

Bridgewater Township

Planning Commission Minutes of Special Meeting April 17, 2006

Location: Bridgewater Township Hall, 10990 Clinton Road, Clinton MI

1. **Call to Order** Acting Chair Glenn Burkhardt called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM
2. **Roll Call** Present: Glenn Burkhardt, Glen Finkbeiner, Dave Faust, Mark Iwanicki, Amy Riley, Jim Tice and Dave Woods
Absent: Mike Bisco (Training)
Also present: Wanda Fish, Administrative Assistant, Cynthia Carver, and Earl Carver
3. **Agenda** There was no agenda
4. **Minutes** The minutes of April 10, 2006 were not available for review
5. **Public Comments**
There were none.

6. Master Plan

Acting Chair Glenn Burkhardt explained the purpose of the meeting was to review the survey results and to discuss what changes to the Master Plan might be necessary.

The following were identified from the survey as primary issues

1. Respondents want development to take place near other development.

Chair said he had talked to Kevin Cornish – Clinton Village Manager – who said that Clinton Village was not particularly interested in extending services into Bridgewater Township. Jeff Wallace, Manchester Village, indicated Manchester Village would be amenable under some kind of 425 agreement. Would provide Bridgewater Township with a way to permit development in nearby areas while still providing limited revenue to offset some of the increasing costs due to development.

2. Respondents indicated that rural environment, farm and open space preservation are paramount.

3. There was a mix of views of preferences towards lot sizes of two, five and one acre with cluster. Slight preference for one acre lots with cluster and five acre. Might be the area for public input at some kind of public meeting.

Chair commented that it would be helpful to explore transitional zoning/lot sizes as well. He also noted that the County plan had recommended trying to maintain farmland and open space along the transportation corridors.

4. Respondents indicated the rate of growth of the township was “about right to too much” and there was no significant change from the 2000 survey. Tice noted that non-residents indicated growth was a little too slow. He thought that was probably an indication of plans to sell. Discussion of prices being asked for large land tracts, commercial and industrial prices.

5. Identification of trends – Burkhardt said building permits have remained at about 10 per year over the past five years. Noted that SEMCOG growth estimates were lower than actual.

6. Discussion of population trends, number of elderly.

7. Tice raised issue of land holdings being farmed by non owners could come onto the market due to economic pressures. Discussion of survey results regarding intent to hold land in production. Discussion of whether or not there is sufficient diversity of zoning options in the master plan to withstand challenges from developers. Need to look at large tracts of land that are near water bodies for discharge. Burkhardt suggested the Township will need to look more proactively and creatively at

where there are possibilities for development and determine if those are the same areas that people want to preserve and then take appropriate steps. Cited some townships that use this kind of trade off for preservation – saying in effect to a developer that if you want to develop this parcel, then you need to help us preserve that parcel. Not precisely a transfer of development rights.

Also mentioned the potential impact of people not understanding this kind of creative effort and going to a referendum as they did before.

Question as to how much is enough diversity. Are there any hard and fast guidelines? Conclusion there is only case law.

Discussion of how much consistency there needs to be between County and SWWCOG plans.

Glen Finkbeiner pointed out that the SWWCOG plan recommended conservation easements. Tice observed the SWWCOG plan was oriented more towards how goals could be implemented. Finkbeiner said the SWWCOG plan recommended more use to PUDs to achieve planning goals. Discussion of how PUDs work, maintaining more flexibility for planning. Burkhardt: Could be more specific about where open space should be focused, and then offer forms of tradeoffs. Concerns about how people will view the way in which this affects land value. If you want to truly preserve prime agricultural land, you will have to provide more incentives. Glen Finkbeiner mentioned sliding scale zoning/land division. Question about how sliding scale divisions are compatible with the current land division laws.

Discussion of how you would be able to implement the change. Discussion of where there were large tracts of farmlands in the Township.

Preservation of natural features area, river, lakes, etc. discussed in terms of how you could preserve them.

New state planning requirements will require much more coordination between townships. How can townships arrive at that? Discussion of cluster requirements not being used. How can you make them attractive for development? Should we try to tweak the cluster ordinance to make it more attractive? Soils come into play as well. Site condo development plays in by avoiding the split issue.

The county plan designated a central agricultural area and recommended five-acre minimum building lots. Encourages the creation of regional manufactured home parks. Discussion of what types of housing could be built. Discussion of differences between manufactured and modular housing. Issue of standards, role of the HUD code.

Tice brought up the issue of the extent to which the Planning Commission should conform to the regional and county plans. Burkhardt pointed out that many facets of the Bridgewater and SWWCOG plans are parallel. Discussion of River Raisin corridor, the concern that while residents would like preservation in that area, tracts are already broken up particularly along Clinton Road. There was extensive discussion of the finances and tax implications of efforts to preserve, sources of funds, impact of Headlee. Led to a discussion of consolidation to preserve operating funds while freeing up funds for preservation. While it may make sense, difficult to do, given entrenched thinking. Hard to be creative if people are not ready for creative ideas.

Burkhardt posed the question if there is any reason in anyone's mind to make any material changes to the Township Master Plan? Tice: Brings up the question of whether or not the overlay approach will be acceptable to the State for the PDR program. Burkhardt: We are moving forward on that, but beyond that, is there reason to alter the plan? Glen Finkbeiner: Perhaps some minor tweaks, but there doesn't seem to be anything major. Question if there should be specific discussion about the US 12 corridor near Clinton, the proposal regarding the Stevenson farm, to reaffirm the status. Finkbeiner: The decision was sound; we all agreed it made sense to put the buffer at Lima Center Road. Burkhardt: Would probably make legal sense to discuss and document that's what we continue to intend. It's a major transportation corridor, we don't want to add access points to facilitate more traffic problems and we want to preserve farmland in that corridor. Is there any sense in adding housing in that area when we are already planning housing in the Hamlet area where sewers are just coming on line? Woods:

Perhaps we should do the same thing for the Hamlet area. Iwanicki said that five years ago, the Township had a thorough plan, not a lot has changed. Until there are changes in what is happening and there are changes in the attitude of the people, cannot see the need for major changes. If we try to do something major to preserve open space, we'll be shot down. Tice asked about County involvement, referring to the letter that was received. Consensus that it would be appropriate to meet with Roby, explain where we are and what the thinking is.

Riley: Terry Brinkman was indicating the regional and county and local plans should track.

Burkhardt: One of the areas of difference with the county plan is the concept of five acre minimum lots with a transition to 20 and then 40. Very doubtful that could fly in the Township.

Discussion of the need to do a thorough update of the Zoning Ordinance.

Iwanicki noted that the Township can decide to amend the Master Plan outside of the five year schedule, can do it when we see the need clearly.

Burkhardt: Consensus is that we should do some housekeeping, refinement but not a major update.

Riley: With the results of the survey, the input from the ad hoc committee, plus the input from the members.

Burkhardt said he would talk with the state officials to be sure we can do the overlay approach. Then we can ask the Board to let us move ahead. Cindy Carver asked if the Planning Commission was looking to lay over. Burkhardt: No, we cannot do that. Need the Board to take action to distribute the draft. Discussion of what actions the Board has been asked to take. We would take action in the July meeting to ask the Board to affirm the plan in their July meeting. Discussion of the need for the Board to be involved in the discussions on an ongoing basis.

Discussion of MSU Extension training being offered on May 10 on the new combined legislation. Glen and Glenn will go.

Motion to adjourn: Finkbeiner, second by Woods. Meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.