

**Springfield Township
Planning Commission –Workshop Meeting
Minutes of January 6, 2005**

Call to Order: Chairperson Roger Lamont called the January 6, 2005 Workshop 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
John Steckling
Paul Rabaut
Dean Baker
Ruth Ann Hines

Commissioner(s) Absent

Chris Moore

Consultants Present

Dick Carlisle

Staff Present

Collin Walls
Mary Blundy

Approval of Minutes: November 4, 2004
November 15, 2004
December 2, 2004

- **Commissioner Steckling moved to approve the Minutes of November 4, 2004 as presented. Commissioner Rabaut supported the motion. Vote on the motion. Yes: Lamont, Steckling, Rabaut, Hines and Baker; No: none; Absent: Moore. The motion carried by a 5 to 0 vote.**
- **Commissioner Rabaut moved to approve the Minutes of November 15, 2004 as presented. Commissioner Steckling supported the motion. Vote on the motion. Yes: Lamont, Steckling, Rabaut, Hines and Baker; No: none; Absent: Moore. The motion carried by a 5 to 0 vote.**
- **Commissioner Baker moved to approve the Minutes of December 2, 2004 as presented. Commissioner Steckling supported the motion. Vote on the motion. Yes: Lamont, Steckling, Rabaut, Hines and Baker; No: none; Absent: Moore. The motion carried by a 5 to 0 vote.**

Approval of Agenda:

Commissioner Steckling asked to add a discussion regarding the **Relocation of Big Lake Road to Dixie Highway as item #3 under "Miscellaneous."**

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Commissioner Rabaut asked to add a discussion regarding **On-Site Wastewater Treatment as item #4 under "Miscellaneous."**

There were no objections to these additions.

Public Comment: None

Unfinished Business:

1. Screening Fences & Walls Regarding Lakefront Lots (Section 16.13) Final review before Public Hearing

Mr. Dick Carlisle noted regarding Subsection 2, we do have a requirement for 80% opacity but we also have a provision that no such fence, wall or screening structure shall exceed three feet in height. He asked, if 80% applies, why have a three foot height limit? Chairperson Lamont said the Planning Commission decided to keep the three foot height limit to stay consistent as a lakefront lot is considered a front yard. Commissioner Baker asked if we are requiring 80% opacity or 80% visibility? Mr. Carlisle and Chairperson Lamont said visibility is correct, opacity was a misstatement.

Mr. Carlisle said Subsection 3 has been added at the request of the Planning Commission. This section sets a total limit on height of six feet for any fence in a side or rear yard within a residential district.

Commissioner Rabaut commented that he is not a fan of a plan that would allow fencing on lakefront property. This ordinance would allow a fence to be erected anywhere on the property including at the high water mark. He said he thinks lakefront property is unique with a lot of open space and our Master Plan talks about Springfield Township being a rural, peaceful, quiet community. He envisions with this fencing plan that there would be many pockets of chain link fences all along the lake; this does not strike him as being consistent with our Master Plan goals and objectives. Commissioner Rabaut said he is not supportive of this feature.

Commissioner Baker said he does not see this amendment as limiting the rights of homeowners. We are not creating a more open-ended situation than we currently have. As the ordinance currently is written, one is permitted to build a fence of any height with any opacity. He believes this is a grand improvement over that and does not view this amendment as a promoter of fence construction or chain-link installation.

Commissioner Hines said she supports the three foot height restriction and still believes we need to allow property owners rights to use their property. She said this is an opportunity to limit the screening that could occur on lake lot situations.

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Commissioner Steckling said he would concur with the aforementioned comments and is in favor of this amendment. He does not think it will promote people to construct fencing and agrees it is a major improvement over what we currently have.

Chairperson Lamont said he agrees with some comments from each Commissioner. When Mr. Carlisle provided the history of other municipalities regarding fences, only one prohibited fences on lakefront sides and only one required a permit for any fence construction. Chairperson Lamont said he could still be in favor of requiring a permit to construct a fence and agrees that homeowners have property rights, and the Commission should not ignore those rights. He did note that the amendment does not mention anyone placing a fence on the shoreline side of the property, which did not occur to him until tonight. He asked, do we now write an ordinance in regard to this? He would support what is presented tonight, but he does have some more suggestions that he would like to provide to Carlisle/Wortman. Regarding item #4 on page 1, many fences are now composite vinyl or plastic and the change noted wrought iron or tubular aluminum. Commissioner Steckling suggested changing it to read "materials commonly used in conventional fence construction including but not limited to..." Mr. Carlisle said he would word it that way, but also add vinyl or plastic and leave the door open for future materials.

Supervisor Walls asked what is the purpose of the reference to "wrought iron" or "tubular aluminum?" Mr. Carlisle said it could be eliminated. Supervisor Walls suggested adding to item #3, "front" to read "shall not exceed six (6) feet in height in a side, front or rear yard..." This would cover the area between the required front yard and the house. There were no objections to this change.

- **Commissioner Steckling moved to send this back to Carlisle/Wortman for revisions according to comments this evening. Commissioner Baker supported the motion. Vote on the motion. Yes: Lamont, Steckling, Baker and Hines; No: Rabaut; Absent: Moore. The motion carried by a 4 to 1 vote.**

New Business: None

Miscellaneous:

- 1. Proposal to rezone properties at Andersonville & Farley Roads from R-1 to PL**

Commissioner Hines said she believes if this is public land that we want to use for a fire station, we should zone it Public Land to identify what it is and amend the ordinance so we could put a fire station there. Supervisor Walls said when this property was purchased, there may not have been a public land district, he doesn't remember for sure. He said the point of this referral was, if we're going to rezone to use it for a fire station, make sure a fire station could be used in a public land district. The public has a right to know what it is intended for. There are people in

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opposition at the Public Hearing of this rezoning who built their home knowing they were adjacent to a site that was planned for a fire station.

Commissioner Steckling said he is in favor of rezoning. Commissioner Baker said it is an implied responsibility of our Township to provide protection to the citizens and the fire department is something we provide. He is in favor of rezoning this parcel.

Chairperson Lamont asked Mr. Carlisle if he recommends redefining the ordinance before rezoning this parcel? Mr. Carlisle said he is comfortable with the ability to interpret the ordinance but the most straight forward thing to do is to revise the ordinance. Chairperson Lamont said he would agree.

- **Commissioner Baker moved to review the Public Land Ordinance inclusions before rezoning the parcel at Andersonville and Farley Road. Commissioner Steckling supported the motion. Vote on the motion. Yes: Lamont, Steckling, Rabaut, Baker and Hines; No: none; Absent: Moore. The motion carried by a 5 to 0 vote.**

The Planning Commission agreed to discuss the Relocation of Big Lake Road before the Hamlet of Davisburg due to Mr. Carlisle needing to leave the meeting early.

2. Relocation of Big Lake Road at Dixie Highway

Commissioner Steckling said he and Chairperson Lamont were appointed to act as special planners to do a joint review of a proposed development that exists in both Springfield and Independence Townships. One issue that continues to be raised is the traffic difficulties in this area. There are two possible proposals to remedy this problem; one is to go south and then east through the adjoining parcel across from the proposed development. It would come out onto Dixie Hwy. opposite the entrance to the retail development further down the road. The other idea is to bring it across the parcel in Springfield Township and align the two intersections and move the light. Commissioner Steckling said, because this land in Springfield is vacant he suggests the Planning Commission consider presenting relocation of Big Lake Road to the Township Board for review as to cost and details.

Supervisor Walls asked the Planning Commission to discuss and consider this from a planning and a traffic safety standpoint only. Commissioner Steckling said that is his intent. Supervisor Walls said this did not have to go to the Township Board. The Road Commission had agreed to look at this several months ago. If the Planning Commission wishes to pursue this, Supervisor Walls said he would contact the Road Commission again.

Mr. Carlisle commented that one portion of this property (a triangular piece the road would actually cross) is in Independence Township and is currently the subject of a planning and development being proposed. This developer has been in discussion in regard to potentially leaving this property open and available for this type of roadwork.

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Commissioner Rabaut said there have been numerous concerns from residents about that intersection. He believes there is a safety and traffic issue and is supportive of a study to ease or eliminate this issue. Commissioner Baker said he would also support discussions. Commissioner Hines said she also concurs. Chairperson Lamont said he would concur with discussions.

- **Commissioner Steckling moved that the Township consider the relocation of Big Lake Road according to the drawing prepared by Kieft Engineering, so that it is opposite of Deer Hill Drive and perform whatever studies necessary to determine the feasibility, cost and possibility for purposes of improving and enhancing the planning and traffic safety for the residents of the community. Commissioner Hines supported the motion. Vote on the motion. Yes: Lamont, Steckling, Rabaut, Baker and Hines; No: none; Absent: Moore. The motion carried by a 5 to 0 vote.**

3. Hamlet of Davisburg - Existing Conditions Report

Mary Blundy summarized her memo to the Planning Commissioners dated December 22, 2004 regarding the revival of the Hamlet of Davisburg. The group will be meeting again on January 26th, and she would provide an update at that time. Chairperson Lamont thanked Mary Blundy for getting involved and her efforts with the community business owners.

4. On-Site Wastewater System

Commissioner Rabaut said one of the tenets of our zoning and planning is the suitability of soils for septic systems and the impact of septic systems on ground water and the natural features. Protecting the land is a goal of our Master Plan. He noted that in the latest issue of "Planning and Zoning News," there is a story regarding new on-site wastewater treatment systems. This article states that these systems could be put anywhere without regard to the suitability of the soil. Commissioner Rabaut said this concerns him greatly.

Supervisor Walls noted that we already addressed this issue with the amendments to our cluster provisions in the density plans. Density cannot rely on a community septic and the density plan must support itself without the benefit of a community septic. Supervisor Walls said he is comfortable with this as long as the new and innovative on-site wastewater systems are part of a development that serves more than one building.

5. Priority List

Office Services and C-1 and C-2 is set for Public Hearing on January 17, 2005. Review Screening, Fences and Walls is set for discussion at the February 3rd Workshop meeting. Temporary Outdoor/Transient Sales is set for hearings at the next available date. Review Lakefront structures is TBD. Review PL District was set for discussion at the February 3rd Workshop meeting. Review RC District was set for discussion at the March 3rd Workshop meeting. Hamlet of Davisburg is work in progress and set for discussion at the February 3rd Workshop meeting. Buildout/Traffic Study is TBD. Innovative Storm Water Management is

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TBD. Proposal to rezone properties at Andersonville & Farley Roads is pending review of the PL District. Section 18.11(5) is sent to Carlisle/Wortman for review and to be discussed at the February 3rd Workshop. Rezoning SubArea 2 from R-2 to R-1 is set for February 3rd Workshop.

Adjournment:

Hearing no other business, Chairperson Lamont adjourned the meeting at 9:10 p.m.

Susan Weaver, Recording Secretary