

Minutes of
**PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
January 24, 2023**



Call to Order: Chairperson Baker called the January 24, 2023, Regular Meeting of the Springfield Township Planning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Springfield Township Civic Center, 12000 Davisburg Rd., Davisburg, MI 48350.

Commissioners

in Attendance: Dean Baker, Chair
Jamie Costigan
Ruth Ann Hines
Dave Hopper
George Mansour
Chris Moore

Absent: Kevin Sclesky

Consultants Present:

Julia Upfal, Giffels Webster
Stephanie Osborn, Giffels Webster

Staff Present:

Laura Moreau, Supervisor
Joan Rusch, Planning Administrator

Approval of Agenda:

Commissioner Hines moved to proceed with the agenda as presented. Supported by Commissioner Mansour. Vote: Yes: Baker, Costigan, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Moore. No: None. Absent: Sclesky. Motion approved.

Public Comment: None

Approval of Consent Agenda:

Commissioner Hopper moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Supported by Commissioner Mansour. Vote: Yes: Baker, Costigan, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Moore. No: None. Absent: Sclesky. Motion approved.

a) Approve minutes: December 20, 2022, Regular Meeting

Old Business:

1. Master Plan

a. Presentation of Master Plan Survey and Open House Results

Ms. Upfal explained that the information gathered at the open house and in the survey will help the Commissioners get a deeper understanding of what residents are looking for as they set goals, which is the next step in the Master Plan process.



Ms. Upfal introduced the PowerPoint presentation of the Master Plan Survey and Open House results. She began by explaining what planning means for the community. The Township currently has two Master Plan projects in the works – one for the Parks and one for the Township. The Parks plan encompasses five years. The Township Master Plan is a comprehensive plan with long range goals and objectives for development encompassing the next 10-20 years. The difference between the Master Plan and zoning is that the Master Plan is a long-range vision that guides policy, while zoning is a legal framework that regulates development of property. The Master Plan is a guide to development, but development decisions are also influenced by external forces. The most important duty of a Planning Commission is to prepare the Master Plan.

Ms. Upfal explained that public input for the Master Plan was generated by three activities – the survey, the community open house, and the PictureThis! website. Nine common themes emerged as a result of these activities.

- 1) Springfield Township is a desirable place to live and a place worth staying.
- 2) The characteristics of the Township that residents enjoy most are evocative of its rural identity.
- 3) Access to nature, conservation of natural resources, and natural beauty are regarded as some of the Township's greatest strengths.
- 4) The preferred housing type is single-family/low density; residents were most open to alternative housing types that serve the senior population or help seniors age in place.
- 5) There is tension between growth and preservation of existing character.
- 6) Commercial development is desirable, but only in contextually appropriate locations.
- 7) Springfield's seniors are very independent but reported some dissatisfaction with the senior services available.
- 8) Springfield's recreational amenities and programming are regarded as a community strength and ongoing growth and development in this area is a priority.
- 9) More non-motorized connections are desired, particularly between neighborhoods and parks.

Commissioner Mansour noted that the age of most of the respondents to the community outreach activities were older. He was wondering if this would skew the results of the information regarding what people want to see in the Township. People in their 40s, 50s, and 60s see things differently from those in their 20s and 30s. The younger generations didn't participate as fully in these community outreach activities.

Ms. Upfal stated that one of the goals of the Master Plan is to include a senior services component, so the information from this demographic is helpful. The planners wanted to be as inclusive of this age segment as possible. Representation does need to be a consideration when looking at the results, which is why the demographic data was captured. When planning these outreach activities, it is difficult to know who will participate. The attempt was made to capture as diverse a representation as possible. The demographics may be skewed one way or another, but this information must be kept in mind when reviewing the data.

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Commissioner Mansour asked if it would be possible to get information from other communities to see how the demographic compares to what Springfield captured.

Ms. Upfal stated that the demographic turnout from other communities varies, as they may be more suburban in nature. The turnout for the open house event was determined by the time for which it was set. It is difficult to find a time that works for parents with families. The challenge of this event and for most local government is that the participation is skewed towards those who can make it. Frequently, young families with children find evening events difficult to attend.

Commissioner Mansour asked if the planners had other data about what the younger generations might possibly be wanting in other communities and if this could help Springfield as well.

Ms. Upfal stated that it might be possible to bring in best practices from other communities and their experiences with this demographic.

Chairperson Baker stated that demographics of the Township are already skewed towards 40- to 50-year-olds as this is the average age of the resident population. We could seek information on this other demographic to capture what information the Township might be missing.

Supervisor Moreau asked Ms. Upfal to explain what is meant by ADU which was referenced in the housing section of the presentation. Many members of the audience may not be familiar with Accessory Dwelling Units.

Ms. Osborn explained that these are smaller housing units either attached to, or on the same property, as a principal residence. It is a separate living facility that provides independent living for someone while being in close proximity to someone else.

Ms. Upfal stated that the detached, rather than the attached, Accessory Dwelling Units were preferred by residents at the open house activity.

Commissioner Moore commented that he staffed the housing station during the open house. He confirmed that once he explained what ADUs were, many people were in favor of this option.

Chairperson Baker asked if there were any questions or comments from the public.

Ann Mauro-Vetter asked if the breakdown of demographics was on the survey results.

Ms. Upfal stated that the 65 and older group was the largest group to participate in the survey and included 34.27% of all respondents. The age range of 55 to 64 included 26.29% of all respondents.

Ms. Mauro-Vetter asked if there was a way to gather more information from this demographic of the population and specifically target this group.



Chairperson Baker stated that we are trying to address the community as a whole. We are doing our best to gather information with the communication elements available to us. A further determination that could be made is if there was a gap, measured against our real population numbers, to those residents that actually participated. However, the Planning Commission is pleased that with a community of this size we have had so many people participate. It is usually fractions of a percent of people who participate. There has been at least 2% of Springfield's population participating in these processes.

Ms. Mauro-Vetter commented that maybe there are different opportunities and methods for letting the community know what is happening in the Township.

1. Master Plan

b. Review of 2018-2023 Strategic Plan

Ms. Upfal stated that the Township's 2018-2023 Strategic Plan strategy charts will help the Planning Commission as they formulate the action plan that accompanies the Master Plan. Reviewing these strategies would be the first part of the discussion of what action items the Planning Commission wants to take on.

Chairperson Baker asked for clarification on what the Planning Commission was to review with this document, as the strategic plan encompasses other boards, commissions, and so forth. Not every item in this chart is the responsibility of the Planning Commission.

Ms. Upfal agreed with Chairperson Baker. Then, per a suggestion from Chairperson Baker, she commented on the items relevant only to the Planning Commission with outstanding or uncompleted action items. She noted that items the Planning Commission may want to address with the Master Plan include adopting specific ordinance amendments, updating the Dixie Highway Corridor plan, creating a developer's guide for the corridor, and addressing streetscape improvements for the Dixie Highway/Davisburg Road intersection.

Chairperson Baker stated that at the December meeting the Commission had talked about certain ordinances they wanted to see addressed. This Strategic Plan along with the updated Master Plan will help the Commission keep in mind relevance of particular items and topics.

Ms. Upfal stated that the next steps in the Master Plan process would be to have a deeper discussion on goals and flesh out what the overlying goals and objectives are for the Master Plan. Upcoming workshops will focus on different elements of the Master Plan and refine these goals. It is the goals that make the Master Plan a living document.

New Business:

1. Review annual report to Township Board

Ms. Upfal explained that the Planning Commission is required to submit an annual report to the Township Board under the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. This report notes the different activities of the Planning Commission and Site Plan Committee over the course of the past year. This report documents the site plans reviewed and zoning amendments adopted by the Planning Commission,

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as well as the steps taken in the Master Plan process so far. The report also comments on what items the Planning Commission will address in the coming year.

Commissioner Hines moved to present the annual report to the Township Board as written, reporting the activities of the Planning Commission for 2022. Supported by Commissioner Moore. Vote: Yes: Baker, Costigan, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Moore. No: None. Absent: Sclesky. Motion Approved.

Public Comment:

Chris Miller asked if the slides of the 2018-2023 Strategic Plan would be available online.

Supervisor Moreau stated that the items reviewed tonight were the strategy charts for the Strategic Plan. The entire Strategic Plan for 2018-2023 will be posted on the website.

Mr. Miller asked if the meetings of the different committees are open to the public.

Chairperson Baker stated that all meetings are open to the public. The Planning Commission meets at 7:00 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of the month in this meeting room with the exception of December, when the Commission meets on the third Tuesday. Notices of other special committee meetings in the Township are published at least 18 hours before and information is posted in the Township Offices and on the website.

Supervisor Moreau stated that agendas and minutes from all meetings are posted on the website. Anyone can sign up to receive notifications about updates to this web page. The Township does not send out email blasts for this type of notification.

Mr. Miller asked if the Commissioners were aware of the activity happening at the General RV site. There is significant noise and light pollution at this site. There are also trees being removed along I-75 which is impacting the buffer in place. He was wondering if further development was happening at this site.

Supervisor Moreau explained that this comment is not an item that the Planning Commission would address. She indicated that Mr. Miller could speak to her after the meeting regarding these concerns.

Adjournment:

Commissioner Hines moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 p.m. Supported by Commissioner Mansour. Vote: Yes: Baker, Costigan, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Moore. No: None. Absent: Sclesky. Motion approved.

Joan Rusch, Recording Secretary