

Hopkins Township Planning Commission
Minutes Special Meeting 8/29/2006

Planning Commission Members: Chair Lori Castello; Tadd Heft; Bob Hoffmaster; Richard King; Lee Murray; Chuck Wamhoff; Fred Morley

Members Present: Lori Castello; Tadd Heft; Bob Hoffmaster; Richard King; Lee Murray; Chuck Wamhoff; Fred Morley

Meeting Called to Order at: 7:30 PM Meeting Adjourned at: 8:35 PM

Attendance: 6 Roster: See attached

Location: Hopkins Township Hall

Business Conducted:

- Meeting called to order at 7:30 PM by Chair Castello.
- Commission attendance as noted above.
- The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- Agenda: The review of the draft Hopkins Township Master Plan is the only item on the Agenda.

Agenda Item: Hopkins Township Master Plan (Plan).

Mark Sisson, Township Planner, presented an overview of what's going on with our Plan and some of the actions that need to be taken. We needed to look at a couple issues.

1. Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program. Where does the PDR Program stand with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR)? Mark Sisson ran the PDR Program past the DNR. They indicated that the language is acceptable and meets the DNR criteria.
2. Raising the minimum lot size in the Ag District from 20 to 40 acres and in the Rural Estate, R-1 District, from 10 to 20 acres. This issue was discussed later in this meeting.

When the draft of the Plan is ready, it will be forwarded to neighboring jurisdictions for their comment. A Public Hearing will be held after

comments from our neighbors are reviewed and incorporated into our Plan, if they are deemed needed in the Plan.

The Plan designates Hillards as a Hamlet Expansion (HE) Area. Some of the points brought up in discussing Hillards as an HE Area are:

1. There should be no further development in this area without sewers.
2. If sewers are not available, action on changing zoning to expand would not be taken.
3. Scenarios of leaving the Plan like it is or downsizing the Hillards HE Area were presented.
4. Other locations that have sewers in close proximity would be more suited for expansion.

Following this discussion, there was agreement that the HE designation will be removed from our Plan.

Discussion about the Agricultural Preservation (AG) District focused on whether to increase the minimum lot size to 40 acres from the present AG District 20 acres. Among the points raised were:

1. A primary objective of the Plan is to preserve farmland, Planning Principle number 2. A 40 acre minimum lot size in the AG District will help in preserving farmland.
2. 20 acres is not a good building lot size.
3. There was a claim that a 40 acre minimum would “devalue” the land. This was tied in with an accusation that this Commission was making decisions to benefit ourselves. This accusation was flatly rejected.

A brief discussion on Open Space Preservation, different than farmland preservation, led to proposing that the minimum lot size in the Rural Open Space Residential (RO) District, presently the Rural Estate, R-1 District, be increased from 10 acres to 20 acres. One of the points was that 20 acres may encourage cluster developments.

It was noted that designated County Drains are not subject to zoning.

MOTION: A motion was made and supported to have Mark Sisson, Township Planner, make the following changes in the draft Master Plan in preparation to sending the Plan out to our neighbors:

1. Leave the Hillards area as presently zoned.
2. Remove the Hamlet Expansion (HE) Area designation from the text of the draft Master Plan.
3. Increase the minimum lot size in the Agricultural Preservation (AG) District, from 20 acres to 40 acres.
4. Increase the minimum lot size in the Rural Open Space Residential (RO) District, from 10 acres to 20 acres.

This motion was approved.

There was further discussion about the comment period, the comment process, the timing of these and the Public Hearing.

We should be proactive in seeking comments from our neighbors and explaining to them what is in our draft Master Plan. We should especially talk to our closest neighbor, the Village of Hopkins. We should ask our neighbors to come to the Public Hearing on our Master Plan. Chair Castello indicated that she would go to the Village.

MOTION: A motion was made and supported to adjourn. This motion was approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Submitted by

Fred Morley
Secretary
Hopkins Township Planning Commission