

These are the minutes of the April 16, 2007 Salem Township Planning Commission meeting.

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Shields.

Present: Shields, Coffey, Oosterink, Davis, Myers, Parmelee, Heasley and Mark Sisson.

Absent: None

March 5, 2007 minutes: Parmelee made a motion to approve the minutes as amended with the following changes:

page 4 under Myers comments. The sentence "If there is no good reason we should stick with the Master Plan" is deleted from the minutes.

Page 5 Myers comments should read "The back dump is economically not feasible until the lease has expired."

Coffey seconded, motion carried.

Inquiry of conflict of interest: None

Master Plan public hearing was held tonight. Mark Sisson presented an overall review of the changes to the Master Plan and went over each zoning that has proposed changes and the definitions of each. The main concern of the PC over the past two years was addressing rural residential development but retaining the rural character of the township.

PC questions:

Myers - has concern of the intersection of 26th & 142nd. He feels the major reason this was proposed I-1 because it was close to the M-6 exit should that come in. He feels this particular site should be taken off the Plan and remain as A-2 since there are more houses in the surrounding area. It is better suited for residential.

He also stated he feels that the landfill/transfer station property that the Township owns is more suited for industrial type use. We should pursue making this land available for industrial and then not plan for the 26th & 142nd property for I-1.

Heasley questioned Mark about the ratings that the PC used back in 2001 for future land uses. Was M-6 even considered?

Parmelee stated that 142nd is an “all weather” Class A road that can handle the traffic for this type of zoning. He and Davis also feel that the I-1 zoning should stay on the Master Plan. It is on a main artery road coming into and going out of town and is best served here.

Coffey agreed with Parmelee & Davis. Leave the zoning as is. The landfill site is already classified as I-1. No harm is leaving this as well. Also a small portion on the southern part of the landfill is leased to Walters Gardens, plus the tower lease making less land available for development.

A Phase II environmental site assessment (ESA) was performed by Innovative Environmental Solutions as requested by the Township Board. The purpose of the ESA was to attempt to evaluate the subsurface conditions present below the study area. No study was done for development quality.

A representative of IES was at the meeting and answered questions by the PC.

Noted were the presence of dissolved metals detected in several of the groundwater sampled analyzed with concentrations of lead exceeding the RRD of the MDEQ Part 201 Generic Res. Protective of Drinking Water Groundwater cleanup criteria in four of the groundwater samples. The levels of adsorbed lead detected were relatively low. More information can be found in this Phase II of which each member received a copy.

General discussion revolved around the availability of the landfill property and the Township’s ability to develop this area. Parmelee stated he will question the Board; however given the current financial position it is highly unlikely it will be developed. If it were to be developed, it would have to be sold as the Township could not carry that financial obligation.

Davis questioned what makes this a better location than 142nd & 26th? This is not where the PC should be going. It makes more sense to keep the proposed Master Plan as is. There is no point in taking it off the Plan.

Myers commented that the landfill property would be a better fit, keeping commercial and industrial closer to town.

Heasley noted that this Master Plan is a 20 year plan. Nothing happens overnight and the PC needs to plan for the distant future as well.

Shields: As M-6 develops, there will be more traffic on 142nd and so it’s not going to be feasible for residential along the main corridor.

After further discussion, Davis made a motion to open the public hearing, Oosterink seconded, motion carried.

Several residents living in the 142nd/26th St. Neighborhood made public comments and statements about the proposed Master Plan. Attached hereto and made a part of these minutes are the comments from Randy Beekman, Dennis Roys, Mary Beekman, Katie Weber, Leonard Gill, Ron Weber, Nancy Vogt, John Van Bonn. Also received was a letter from Attorney John L. Marple dated April 11, 2007 representing several property owners who reside adjacent to the 142nd/26th St. Intersection.

Jim Pitsch: Have you identified anything on 30th St. Since this is a Class A road? You shouldn't plan for industrial or commercial near water ways or hills/sloping land.

Mark Sisson: the criteria for industrial is flat and dry land which the land at 142nd & 26th is. The PC did originally identify property near 30th & 144th, but for various reasons it did not rank high in criteria.

Rob Miller pointed out that the dump site has only one access and that is onto 142nd. The proposed corner of 142nd & 26th has two access places. Isn't this one of the conditions needed for industrial or commercial? Rob went on to read a letter addressed to the PC and residents with he and Jesse's intentions. This letter is attached hereto and made a part of these minutes.

Jesse Demaray asked how soon could the landfill property be available? Is the township in good financial position? Are there job cuts in the area? Look at the big picture. We need to have businesses move in and create good jobs for the community.

Vicki Blakeslee commented that there has been a lot of growth in the township. We need something in the future master plan for commercial and light industrial.

Davis made a motion to close the public hearing, Coffey seconded, motion carried.

Mark Sisson comments: many things have changed. We have included the landfill site as industrial. We shifted commercial to the opposite corner on 142nd/26th. As fate would have it, a rezone request for that particular corner has been asked for. Some arguments ring true - should we scale back some industrial zoning? In the future, this will be a high traffic area. We can't rule it out. Is there some sort of compromise?

Shields: if the dump is to be developed it will require time and cost, neither of which the township has.

Sisson: Who will put in the road? Private investors? Possibly 8 or 9 lots available after all said and done. There are low levels of metal in the water.

Oosterink: Develop one entire industrial place rather than picking several spots. Expand one area.

Parmelee: What's a good percentage for industrial planning?

Sisson: Identify two or three times more for availability of choice. First come first serve. There should be land available when the need arises; however, if there was a commitment to develop the landfill, then no other area is needed right now for industrial.

Davis: The PC cannot conduct planning and zoning at the same time. I would be very leery in building on the dump site. Right now we are doing both without a commitment.

Sisson: On the master plan, should the dump site not be available to develop, the other choice is 142nd & 26th. We already moved the commercial zoning from the SE corner to the SW corner because of homes.

Shields: Rewa made the problem by building houses on commercial planned property.

Sisson: Leave the light industrial/commercial zoning on the NW & SW corners.

Parmelee: If the township is able to commit is the big question. What knowledge he has indicates that the township does not have resources to follow through. If we exclude 142nd & 26th, we prevent small business from coming into the township. Can we prevent business from coming in and developing here?

Sisson: No. We cannot ignore land use patterns or trends. There is limited opportunity at this time for small business. There is no industrial park available at this time.

Shields: Could the township sell the landfill property and someone else develop? The Township Board has to make the decision to sell. What other land do we have to offer?

Myers: We should table the master plan until the Township Board makes a commitment to develop the industrial park.

Jim Pitsch: We have done the Phase II soil test. There is grant money available from the State but we do not know how much or if available. The MI Development Authority wants to bring jobs to MI. He doesn't have all the information. More will come out in the next couple weeks. To develop the landfill, the township will have to sell the land. It cannot recoup costs if parcels don't sell.

Parmelee: Residents would be surprised to know how much commercial/industrial zoning is in the township. The PC has done a good job in where it has been placed.

After further discussion, Parmelee made a motion to table the Master Plan. Discussion ensued about which date, the May 3 or June 7, 2007 meeting, to discuss the landfill development possibility concerning the master plan, Davis seconded, motion carried. Davis – Nay All others - Aye

Rezone request: Rob Miller & Jesse Demaray.

Parmelee made a motion to remove from the table, Heasley seconded, motion carried.

Mark Sisson: Applicant has provided a site plan splitting the East 437' (5 acres) to be zoned commercial and the balance 875' (10 acres) be zoned industrial. The commercial zoning is already supported by the current master plan. The industrial is planned on the proposed updated master plan.

It was noted that all the correct interest parties within 300' of this request were notified by regular mail.

Oosterink made a motion to open the public hearing, Coffey seconded, motion carried.

Rob Miller: Sounds like the PC has given the Township the ok to go ahead and develop the landfill property so they can sell the property and do it themselves as opposed to giving someone else a chance to sell their land for same use.

Randy Beekman: when will they start the business on the industrial portion if granted?

Demaray: 1-2 year with potential to change.

Sisson: there is an existing house and buildings on the property. They could reuse or adapt to serve their purposes. It is handled case by case basis.

Randy Beekman: Why can't Jesse be granted a SUP/variance where his business is located now? His need is not immediate.

Sisson: Jesse is very limited in his ability to stay where he is. He cannot expand or add employees.

Rob Miller: We have been working on this rezone since October. How long is this going to last? We cannot go without a decision any longer.

Demaray: Would you run into road blocks with surrounding neighbors if you would develop the landfill property? Would that many neighbors object? How about the soil borings? Risk of development? The township should like to have local residents establish businesses here rather than outside business coming in. That way the township knows the owners and the owners care for the township.

Mel Stoepker: What happens to the land in the back of the industrial zoning? Currently Cris Compagner farms this land.

Public hearing closed.

Sisson: The PC has to settle the master plan issue first.

More discussion, then Myers made a motion to table the rezone request until the PC hears from the Township Board if they are going to pursue the landfill/transfer station development, Oosterink seconded, motion carried 4-3.

Township Board update: none

Shields: The Township Board would like the PC members to attend the Citizen Planner training. There is question as whether all new and current members should attend training, what training is available, and what training is to be required. Members that have attended the training sessions noted that it was of value and recommended that other members obtain it.

A special PC meeting is set for April 26, 2007 @ 7:00 for site plan review.

Davis made a motion to adjourn, Coffey seconded, motion carried. Meeting

adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Submitted by,

Cris Heasley, Secretary

Salem Township Planning Commission