

Bridgewater Township

Planning Commission

Minutes of Regular Meeting - September 12, 2005

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

1. Chair James Fish called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM

2. Present

Mike Bisco, Glenn Burkhardt, Glen Finkbeiner, Dave Faust, Jim Fish, Mark Iwanicki, Amy Riley, and Jim Tice

Absent: Dave Woods

Also present: Wanda Fish, Doug Frey, Gretchen Barr, Carlos Acevedo, Ron Finkbeiner and Joann Finkbeiner

3. Agenda

Approved with the addition of information from the Howell workshop added under other business.

4. Minutes

Minutes of August 8, 2005 were approved as prepared

5. Public Comments

None

6. Bridgewater Commons

Chair stated he had received a letter dated August 17, 2005, from Gary Niethammer confirming the oral request to consider the application for Bridgewater Commons under the cluster option of R-3 zoning. Letter attached to the record.

7. Bridgewater Farms

Chair stated no further communication was received when the agenda was prepared. He had received on September 12, 2005, a copy of a revised landscape plan that was sent directly to the Township planning firm, Birchler Arroyo, for review. Per the discussion at the last meeting, Chair stated that he assumed the applicants were continuing to perfect a revised plan that would be submitted at a later date.

8. Master Plan

A. Draft Survey prepared by Gretchen Barr (Attached to record)

Chair noted that Barr had made a presentation to the Township Board of the trend analysis she had presented to the Planning Commission.

Barr: Said she had tried to carry over questions from previous two surveys.

Discussions

Age - concern regarding whether or not people would answer, but may be outweighed by the analysis and possible future grant applications usefulness. Left in.

Zip code correction.

Discussion regarding various groups.

Question regarding including the information as to where people are registered to vote.

Decision to include that question.

List: Burkhardt asked to whom we would send the surveys. Chair said that it would be sent to all registered voters with a cross sort of property owners. Burkhardt: Asked about people who rented. Chair said that if they were registered voters, they would receive it. No doubt there would be a handful of people who would not receive it. Discussion of how survey results could be balanced between various different interests, such as property owners, renters, farmers, small housing owners, etc. Chair recounted his discussion with MSU planner who said that if you expected to act on the results of the survey, need to have all the registered voters involved in the event an issue goes to ballot.

Occupation section

Bisco thought there was some confusion because someone could be a business owner as well as a profession. Which would be primary? Riley: Too many. Agreed to change housewife to

homemaker. Occupation vs. employment? Members agreed the section needed revision.

Residential Attitudes

Add a box for non resident.

Discussion of whether or not there should be some kind of ranking for the questions regarding where to live. Concluded that with the sorting capabilities, could array data in different ways.

Changes in the size parcel, two to five and then more than five, add ten to 20 and more than 20.

Primary business shopping. Iwanicki raised questions about phrasing, thought it might be confusing. Burkhardt: Asked what we were looking for, traffic? Thought having people indicate only the primary, how measured? Number of trips, amount of money? Burkhardt: Money ultimately not the question - looking at future infrastructure needs more important. Discussion of what information is being sought and for which reasons. Are we seeking information to understand where we need to create more commercial/retail zoning? Iwanicki: People change patterns based on where they are working. Agreed to rethink what information will be most useful.

Attitudes towards growth.

At Burkhardt's suggestion, put in time frame of five years, may help people think more critically.

Discussion of why you create a survey - to affirm or create strategy. Hard to know when you think you are getting the answer you think you are getting. Try to set a framework. Bisco: You will ultimately have emotional responses, perceptions, when you ask questions that are not quantitative or fact based. Should you give choices between five and ten years? Five years matches the master plan sequence. Decided on five.

Where residential growth should occur, how it should look.

Barr: Would like more input on the breakout categories.

Finkbeiner: Should say Hamlet, not just Bridgewater.

Moved to pages 9 and 10 on policy and government

Questions raised as to how long the survey should be, where question categories should be placed.

Barr: Maybe need to return to the strategy: how will each answer be used, what will it contribute to our understanding of what residents really want in the future.

Return to page 5. Change text of question to number of acres per house.

Commercial development questions, page five. Note that in previous meetings, people in the Hamlet said they'd like to see more commercial facilities, such as a car wash, pizza place, etc., but you'd have to have much more population to support more commercial development. Had an ice cream shop, but it closed. By asking these questions, are we suggesting such business might be successful? People may say they would like a gas station or a grocery, but they also say they don't want more development.

Natural Resources, Agriculture and Recreation

Chair: More questions about what residents really want. Barr: Tried to refine with the series at the bottom of page 6. See also page 7 where we try to get people to make choices to define what they mean. Agreed the section needs work, but on the right track.

Page 9 - 10. Agreement to retain the bold faced questions, but drop the other. Can we get people to understand the tradeoffs in terms of what it takes? If we want open space preserved, we can purchase the land or the development rights or we can restrict land use through ordinances. We can't expect that people will not sell their land for development just because other people think it's a nice idea. We know that if we ask "do you like open space," everyone will say yes. But we need to find out how far they are willing to go to achieve that.

Bisco: Points out that regulation carries costs as well. You can have legal challenges. Creating and passing regulations costs as well. While we should not be governed by fear of lawsuits, need people to understand that just passing regulations may not work. A lot of people simply believe you can pass an ordinance and prevent something like the gravel mining. People don't necessarily understand that we still have to deal with laws beyond our jurisdiction. Chair: Yes. But, you can regulate how something can be done. You can't say "no mining," but we can say, "no mining unless you have a class A haul route and you have to pay for that." Discussion of how you ask questions in a way that will give people choices that are actually possible to carry through.

Chair: Need to ask for suggestions as well. What about asking people if they would be willing to

participate in meetings, following the survey. After discussion about privacy, agreed to include. Agreement that a small group might go through the survey and redraft.

B. Agricultural Land Preservation

Chair: Received material from Carol Peacock regarding an ad hoc committee for agricultural preservation to make recommendations to the Planning Commission about including in the master plan designations of agricultural land that should be preserved. Establishes a preferred area for purchase of development rights. Required for participation in state PDR program. Need to make a recommendation to the Board.

Motion: Bisco, second by Burkhardt: Recommend to the Township Board that a short-term, ad hoc agricultural preservation committee be created. Motion adopted unanimously.

C. Land Use Update

Administrative Assistant is integrating data.

9. Zoning Administrator Report

Attached to the record.

Chair noted that a cell tower co-location application had the wrong address listed, should be Sheridan Road, not Allen Road.

Discussion of various land divisions, amount of acres being divided.

Chair noted that Ron Finkbeiner is talking about building one duplex unit. Difficulty is that if you go through that process and don't divide the land first, then you have used the entire property for one unit, deactivates the condo application. Complex process. Have been over this with the planner, the engineer and the attorney.

Another problem highlighted includes a property that was sold before it was split, but there are substantial problems with any division due to pipeline easements. Working it out, but clearly shows the need for people to discuss divisions before finalizing anything.

Problems on the Porter property because the pond appears to be in violation of soil erosion requirements.

Noted that the Ron Finkbeiner pond is being altered again, contrary to ZBA condition.

10. Member Reports

None.

11. Zoning Board of Appeals

Glen Finkbeiner said that the ZBA considered and approved variances for Craig Portice property on Clinton Road, so they could build a swimming pool.

12. Other Business

Chair indicated a workbook from the Howell training session was available for review, would try to obtain additional copies.

13. Public Comments

None.

Motion to adjourn, Finkbeiner, second by Riley and adopted unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:50 PM