

Minutes of  
**PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
August 22, 2023**



**Call to Order:** Chairperson Baker called the August 22, 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  
Ruth Ann Hines  
Dave Hopper  
George Mansour  
Chris Moore

**Absent:** Jamie Costigan  
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 Moore. Vote: Yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Moore. No: None. Absent: Costigan, 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, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Moore. No: None. Absent: Costigan, Sclesky. Motion approved.**

**1) Approve minutes of July 25, 2023, Regular Meeting**

**Old Business:**

1. Short Term Rentals – Discussion on Proposed Ordinance Amendments



Ms. Upfal stated that the intent is to treat short term rentals (STRs) as a commercial use. They would be permitted as special land uses in the Office-Service, Local Commercial (C-1), and Village Center districts. It is recommended to regulate STRs through the zoning ordinance. There are three items to consider: how other types of lodging are addressed in the ordinance, where STRs should be permitted, and what regulations and standards should be applied to STRs. This issue is complex, and every community needs to address it differently. The challenge is to make the proposed ordinance language effective within the framework of the current zoning ordinance.

Ms. Upfal reviewed the types of lodging in the Township referenced in the current ordinance: boarding houses, bed and breakfasts, and hotels and motels. Relevant terms in the definition section include rooming unit, along with dwelling unit and family because they relate to permanent occupancy. Proposed changes to the definitions section would include new or revised definitions for the terms bed and breakfast, lodging unit, rooming unit, hotel/motel, and short term rental. The definitions for hotel/motel and STR would be based on the number of bedrooms and not the number of guests. There must be clarity about what constitutes a short term rental versus a long term rental. The Commissioners should clarify a specific amount of time of rental for a use to be considered short term.

The Commissioners discussed the proposed definitions and how to define “temporary.”

Ms. Upfal commented that if 30 days was decided as the time limit for STRs, then rentals less than 30 days would not be allowed in residential areas. If a rental was more than 30 days, then it could be allowed in residential districts.

The consensus was to start by defining the time limit of a STR as 30 days.

Ms. Upfal stated that the 30 day limit would be in the standards section of the ordinance, not in the definitions section.

The Commissioners discussed limiting STRs by the number of bedrooms and not the number of guests.

Ms. Upfal commented that it would be difficult to determine an ordinance violation by regulating the number of guests, but the number of bedrooms would be easier to know. She stated that the Commissioners could also limit the number of vehicles. Ms. Upfal stated that STRs are proposed to be permitted in the VC, OS, and C-1 districts as a special land use. STRs are like a commercial use and commercial uses are not allowed in residential districts. Commercial operations have setback and landscaping requirements to protect nearby residential properties. Any STR would need to go through site plan review. The special land use requirement also allows an additional level of review by the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Hines asked what would happen to existing short term rentals.



Ms. Upfal stated that existing STRs could remain as a legal nonconforming use. However, the Township can ask for documentation that a STR has been active within the past 180 days. This section of the ordinance will be reviewed by the attorney. There may be legal implications with how to address these existing STRs, and legal guidance would be needed if the Township wanted to explore how to stop them altogether.

Chairperson Baker summarized that, if ordinance language was to be adopted regarding short term rentals, and if a property had a history of being used as a short term rental, then it would have to demonstrate this use and would have to maintain this use. If there is a gap of a certain period of time, then the owners would have to abide by the new ordinance requirements.

Ms. Upfal confirmed that this was the correct interpretation. The Zoning Administrator has every right to ask for documentation as proof of use as a short term rental. Putting this in the ordinance makes it very clear that this is a proper course of action.

Commissioner Mansour asked if STRs would require a permit or inspection.

Supervisor Moreau indicated that this is not the intent. That would be an administrative function that the Supervisor's Office doesn't want to undertake at this time. STRs would be considered a commercial use and the Township doesn't currently inspect commercial uses. She stated that the Township legal counsel has suggested sending letters to known STRs notifying them once the ordinance has been adopted, and letting them know that they have a right to continue. However, they cannot expand or make alterations, and if this type of use ceases for 180 days, then they cannot continue STR activities.

Ms. Upfal stated that the recommendation is to address this issue in the zoning ordinance instead of the general code. The general code is where a permitting process would be addressed. This will not require a permitting process, and it will be easier to handle administratively as part of the zoning ordinance. Ms. Upfal noted there are other standards regarding STRs that must be decided.

The Commissioners discussed these other standards and decided the parking would be addressed through the SLU process and use standards for hotels would be moved from the definition section into a new section. Also, owner occupancy would not be required.

Supervisor Moreau asked if STRs would be allowed in the C-2 district, as there are some properties on Dixie Highway that might be suitable for this type of use.

Ms. Upfal stated that they are not currently proposed as a use in C-2. However, that could be changed. She suggested making STRs in the C-2 district also a SLU.

The Commissioners agreed that this would be appropriate.

Ms. Upfal stated that the recommendation of 10 or fewer guests would translate into occupancy based on a maximum of five bedrooms. Limiting occupancy by number of bedrooms would give



the Township a way to enforce this item. It is also a way to differentiate between a hotel/motel and a STR.

Paula Lentine-Vining, 9987 Dixie Highway, wondered how the number of beds could be enforced since the Township would not be licensing or permitting short term rentals. She was concerned about STRs becoming party houses.

Supervisor Moreau stated that short term rentals would operate like a hotel or motel. There would be no need for inspections if in the commercial zoning district. She does not foresee this being a popular use in either the C-1 or C-2 districts. The Township cannot be exclusionary, so the Township is trying to identify places where short term rentals could be possible with the least impact on surrounding properties.

The Commissioners discussed occupancy and reached consensus that STRs should have a maximum of five bedrooms. They also discussed parking requirements and decided that STRs and bed and breakfasts should have one parking space per bedroom and hotels/motels should have one parking space per 1.5 units.

Ms. Upfal stated that she understands where the Planning Commission would like to go with this ordinance. She will revise the draft language and have it ready for next month. However, the Commissioners could set for public hearing this evening if they wanted.

The Commissioners discussed that they would like to review the revised ordinance language next month before setting for a public hearing.

Ms. Upfal stated that after she revises the ordinance, the Township attorney would also review the proposed ordinance. His comments would be part of next month's packet.

## 2. Master Plan – Future Land Use Map

Ms. Upfal commented that the Future Land Use (FLU) map does not impact how the property is currently used or regulated. It is a planning tool to assist the Planning Commission in how they would like to see land uses evolve in the Township. The zoning map and zoning ordinance are two items that regulate the use of land, and changes to the zoning map should occur strategically over time. To update the FLU map, the Commissioners must first review the designations noted on the current FLU and consider what changes they would like to see.

Ms. Upfal reviewed the key changes proposed to the land use descriptions and provided an explanation of each. These changes are to consolidate Traditional Lakefront Residential into Residential; to consolidate Mobile Home Park into Multiple Family; to eliminate Office-Service and consolidate into Local Commercial or one of the Mixed-Use districts; to rename General Clustered Commercial to General Commercial; to recategorize Planned Mixed Use into different Mixed-Use districts; and to create four new Mixed Use districts – South Dixie Highway District, North Dixie Highway Overlay District, Residential Mixed Use District, and Davisburg Mixed Use District.



The Commissioners discussed each of the updated future land use designation descriptions. The Commissioners either approved the descriptions as presented, or with guidance from the planner revised the descriptions as necessary.

- **Low Density Residential** - Updated description approved as presented.
- **Medium Density Residential** - Updated description approved as presented.
- **High Density Residential** - Updated description approved as presented.
- **Traditional Lakefront Residential** – Remove this section and change these areas to be consistent with the residential FLU designation that is best aligned with underlying zoning. Explore zoning regulations to provide standards for “special exception lots” which meet certain conditions such as nonconforming size, width, and setbacks.
- **Multiple Family Residential** - Updated description approved with the following changes:
  - Removed the sentence, “Cookie cutter designs should be avoided,” replace with wording such as “high quality and varied designs.”
- **Local Commercial** - Updated description approved as presented.
- **General Commercial** - Updated description approved as presented.
- **Mixed Use** - Updated description approved with the following changes:
  - Update “three” to “four” distinct mixed-use Future Land Use categories.
  - *South Dixie Highway Mixed Use* to include an explanation of how the corridor will evolve over time before this entire area can be rezoned to the South Dixie Highway Zoning.
  - *North Dixie Highway Mixed Use* to consider adding references to shared driveways and to encourage internal circulation for pedestrians and non-motorized transportation; also remove last bullet point regarding employers.
  - *Residential Mixed Use* approved as presented.
  - *Davisburg Mixed Use* approved as presented.
- **Limited Industrial** – Updated description approved with the following change:
  - Adjust last sentence to read, “...when adjacent to residential zoning districts **or uses.**”
- **Public/Semi-Public** – Updated description approved as presented.
- **Utility Corridor** – Planner will adjust wording after discussion on whether corridor should include underground utilities like gas transmission lines or be changed to specify that the corridor indicates only above ground utilities.
- **Recreation-Conservation** – Updated description approved with the following change:
  - Remove last sentence.
- **Privately Dedicated Open Space** - Updated description approved as presented.

Ms. Upfal stated that the next step is to review and discuss the recommended changes as annotated on the provided Future Land Use map.

The Commissioners considered each of the twelve recommendations and the planner provided explanations and rationales for each change. The Commissioners decided on the following changes:



- Mining operation on Tindall Road to be designated as Residential Mixed Use on the west side of Tindall and Medium Density Residential on the east side of Tindall.
- Heather Highlands Golf Course area to change from Recreation and Conservation to Residential Mixed Use to allow for greater flexibility and possible change in use from golf course.
- Create a new North Dixie Highway Overlay District north of Davisburg Road and reassign FLU designation for Office-Service, possibly to Local Commercial. This district would not include residentially zoned parcels.
- Eliminate Traditional Lakefront Residential at Dixie Lake, Susin Lake, Waumegah Lake, and Big Lake and replace with residential FLU designation that matches current zoning.
- Create a new South Dixie Highway Zoning District south of Davisburg Road which matches the current overlay district but extends north across Davisburg Road to include Buscemi's, Yellow Dog, and Bella Artistry.
- On Dixie Highway at the end of Lavon Road, change Planned Mixed Use to Medium Density Residential.
- On the west side of Dixie Highway south of I-75, change to Residential Mixed Use to replace Office-Service with appropriate zoning.
- At Colombiere Center, change from Recreation and Conservation to Residential Mixed Use to prepare for potential transition in use from retirement home/retreat center.
- For the residential parcel on Andersonville Road in the M-2 District, consider changing from Limited Industrial to Residential.
- Near the Post Office area, change from Office and Local Commercial to Residential Mixed Use to present greater options for potential development.
- In Downtown Davisburg, change from Planned Mixed Use to Davisburg Mixed Use.

Ms. Upfal stated that if the Commissioners had any other changes they would like to see, to contact the Supervisor's Office, and these suggestions would be relayed to the planners. The goal for the next meeting is to have a draft of the Master Plan. Once the draft is prepared, there will be many opportunities for review and revisions.

**Public Comment:** None

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**SPRINGFIELD**  
CHARTER TOWNSHIP



Sean R. Miller, Clerk

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**Adjournment:**

**Commissioner Hines moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:05 p.m. Supported by Commissioner Moore. Vote: Yes: Baker, Hines, Hopper, Mansour, Moore. No: None. Absent: Costigan, Sclesky. Motion approved.**

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**Joan Rusch, Recording Secretary**