

NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION Minutes of Regular Meeting May 20, 2015

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Marlene Chockley at 7:00 P.M. at 8350 Main Street.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Roll call:

Janet Chick	Present
Marlene Chockley	Present
Brad Cousino	Present
Kenneth Dignan	Absent with notice
Sam Iaquinto	Absent with notice
Larry Roman	Present
Mark Stanalajczo	Absent with notice

Also present:

Township Manager Howard Fink
Planning Consultant Douglas Lewan,
Carlisle/Wortman Associates
Mary Bird, Assessing & Building Assistant
Recording Secretary Lisa Lemble
Members of the Community

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chockley suggesting moving the approval of minutes to precede New Business.

- **Motion:** Roman moved, Chick supported, that the agenda be adopted as amended.
Motion carried 4—0 on a voice vote.

5. FIRST CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Green Infrastructure Workshop. Lenore Zelenock, 1440 Six Mile Road, thanked the Commission for holding this session.

Master Plan/Growth. Craig Warburton, 450 W. Joy Road, read from the Planning Commission Annual Report of 2013 which noted that the recently completed Master Plan called for policies to avoid leapfrogging of development and to encourage compact development that would bring in tax revenue from a variety of sources. He said the Township should be very proud of the current Master Plan.

David Perry, 9411 Earhart Road, said he is concerned this meeting might be a charade to cover the fact that the good work done by the Township on the Master Plan is being cast aside. He said most residents are not paying attention to what is going on in the Township, noting that only about a dozen people are present for the Green Infrastructure Workshop.

Joanne Pierson, 5756 Earhart Road, said it is startling to her that three of the seven Commission members are not present for this workshop because the residents present take it very seriously.

Sally Lewis, 6015 Sutton Road, said she has been a member of Northfield Neighbors (NN) since it was formed. She said she is proof that members of that group are not all young newcomers to the Township. She said the NN are responsible community members who are in favor of responsible growth. She said she has been remiss in speaking on growth issues, and she asked the Commission to look at the existing Master Plan before looking to change it.

Laurie Nelson Daniels, 8082 Mason, said her family moved here to escape congestion and crime, and it saddens her that they are looking for a new home because of efforts to tear down the Master Plan.

Jennifer DeLisle, 7441 Spencer Road, said she agrees with everything previous speakers have said, and noted that they are from throughout the Township. She said rather than the constant accusation that only some rural residents are in favor of keeping the current Master Plan, it seems more likely that it is a special interest group from the downtown area that is in favor of changing it. She asked that the Commission fight the good fight.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

None.

7. REPORTS

7A. Board of Trustees

Chick reported that the Board:

- Approved Special Event permits for the 4th of July Fireworks and Parade.
- Accepted Mary Kendall's resignation.
- Approved the proposal from Cobalt Community Research for a community survey.

7B. ZBA

No meeting has been held since the last Commission meeting.

7C. Staff Report

Nothing to report.

7D. Planning Consultant

Lewan reported:

- On May 8th a meeting was held regarding Steel Trucking's reuse of the Carter Lumber Site.
- Adams Outdoor Advertising is looking at two possible locations for a new billboard; one would be permitted by ordinance and the other would require some kind of rezoning, but no application has been submitted.
- On May 15th a pre-application meeting was held with the Bobber Down restaurant owners regarding improvements and a small addition which would require a ZBA variance. Application may not be made for some time, but when it is it can probably be reviewed administratively.
- The Nowatzke project is working its way through the permitting process and his office is making sure all conditions of approval are being met. He will let the Commission know when final engineering approval is given.
- O'Donnell Electric is asking about putting an addition on their building. Plans have been reviewed and a proposal may be on the June 3rd Planning Commission agenda.
- Al Dente Pasta has submitted a site plan for a proposal that is slightly different than one submitted a few years ago. This might be on the June 3rd meeting.
- A public hearing is scheduled on June 3rd for text changes to the ES zoning district and the site plan review manual.

8. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

9. OLD BUSINESS

None.

10. MINUTES

April 15, 2015, Regular Meeting

Chockley made four minor corrections.

- ▶ **Motion:** Chick moved, Roman supported, that the minutes of the May 6, 2015, regular meeting be approved as corrected, and to dispense with the reading. **Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.**

11. NEW BUSINESS

10A. Green Infrastructure Vision Workshop.

Kris Olsson, Watershed Ecologist with the Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC), said the Council is a coalition of local governments and individuals established in 1965. She gave a slide show presentation and made comments including:

- Green infrastructure—wetlands, woodlands, forest—provide services to people as do governments.
- 31% of Northfield Township's landscape is intact natural areas, but only 5% of those are publicly owned. Only 5% of the Township has impervious surfaces.
- Northfield Township is home to 9 animals and 16 plants that are threatened, endangered, and special concern species.
- Natural areas filter and cool runoff water, provide the water supply for the entire Township (groundwater recharge), provide storm and food protection and erosion control, store and cycle nutrients, pollinate crops, regulate the climate, and provide recreation, scenery, biodiversity, and clean air.
- Prior to development there is little water runoff because it is absorbed by the plant material and ground, but post-development runoff increases.
- When less than 10% of an area is impervious surface rivers have low banks with natural buffers, and provide good habitat and cool and clean water. With between 10% and 25% impervious surface banks are undercut and higher, there is visible sediment, less diverse habitat and warmer water. With over 25% impervious surface banks are steeply eroded, there is very little buffer and habitat, and the water is warm and of irregular flow.
- Since European settlement about 50% of wetlands have been lost and SEMCOG predicts that about 40% of the remaining open space is projected to be developed in southeast Michigan in the next 20 years. Master Plans and zoning ordinance buildouts show little designated natural areas. Almost all natural areas are in private ownership and are designated for some kind of use.
- The current Master Plan encourages higher density development in some areas, while calling for lower density in most areas.
- To keep the ecosystem in Northfield Township healthy higher density should be encouraged where infrastructure already exists, and natural areas should be preserved so they can continue to provide ecological services.

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- A Bioreserve Map of Northfield Township was prepared using existing tools (maps, aerials), and bioreserve sites were ranked by 15 criteria.
- Field Assessments can be requested and are done by trained volunteers to get more information about the natural area and to help conservancies protect the most important land. This can be done for any property of at least 3-5 acres. Several have been done in Northfield Township.
- Individuals and communities can design higher density neighborhoods, live in a walkable community, plant trees and native plants, keep water on their land, control stormwater runoff, keep natural lands natural, and permanently preserve larger, intact, natural lands.
- Green infrastructure networks consist of hubs, sites, and links.
- These projects are going on all over the state.
- The Watershed Council can provide a review of the Township's zoning ordinance and Master plan and make recommendations for changes to work within this green infrastructure.
- Land acquisition, open space conservation, buffers around lakes and along waterways, and education are tools to preserve green infrastructure. In urban environments, green infrastructure can include green roofs, trees, ran gardens, swales, etc.

Olsson said she would get her presentation posted on the Township's website, provided instruction to those present for the evening's workshop activities, and described possible next steps. She made comments and answered questions, including:

- She will provide information to the Township from the evening's workshop, and the community will then decide which items to work on.
- There is a lot of information about doing ecological restoration, including on the HRWC website. After the HRWC does a field assessment

of someone's property, the owner is put in touch with environmental consultants. The City of Ann Arbor, Michigan Wild Ones, and Stewardship Network have websites with information. Ducks Unlimited has some funding for work on farmland, and the Department of Natural Resources has a cost-sharing habitat wildlife program.

- The Township's Master Plan already has a lot of this information in it, and it is a great resource for the Township.
- Groundwater recharge areas shown on maps are based on soils, water table, and geological information, and they can be shown on the map that will be developed during the workshop.
- There are a variety of resources available from many government entities to help develop and implement green infrastructure plans.
- Open space is defined differently by different people. She thinks of them as a combination of natural areas and farmland. It is important to define terms and goals.
- Both the Township and the State have wetlands ordinances, and these ordinances usually require permits to be issued before wetlands are disturbed.

Olsson conducted a visioning session involving participants reviewing various maps of the Township and identifying green infrastructure areas which continued after the meeting was adjourned.

13. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING

June 3, 2015, at 7:00 P.M. at the Public Safety Building was announced as the next regular Commission meeting time and location.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Chockley adjourned at 8:25 P.M.

Prepared by Lisa Lemble.

Corrections to the originally issued minutes are indicated as follows:

Wording removed is ~~stricken through~~;

Wording added is underlined.

Adopted on _____, 2015.

Marlene Chockley, Chair

Mark Stanalajczo, Secretary

Official minutes of all meetings are available on the Township's website at <http://www.twp-northfield.org/government/>

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