

Minutes of  
**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**June 27, 2023**



**Call to Order:** Chairperson Baker called the June 27, 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  
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 Hopper. Vote: Yes: Baker, Costigan, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Moore, Sclesky. No: None. Motion approved.**

**Public Comment:** None

**Approval of Consent Agenda:**

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

- 1) Approve minutes of May 23, 2023, Special Joint Meeting with Parks Commission**
- 2) Approve minutes of May 23, 2023, Regular Meeting**
- 3) Accept Communication from Holly Township for Notice of Master Plan Update**



**Public Hearing:**

1. Amendments to Code of Ordinances – Nonconforming lots of record  
40-931(h) – Nonconforming uses of land; nonconforming structures; nonconforming uses of structures and premises

**Hearing Opened at 7:03 p.m.**

**Comments:** None

**Hearing Closed at 7:04 p.m.**

2. Amendments to Code of Ordinances – ZBA Powers and Duties and Unlisted Use Determination  
40-63(c) – Zoning board of appeals – Powers and duties – Requests for interpretation, Record  
40-156 - District Regulations - Application  
40-159 - Unlisted Use Determination

**Hearing Opened at 7:05 p.m.**

**Comments:** None

**Hearing Closed at 7:06 p.m.**

**New Business:**

**1. Proposed amendments to Code of Ordinances – Nonconforming lots of record**

Ms. Upfal explained that this is a simple amendment to clarify that this ordinance applies not just to residentially zoned properties, but to all zoning districts. It also clarifies that if there is a lot size regulation associated with a special land use, then that minimum is not superseded by this ordinance. In that case, the proposed use must meet that lot minimum to be developed.

Commissioner Hines asked how this would impact a special land use requirement. She wanted to know if this would eliminate a Zoning Board of Appeals request for variance.

Ms. Upfal stated that the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act does not allow the ZBA to grant variances for special land uses or planned unit developments. The Planning Commission sets conditions for those uses and the ZBA cannot change them.

**Commissioner Hopper moved to recommend to the Township Board to adopt amendments to Springfield Township code of ordinances Chapter 40, Section 40-931(h) – Nonconforming uses of land; nonconforming structures; nonconforming uses of structures and premises. Supported by Commissioner Sclesky. Vote: Yes: Baker, Costigan, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Moore, Sclesky. No: None. Motion Approved.**

**2. Proposed amendments to Code of Ordinances – ZBA Powers and duties and Unlisted Use Determination**

Ms. Upfal explained that currently, the Zoning Board of Appeals interprets an unlisted land use. The Township Board is responsible for creating ordinances, so the Planning Commission may



consider that it is more appropriate for the Township Board to be the body that adds language to the ordinance in this situation. A few different amendments are required to be able to change this unlisted use process. This revision also adds procedural requirements and outlines the process for unlisted uses. One section to be amended is 40-156 – District Regulations. This covers how to treat different principal uses and provides a process for a use that is not specified. Section 40-63(c) to be amended pertains to the powers of the ZBA. This section changes the word “nondesignated” to “unlisted,” removes language from the ordinance regarding ZBA authority for interpretation, and changes the title of this section. Finally, a new section will be created that adds new language regarding unlisted uses and covers intent, application submittal, application processing, standards for approval, conditions of approval, standards for denial, site plan review, and record keeping.

Chairperson Baker asked for clarification of what section this new language would be placed under. The notice indicates Section 40-159, but some of the other the information provided indicates a different section.

It was determined that this new section would be placed under Section 40-159.

**Commissioner Hines moved to recommend to the Township Board the adoption of the ordinance to amend Springfield Township Code of Ordinances Chapter 40, by amending section 40-63 – Zoning Board of Appeals powers and duties, Section 40-156 – District Regulations – Applications, and adding Section 40-159 – Unlisted Use Determinations. Supported by Commissioner Hopper. Vote: Yes: Baker, Costigan, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Moore, Sclesky. No: None. Motion Approved.**

**Old Business:**

1. Master Plan – Discussion on Economic Development, Dixie Highway Corridor, and Downtown Davisburg

Ms. Upfal reviewed the results of the public input sessions which indicated two main themes – 1.) Tensions exist between growth and preservation of character and 2.) Development is desirable but only in contextually appropriate locations. Ms. Upfal provided an infrastructure overview. In general, there are limited options for water and wastewater. In 2014 a Utility Study was done on Dixie Highway to evaluate possible options. As a result of this study, four options were presented to treat wastewater. These included constructing a treatment plant, constructing a decentralized plant for multiple properties, constructing an individual plant, or onsite septic. All but the last of these options were cost prohibitive. Options for water sourcing included individual wells with an option of future connection to a public system or individual wells with no option to connect. Ms. Upfal summarized positive items in place for Downtown Davisburg including a community sewer that serves some parcels, improvements to the old lumberyard property, and the opening of the convenience store.

Supervisor Moreau explained parking in the downtown area. The Township shared in 50% of the costs with RCOC for paving the parking areas and will pay for the entire cost of striping the parking. She showed different configurations for parking and crosswalk striping. To accommodate the



pathway connections, two property owners have agreed to parallel parking with a pathway on the north side of Broadway, instead of the current angle parking. She stated that there will be 25 parking spots and 1 ADA van accessible spot and that all available parking is shared by all the businesses downtown. The Township Board has authorized the parking plan and pathway connections. Supervisor Moreau commented that septic and parking are two key issues for downtown. The old lumberyard property serves the whole community, so the Township is not yet sure of how that property will be utilized. Many of the action items proposed in the planner's memo are things the Township is already working towards.

Ms. Osborn stated that proposed strategies for Downtown Davisburg consist of creating a sense of place and providing amenities. Some ideas to promote placemaking are banners and wayfinding, sidewalk amenities and art, gateways, activation of vacant public space, pop up events or businesses, historic preservation, inventory of historic assets, and restoration and redevelopment of historic sites.

Ms. Upfal explained that one key approach to the Dixie Highway area would be to reconvene the Strategic Planning Committee. Important strategies to consider for Dixie Highway include expanding the Overlay District, or expanding it with modified requirements; review existing guidelines and address requirements that have resulted in undesirable outcomes or stymied development; amend the flexible zoning option to provide greater incentives for mixed use or development to drive foot traffic; consider additional flexibility from design requirements for existing structures; and review setback requirements for the Overlay District. Other strategies for Dixie Highway include building community identity by gateway signage, roadway aesthetics, placemaking enhancements, and activating vacant space; encouraging compatible uses and shared infrastructure by centralized planning; supporting a corridor association; addressing small, non-conforming lots; encouraging complementary uses; and considering economic development tools. Another strategy would be to consider items to help potential developers of the Bordine's site by updating the utility study or providing a concept plan for the site.

The Commissioners discussed the feasibility of connecting to a sewer from a neighboring community for Dixie Highway. Some complications with this include costs to extend the system, available capacity, and obtaining approval of communities already on the system.

Commissioner Hopper commented that recently developed properties on Dixie do not have a need for a community sewer system because their needs in this aspect are minimal. The Kroger development is unique in this regard.

Supervisor Moreau commented that there is flexibility in the Dixie Highway Design Guidelines which state that the Township may modify the architectural style guidelines for historic structures.

Chairperson Baker commented that the Strategic Committee previously met to continue the discussion on Dixie Highway more intensely and then brought ideas to the Planning Commission. This committee consisted of Township Board and Planning Commission members.

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**SPRINGFIELD**  
CHARTER TOWNSHIP



Sean R. Miller, Clerk

Supervisor Moreau stated that the Dixie Highway Design Guidelines and Gateway Sign are two examples of items that came from the Strategic Planning Committee. She feels there would be value in resurrecting this committee.

The Commissioners discussed the strategies presented tonight and were in favor of them.

Ms. Upfal stated that they are close to the end of the Master Plan process. The final discussion next month will be about the Future Land Use map and the implementation table.

**Public Comment:**

Jack Rooney, a member of the family that owns several properties downtown, commented that he is a cheerleader for Downtown Davisburg. He would be open to Commissioners calling him if they have any ideas or would like to help. He was pleased that the Downtown Davisburg property owners have gotten together for meetings with the Supervisor.

**Adjournment:**

**Commissioner Hines moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 p.m. Supported by Commissioner Moore. Vote: Yes: Baker, Costigan, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Moore, Sclesky. No: None. Motion approved.**

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Joan Rusch, Recording Secretary