

Springfield Township
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes December 17, 2019

Call to Order: Chairperson Baker called the December 17, 2019 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
Jason Pliska

Commissioners Absent

Terry Rusnell
Kevin Sclesky

Consultants Present

Doug Lewan, Carlisle Wortman, Associates
Michael Smith, Anderson, Eckstein and Westrick

Staff Present

Collin W. Walls, Supervisor

Approval of Agenda:

Commissioner Mansour moved to approve the agenda as presented. Supported by Commissioner Hopper. Vote: Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Pliska. Voted no: None. Absent: Rusnell, Sclesky. Motion Carried.

Public Comment:

None

Consent Agenda:

1. Minutes of the November 19, 2019 meeting

Commissioner Hines moved to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2019 meeting as presented. Supported by Commissioner Pliska. Vote: Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Pliska. Voted no: None. Absent: Rusnell, Sclesky. Motion Carried.

Public Hearing:

None

New Business:

1. 2020 Meeting Dates and Election of Officers

Commissioners discussed beginning the meetings at 7:00 pm instead of 7:30 pm.

Commissioner Hines moved that the Planning Commission meetings for 2020 be held on the third Tuesday of each month with a start time of 7:00 pm. Supported by Commissioner Pliska. Vote: Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Pliska. Voted no: None. Absent: Rusnell, Sclesky. Motion Carried.

Commissioner Hines moved to nominate Commissioner Baker as Chairperson for 2020. Supported by Commissioner Mansour. Vote: Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Pliska. Voted no: None. Absent: Rusnell, Sclesky. Motion Carried.

Commissioner Hines nominated Commissioner Mansour to serve as Vice-Chairperson for 2020. Supported by Commissioner Pliska. Vote: Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Pliska. Voted no: None. Absent: Rusnell, Sclesky. Motion Carried.

Commissioner Hines nominated Commissioner Hopper as Secretary for 2020. Supported by Commissioner Mansour. Vote: Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Pliska. Voted no: None. Absent: Rusnell, Sclesky. Motion Carried.

**2. Ordinance Amendment – Dixie Highway Overlay District –
Section 40-596 – Review and Discussion**

Mr. Doug Lewan reviewed and explained his memo dated December 4, 2019, the proposed changes to Dixie Highway Overlay District, Section 40-596, flow charts and proposed District Enhancements which are a result of the Dixie Highway Strategic Planning Committee's planning sessions. He also provided a list of all the uses in all the districts that are noted in the Dixie Highway Overlay District that are possible. He suggested that the Commissioners review the list to determine if they agree with all these possible uses. Mr. Lewan asked the Commissioners if they had comment on the uses proposed in this district.

Supervisor Walls stated that when you look at all the possible uses, check the first sentence of the Dixie Highway Overlay District text Intent because it eliminates about half of them.

Mr. Lewan continued his summary of the review of the Dixie Highway Overlay District ordinance amendment. He reviewed the development bonus incentives proposed.

Chairperson Baker commented that there were several members of the committee that worked on these amendments.

Commissioner Mansour asked about the “Historical Context” bonus incentive.

Mr. Lewan stated that he considered historical properties and historical structures and making a project in context with those structures if possible. If there is a historical structure on the property or near the property, this would be a chance for a potential developer to recognize those and incorporate them into the design instead of tearing them down.

Commissioner Mansour commented that in another Township, they will allow the developer to put money into something else in the Township. He suggested that the safety paths could benefit from this. He also suggested that treatment of invasive species in the Township could be another bonus incentive.

Commissioner Pliska asked if he was talking about somewhere else in the Overlay District or other areas of the Township.

Commissioner Mansour replied any other areas that need it.

Commissioner Pliska stated that most of the other incentives are provided in this same Overlay District. He likes the idea but suggested that the monies be confined to the Overlay District so the benefits are derived in the same general area.

Commissioner Mansour suggested that safety paths would qualify for within the district. He asked if there were invasive species within the district.

Supervisor Walls indicated yes but he doesn't know the exact location. Safety paths is a great idea.

Commissioners agreed that safety paths are a good addition.

Mr. Lewan replied that right now the safety paths would be required in front of a new development but other locations along the district would benefit. He suggested that invasive species treatment is now required of new developments.

Commissioner Pliska suggested that a developer be required to provide safety path with the same frontage length as the property being developed.

Commissioner Mansour replied unless that is not significant enough to give them the incentive bonus.

Chairperson Baker replied that the idea is worthy but now they are talking about a developer doing work on someone else's property where there is no easement and it is not in the public right of way. He wants to be cautious that the bonus received is reflective of what is being provided.

Commissioner Mansour agreed. What is provided must be a comparable bonus for the Township.

Commissioner Hopper asked how they determine what is comparable.

Commissioner Mansour suggested that they look at the monetary value.

Supervisor Walls stated that they might be able to use the money to acquire the needed easements.

Mr. Lewan stated that the discretion would be up to the Commission. He suggested that it shouldn't be a one on one amount. The benefit must be equal to the density bonus that they are receiving.

Chairperson Baker commented on the pre-application meeting where the possible development bonus is discussed with the applicant. He suggested that the applicant can get feedback on whether they qualify for expedited review but the discretion of the amount of bonus rests with the Commission during site plan review meetings.

Mr. Lewan commented that at the pre-application meeting, the applicant may not even know what they can offer but it is important that they are provided a list at that point, so they know what they need to offer to receive a density bonus. It will be important to guide and direct the applicant at the pre-application meeting.

Commissioner Mansour suggested that as a developer, they will try to find the path of least resistance and safety path would be one option.

Mr. Lewan replied that some of the items might be too easy and this is something for the Commission to think about.

Commissioners discussed possible district enhancements.

Commissioner Hines asked about proposed district enhancement granting relief from Dixie Highway Design Guidelines architectural standards. She asked why they would do that.

Mr. Lewan replied that if there was a large mixed-use development that generally met the overall standards; he is not in favor of abandoning the entire thing, but this would give the Township some flexibility in looking at an idea or concept that doesn't meet all the standards.

Chairperson Baker commented that the list does use the word "may". There could be nonconforming lots that are not deep enough to provide space for concrete pillars, etc. He provided examples.

Commissioner Mansour commented that the Township's signage is restrictive, and he would rather see a bigger sign especially for multi-use facility with multiple tenants.

Supervisor Walls stated that the key is to what would be a financial benefit to a developer.

Commissioner Hopper agreed with 25% increase in signage area proposed. He would like to see the height restricted.

Commissioner Mansour agreed but also suggested that on some nonconforming lots, maybe they go smaller but a little higher. But he agrees with avoiding goal post signs.

Supervisor Walls stated that maybe in a mixed-used or multi-tenant facility, there might be allowances made in signage and he provided examples. He suggested that the Board of Appeals is always an option.

Mr. Lewan commented that he is adding possible increase to sign height to the language.

Commissioner Hopper suggested that large frontage parcels with one entrance might get two signs.

Mr. Lewan concurred.

Commissioner Hopper asked about “flexible land uses” offered on page three.

Mr. Lewan corrected that language to d(4)(b), not “e”.

Chairperson Baker commented that the terminology should be standardized. They start with Dixie Highway Overlay District and the first sentence in the “Intent” section says, “Dixie Overlay District” and then the first sentence in the “Purpose” section says, “Dixie Highway Overlay District”. He continued with more examples of inconsistent language.

Mr. Lewan concurred.

Chairperson Baker stated that this is the first time the Commission is seeing this and the intent is for it to be an agenda item on the January Joint meeting with the Township Board.

Supervisor Walls asked if Mr. Lewan should look at all the zoning districts and look to see what changes need to be made or should this be presented to the Township Board in its current form.

Chairperson Baker suggested that they use this document as a beginning and start to do the strike-throughs of uses that are not appropriate.

Mr. Lewan suggested that they might end up with a list of uses instead of zoning districts.

Commissioners agreed with this.

Supervisor Walls suggested that they add, “or other uses as accepted by the Planning Commission.”

Mr. Lewan asked if he should list all the uses in a list format because it would be easier to look at and eliminate ones that don’t fit.

Commissioners agreed with this approach and agreed that Mr. Lewan would have this available for the next meeting.

3. Joint Planning Commission and Township Board meeting – Discussion

Commissioners discussed holding a joint meeting with the Township Board and possible agenda topics.

Commissioners agreed to hold the meeting on Tuesday, January 19, 2020 at 5:30 pm with the possible agenda topics being discussion of the draft Dixie Highway Overlay District changes presented tonight, property at the SW Corner of Davisburg Rd & Dixie (Speedway) potential uses, zoning changes, etc., sign Ordinance Amendments and Short-Term Rentals.

Old Business:

1. Ordinance Amendments – Section 40-888 and Section 40-2 Glare and Exterior Lighting

Mr. Lewan summarized the amendment language provided to the Commission dated December 4, 2019. Color rendering index was added to the Definition section. He added the definition for “Skyglow”. He summarized other changes made and Commissioners suggested other changes.

Commissioners agreed with removing all the exemptions.

Commissioner Hines suggested that some of the definitions include restrictions.

Mr. Lewan answered that he would look at those definitions.

Chairperson Baker stated that Mr. Lewan will make the changes and they will hold the Public Hearing at the next available meeting.

Commissioner Hopper moved to set ordinance amendments to Section 40-888 Exterior Lighting, Section 40-893 Glare and Section 40-2 Definitions as discussed, this evening for Public Hearing at the next available Planning Commission meeting. Supported by Commissioner Hines. Vote: Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Pliska. Voted no: None. Absent: Rusnell, Sclesky. Motion Carried.

2. Stormwater Detention Basin Maintenance Discussion

Mr. Lewan summarized the ordinance amendments provided to the Commission.

Commissioner Pliska asked about changing the language on page 2, number 5 at the top to make it stronger and more apt to be implemented.

Mr. Lewan stated that many years ago the cigar shaped detention ponds with fences around them were typical, but we have evolved considerably. They could make it stricter.

Mr. Smith agreed with Mr. Lewan and added that typically the stormwater detention basin is designed to fit the space and they do not get the box shape any more.

Commissioners discussed the stormwater detention basin language.

Mr. Smith asked to add inlet structures and manholes to the definitions.

Mr. Lewan concurred. He asked if those were considered control structures.

Mr. Smith stated that he would consider a control structure tied to a pond that is controlling the release rate from the pond.

Commissioner Pliska asked about the impairment of wildlife statement. He asked who would determine that.

Mr. Smith answered yes. In most cases, if you are impacting wetlands, you would need to apply for a permit through the State and this would be reviewed.

Chairperson Baker asked what size wetland is required to be permitted.

Mr. Smith replied that EGLE would not get involved in a small one.

Mr. Lewan replied that he has seen reviews from the State with concerns over too much water going into a wetland.

Supervisor Walls stated that the State permits are for a wetland or parts of a wetland that is five acres or greater in size.

Mr. Lewan stated that it is a good thing to have in the ordinance and if they had to have someone check it, they could.

Commissioner Pliska replied that if the wetland was too small to be under jurisdiction of the State, then the Township would be responsible for identifying an individual who could do the assessment.

Mr. Lewan replied yes, if it was necessary.

Mr. Smith stated that on page 4, under Maintenance, it should be referenced as Stormwater Facility.

Mr. Lewan concurred.

Supervisor Walls suggested that the Commission coordinate these changes with the updates to the Design and Construction Standards that AEW has been contracted to perform.

Mr. Smith answered that he is projecting that it will take a couple of months for those Design and Construction Standards.

Commissioners agreed.

Other Business:

1. Priority Task List

Commissioners reviewed and suggested changes to the Priority Task List. Commissioners suggested adding “Signs” to the Priority Task List.

Public Comment:

None

Adjournment:

Commissioner Hines moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:59 p.m. Supported by Commissioner Mansour. Vote: Voted yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Pliska, Sclesky. Voted no: None. Absent: Rusnell. Motion Carried.

Erin A. Mattice, Recording Secretary