted are things that the Township Board has identified as being their highest priority and they have taken steps to budget for and plan for these improvements. He stated that when the Township Board went through its priority list, pathways were very high. He stated that the Davisburg-Dixie Signal was also high. It is something that is going to happen, but it has been delayed. He stated that the Maintenance Building will house the snow removal equipment that the Township has accumulated, as well as salt and tools and be a shared facility with Parks. He stated that it would be located by the dumpster west of the Civic Center and built into the hill, similar in appearance to the Township Hall. He stated that the Board budgeted \$100,000 for this project which he stated is a great value for a 2000 square foot storage facility that is nice looking.

Commissioner Shaver stated if it was built into the hill, would there be a provision for expansion if needed?

Supervisor Trout stated yes. It is being developed so that the bidding contractor will know the allowed expense that is budgeted and what is minimally expected. The contractor will be able to see expansion plans if their bid allows for more. This will be enough room to keep what we have and what we anticipate having in the future. He stated that by keeping this equipment inside we are taking care of our investment. He stated that another high priority is cable upgrades. The cable franchise fees build up and sometimes it is hard to find a qualifying project to spend it on. The PEG funds are only to support Public Education and Government projects. He stated that they are looking to develop a partnership with the schools or with a private entity that could provide some computer education or provide a computer lab. He stated another use of the fund money would be to place new cameras in the Board room that could be manipulated and used to tape the meetings to make the video more useful to the viewer. He stated that maybe some editing would be possible with new equipment. He stated that there are cameras present now, but the technology changes so quickly that they are now outdated.

Commissioner Willson asked if the PEG fees generated a consistent dollar amount every year.

Supervisor Trout stated that it is shown in the budget as PEG revenue and it is fairly consistent. He stated that it is different from the cable franchise fees. These fees are able to be spread over the general fund; they have been spread to the police fund to help offset the shortfall that we will have in the police fund. He stated that the PEG funds are different.

Trustee Vallad stated that they were based on 2% of revenue. He stated that there were some changes several years ago based on State law and franchising.

Commissioner Baker stated that the cable networks are unique in this. He stated when the other utilities come to a township to do work, they apply and pay for permits and pay direct funds to local governments to allow them to do installations. This gives the township or city the opportunity to come out and witness their work and verify that it is being done according to their design standards. He stated that this is not true for the cable companies; AT & T and Comcast do not apply for permits. This is an agreement that they worked out with the State of Michigan. He stated it is utilities managed by the FCC versus companies managed by the Michigan Public Service Commission.

Commissioner Hines asked if the franchise fee amounts were different from PEG funds.

Supervisor Trout stated that the franchise fees were approximately \$120,000.00 a year.

Commissioner Hines asked if these fees were based on revenue.

Trustee Vallad stated that it was all based on revenue. There are basically so many subscribers and so much per month and they pay fees based on these figures. The 2% was determined after the law came into effect because there were some changes.

Commissioner Baker stated this was the agreement that they had the chance to vote on and opt into and get dollars, or they could have opted out and got nothing. He stated that they had to agree as a community that they would abide by the relationship that AT & T would create with the State of Michigan. There was not an opportunity to say no, we still want them to apply for permitting and be dealt with individually.

Commissioner Hines asked how big this PEG fund can get before they can take the funds away.

Supervisor Trout stated that this is a concern. He stated that they should try to find something to do with it. It is limited as to what these funds can be used for and he stated that he could provide additional information for the Commissioners if they wanted it. He also stated that he welcomed input from the Commissioners on ideas for these funds.

Commissioner Willson stated that it is interesting in a budget-strapped environment that this is one account where we need to find a place to spend it.

Supervisor Trout stated that most communities are facing the same thing.

Commissioner Hines asked if it could be used for the library.

Supervisor Trout stated that it would be dependent on what it was for; it might be possible to partner with the library on a project.

Commissioner Baker stated that they have used it for things of this nature in the past. He asked if there was anything they could do with the technology in the Board room that would enhance the ability of the public to see the documents that they are working with. He stated that frequently someone is presenting with an easel. He stated that they often have documents that aren't available to be seen from the back. He stated that there is a monitor and a projector, but the quality is not high. He stated that the images are not available to the audience.

Supervisor Trout stated that the Township Board has talked about this. He stated that some other things they are looking at on the CIP are the Fire Station and the Lumberyard. He stated that Station #1 has space limitations. He stated they could put a band-aid on the problem, or they could look for a solution that was long-term. He stated once a new truck is needed, there will be a dire need for more space. He stated the details of where it should go need to be worked out. He stated that this is an option for the Lumberyard and Carlisle Wortman has submitted a proposal to look at the Lumberyard property. He stated that they are looking for different concepts of what can be done on the Lumberyard property but one thing that is not going to be done is a community septic system for Downtown Davisburg. The Township Board decided that this was no longer an option. He stated that they know there is a need for parking, etc., or maybe a park. He stated that they need to focus their efforts collectively. He suggested they have a joint meeting between the Township Board and the Planning Commission once Carlisle Wortman comes up with a preliminary plan.

Commissioner Willson asked about the Hartman listing on the CIP.

Supervisor Trout stated that this is a piece of property in the Shiawassee Basin. It is a piece that the Township would love to have because it is surrounded by our property. He stated that it is privately owned and NOHLC has, through the Springfield Site Action Committee, tried to work on this. The Hartmans still own and use the property. He stated another item on the CIP relates to the fact that Smith's Disposal vacated their business location in Springfield Township but they now are in the process of purchasing some sorting equipment for recycling and are going to look at retooling the Springfield Township property into a recycling center. He stated that he has talked to them about partnering to share this service with our residents. He stated that not everyone has a service that picks it up curbside, and there are still the hazardous wastes to deal with. He stated that he didn't know if there would be an investment, but he wanted to leave it on

the plan. Supervisor Trout stated another item is the solar project that DTE is currently building in the Indian Springs Metro Park. This is to be educational, but also functional. It is a ground level array of solar panels. He stated that they came out and met with him to discuss Springfield Township's role and they indicated that the Township would be an ideal location for additional sites.

Commissioner Shaver stated that several of the projects are listed under grants. She asked if the funding had been applied for yet.

Supervisor Trout stated that the Fire Department received grant money through FEMA. He stated that they are investigating grant opportunities for the pathways project, such as the Safe Routes to School. He stated that he is aware that it will take a millage contribution but is unsure how that will compare to the demands of the police and fire budget. He stated that at the same time it should be a priority. A walkable community is a viable community. He stated that they are pursuing other grants for it. He stated that they just received an energy grant along with Independence Township and they are making some upgrades to the Hart Center. He stated that the CIP shows the Township's funding commitment to the projects that are important. This information can be provided to a grant committee to show them what the Township's contribution will be. He stated that next month he can provide the narrative.

Commissioner Shaver asked if there was anyone on staff who was experienced with grant writing.

Supervisor Trout stated yes and we have other resources as well. He stated that it was also possible to collaborate with communities that were a little larger than Springfield. He stated that Chris Benedict is becoming a very good grant writer. He stated that with experience the results get better every time.

Brian Oppmann stated that there was a generous amount of grant writing that was involved when the stimulus money became available.

Old Business:

- 1. None.**

Other Business:

- 1. Priority Task List.**

Chairperson Steckling stated that they were still working on the sign ordinance. He stated that three of the items on the list were taken care of at this meeting. He stated that these could be taken off. The Planning Studies are still ongoing; the Lumberyard, Downtown Davisburg and the Dixie Highway and Davisburg intersection.

Supervisor Trout stated that once they get into the planning process, a joint effort with the Township Board would be appropriate, but their input could be part of the process.

Commissioner Hines asked if they should care what the Davisburg Action Committee wanted to do with the lumberyard.

Supervisor Trout stated that this was formed for one purpose only.

Commissioner Shaver asked if the entire area in the back of the lumberyard was buildable.

Commissioners answered no.

Supervisor Trout stated that it is a bowl shaped. He stated that the proposed plan would address the grade and changes in elevation. He stated that it is engineering and layout that need to be addressed.

Commissioner Hines asked what was going on with the Dixie Highway-Davisburg Road intersection.

Supervisor Trout stated that it was still being held up in the Oakland County engineering department. He stated that part of the problem is that there were right-of-way issues that needed to be resolved. He stated that the property boundaries went out into the road. He stated the Road Commission had to negotiate with the property owners to obtain right-of-way legally. He stated that they needed to establish the right-of-way where the mast poles would be placed. He stated another issue was the cross walks.

Public Comment:

Denny Vallad, 8684 Sunset Cove, Clarkston, 48348 stated that he has a suggestion for the Priority Task list and a project that he would like to go forward. He stated that he would like Carlisle Wortman to explore a 425 development agreement on what is known as the Mediplex property. This is located on the south east corner of Dixie Highway and I-75 interchange. He stated that there is a consent judgment on this property that has been amended several times. He stated it is clear when anything does go in on this property, much of the services are going to be provided by both Springfield Township and Independence Township. He stated that Independence has capabilities with the sewer, water, fire and police as far as the location. He stated that it makes more sense to be a part of Independence than a part of Springfield at this location. He stated that with the development of a 425 agreement, these issues would be resolved prior to a development coming to the community. He stated that it becomes an agreement between the townships on how the development would occur on the property addressing tax revenues, permitting, shared services, etc. The other things that become important are the relocation of the road because there is a large right-of-way on this exit ramp that has become an issue in the past.

Commissioner Willson asked Trustee Vallad to describe the location of the property in detail.

Trustee Vallad stated that this is on the south side of the freeway and the east side of Dixie Highway. He stated the border of Springfield and Independence goes right through this property. He stated that there is a traffic light at the small residential neighborhood there. He stated that there have been talks with the County on relocating this road and what this would take. He stated that there was a letter from Larry Barnett regarding this piece to Independence Township with Springfield copied. Mr. Barnett had spoke about this property and offered this piece up for relocation of the road. He stated that this is about an acre piece. He stated that many things come together at this corner. He stated that if the Township wanted to be ready when something comes the next time, it is important to work with Independence up front so that all the details can be worked out. He stated that he would like this added to the priority list and ask Carlisle Wortman to investigate what it would cost to initiate this 425 agreement between the townships.

Commissioner Shaver asked about the history of this piece and if back in 2002 they were going to put a church there.

Trustee Vallad stated there have been various groups interested in this piece.

Commissioners clarified that they were speaking about the east side of the road.

Supervisor Trout stated that the letter that Mr. Barnett wrote was about the other side.

Trustee Vallad stated that it was about both sides. He stated that Independence has the larger portion of the land, but it will all go together. He stated that every time it comes up, there has to be coordination between the two communities. He stated that he has talked to Commissioner Lamont previously about this.

Chairperson Steckling stated it is a great idea. He stated that the problem with the Road Commission is the road taper at this location. He stated that he would like it on the priority list. He asked Mr. Oppmann if he could look at it and form a plan of approach. He stated that it is open and vacant now.

Commissioner Leddy agreed.

Commissioners agreed by consensus to look at this piece of property in reference to future developments.

Adjournment:

**Commissioner Hines made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 pm. Supported by Commissioner Shaver. Voted yes: Leddy, Shaver, Hines, Steckling, Willson, Baker. Voted no: None. Absent: Lamont. Motion Carried.**

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Erin Mattice, Recording Secretary