

Hopkins Township Planning Commission
Minutes Special Meeting Public Hearing Master Plan 1/16/2007

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

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

General Discussion Began: 6:30 PM

Public Hearing Called to Order at: 7:30 PM

Public Hearing Adjourned at: 8:22 PM

Attendance: 17

Roster: Attached

Location: Hopkins Township Hall

Business Conducted:

- General Discussion of Draft Master Plan Started at 6:30 PM.
- Commission attendance as noted above.
- Public Hearing on Draft Master Plan Called to Order 7:30 PM.
- Guests include: Mark Evans, Township Supervisor and Mark Sisson, Township Planner.
- Agenda: Draft Master Plan informal discussion and Public Hearing on Draft Master Plan.

Agenda

Informal discussion of Draft Master Plan 6:30 to 7:30 PM.

Public Hearing on Draft Master Plan called to order at 7:30 PM by Chair Castello.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Comments:

Ken Blaauw: He owns a parcel in Section 24, located north of 129TH Avenue and west of US 131. In the past, he has objected to the commercial zoning of this parcel. He wants the parcel that he owns to be zoned Agricultural. Further, the Draft Plan does not have this parcel planned as Agricultural. He wants the parcel planned and zoned Agricultural. He plans to apply for placing this parcel in the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program. Under PDR rules, land must be planned and zoned for Agricultural use to qualify.

It was pointed out that we are looking for input. We will not be making decisions on finalizing the Master Plan tonight.

Mark Sisson gave an overview of the Draft Master Plan. One of the new things in the Plan is the consideration of increasing the minimum lot size in the Agricultural District to 40 acres, from the present 20 acres minimum. He also reviewed some other new things in the draft. Among these are: the Lake Development District; Open Space, Cluster Development; the River Protection Corridor Area. He also made the point that the adopted Master Plan will be the basis for changes in the Zoning Ordinance. The Master Plan is Policy, not Law. The parcel at 129TH Avenue and US 131, discussed previously is at the interchange and could be a candidate for development.

Todd Green: He went through several hypothetical scenarios that we may have to face if we change the minimum lot size in the Agricultural District to 40 acres. He questioned whether variances, Special Use Permits and the like could be used. These regulations affect a lot of people.

The point was made that we must review the Master Plan every five years, so it is not carved in stone. The regulations that would come out of the Master Plan are future regulations. Until the Master Plan is adopted and regulations are put into the Zoning Ordinance, the present regulations apply. We do not want to rely on variances, Special Use Permits and the like for zoning solutions.

Mark Battjes: He asked where the 40 acres minimum came from and if there would be a vote of Township people. Mr. Battjes stated that he did not like the 40 acres minimum in the Agricultural District.

Mark Sisson went through the overall procedure to get from where we are to where we will be after the Master Plan is adopted, Zoning Ordinance changes, etc. There could be a referendum. Keep in mind that there are many things that need to be accomplished before we have the 40 acres minimum actually in place. Again the present regulations have 20 acres minimum in the Agricultural District. We want to consider how we can meet the goal stated in the Master Plan, that of preserving farm land.

Mark Evans, Hopkins Township Supervisor handed out a document with several recommended changes to the Draft Master Plan. A copy of this document will be part of the Public Hearing record.

Chair Castello noted that we must send the Draft Master Plan out to various jurisdictions. We received a letter from the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission, commenting on the Draft Master Plan. The letter suggested that we include more discussion of the recently completed Township Recreation Plan. This letter will be part of the Public Hearing record.

We will have our next regular quarterly meeting, January 23, 2007. We will schedule special meetings to go over the comments we have received thus far. The Public Hearing was adjourned at 8:22 PM.

Submitted by:

Fred Morley, Secretary
Hopkins Township Planning Commission