

Hopkins Township Planning Commission  
Minutes Special Meeting 2/24/2015

Planning Commission Members: Chair Lori Castello; Mark Forbes; Tadd Heft; Mike Timmer; Chuck Wamhoff; Steve Wamhoff; Fred Morley

Members Present: Lori Castello; Mark Forbes; Tadd Heft; Mike Timmer; Chuck Wamhoff; Steve Wamhoff; Fred Morley

Meeting Called to Order at: 7:00 PM Meeting Adjourned at: 8:05 PM

Location: Hopkins Township Hall

+ Commission attendance noted above.  
+ Zoning Administrator Kirk Scharphorn present.

- **Minutes of the 1/27/2015 Special Meeting:** These minutes were previously emailed to commissioners.

**MOTION:** A motion was made and supported to approve the 1/27/2015 meeting minutes. This motion was approved.

- **Agenda:** The agenda was approved as presented and is attached to these minutes.
- **OLD Business:**
  - **Ag Building Standards Changes:** Zoning Administrator Scharphorn explained that the Zoning Board of Appeals has been receiving requests for variance in setback distances in the Ag District. The number of variance requests could be reduced with an Ordinance change. He presented three possible options. These are made part of these minutes. Option #3 would eliminate the most variance requests. Discussion included: The Township goal of preserving farm land must be strongly considered in any Ordinance change; Ordinance change will require a public hearing; existing home locations affect on preserving farm land in light of adding building sites; the use of natural features and the location of property lines to maximize farm land preservation.  
  
Specific suggested language included: The dwelling location shall preserve the maximum amount of existing tillable farm land.  
  
The target date for the public hearing is the Planning Commission's next scheduled meeting, March 24, 2015 at 7:00 PM. Zoning Administrator Scharphorn will draft proposed language for the Ordinance change.
  - **Master Plan Updated Draft:** A new draft of the revised Master Plan is in the works and should be presented at the next Planning Commission meeting in March.
- **NEW Business:**
  - **Centennial Barn:** Several other jurisdictions are dealing with the same idea and issues we have dealt with in Hopkins Township. The Allegan County Health Department is getting involved.
  - **Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO):** There is CAFO, a large chicken operation, being proposed in Otsego Township. Many people have expressed their opinion about this. Otsego Township Planning Commission, their attorney and others are involved. Michigan's Right-to-Farm Act allows operations of this type and protects the operators as long as they are following certain requirements including the Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPS).
  - **Jjak Foundation:** This property on 20<sup>th</sup> Street has been put into trust. Hopkins Township has no jurisdiction over this property.
- The meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM.

Submitted by:

Fred Morley, Secretary  
Hopkins Township Planning Commission

Minutes approved: