

**Whitewater Township Board
Minutes of Joint Meeting of the Township Board and Planning Commission
held on June 24, 2014**

Call to Order

Supervisor Popp called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Whitewater Township Hall, 5777 Vinton Road, Williamsburg, Michigan.

Roll Call of Board Members and Planning Commission Members

Board Members Present: Benak, Goss, Lawson, Popp

Board Members Absent: Hubbell

Planning Commission Members Present: Bowerman, Dean, Link, Lyons, Mangus, Miller

Planning Commission Members Absent: None

Also Present: Zoning Administrator Habedank and 6 others

Set/Adjust Meeting Agenda

No changes; set as is.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None

Public Comment

Vaughn Harshfield, 4404 N. Broomhead Road, stated he hopes he sees government in action. He hopes it is not a rubber stamp. He hopes some good ideas transfer back and forth between the Board and the PC. He is not ready to call the document a master plan right now because he fails to see direction in the current form of the document. Several things should be discussed at this level, the first being the comment concerning a 39% response rate on the survey. It is deceiving. The 39% is the third best response rate McKenna has ever received. He would also like to see a hyperlink to the survey in the appendix. Harshfield also states he has seen the reformatted version of the master plan and noted the pictures make it look very good. He stated the document is high on history and high on definitions but very weak on direction. The goals are good and the PC worked hard on them, but he does not see a plan to initiate those goals. He hopes the two boards work together to come up with a plan that we can live with for the next 15 or 20 years that will give the township good positive direction.

Correspondence

None

Public Hearing

None

Reports/Presentations

None

Unfinished Business**Review of Draft Master Plan**

Goss stated she reviewed it previously, gave her comments to Popp and Lawson, which presumably the Planning Commission has seen. She received the reformatted version today and has not had time to review it but understands that the content is the same.

Mangus stated she does not have a copy of the reformatted version.

Benak volunteered to make some extra copies of the reformatted master plan and left the Board table for that purpose.

Dean stated, putting the two documents in context, it is the same prose, same verbiage. The content has not changed since it was reviewed. Dean understands this meeting to be a direction check, not final approval or the final master plan.

Mangus stated the PC's hope was that we could start with page 1 and work our way through all of the Board members' comments and make a list of edits, as well as things the PC may need to hammer out.

Popp understands that Hubbell has had a couple conversations with Dean, but the Board has not received any written or verbal notice from Hubbell. Popp inquired if there were any concerns the Board should be aware of.

Dean stated no, nothing on specifics. The conversations were more on philosophy and general direction, and general encouragement to the PC's approach to things.

Dean further stated that the editor budget, unless increased, does not include a 3-4 month live document budget, send-changes-in-every-couple-days kind of budget. Dean asked that everyone understand the budget in that regard.

Popp stated his general concern is that, early on, we wanted to have maps of utilities, graphs of population changes, which Popp could not deliver to the PC. A person from LIAA was able to help get some of that information. Popp inquired if that continued after his departure.

Dean stated, in large part, it has not. If there is data they need, they will go get it but not try to keep everything current.

Benak returned to the Board table and inquired if the document had been sent to surrounding townships and counties.

Mangus replied no, not till approved by the Board for distribution.

Dean stated it is not ready in its current state and was not intended to be.

Benak stated the hyphenation at the end of every sentence drives her insane and makes it hard to read the document.

Discussion followed.

Popp stated he anticipated reviewing the document that went out with the actual packet.

Dean stated the reformatted document can be set aside. They would like to hear the direction. Are we 75% right? Are we 80% right? Are we close?

Goss stated she would be happy to start and began to list her concerns.

At page 5, the format of discussion turned to page by page review of all Board comments.

Dean commented that the tenor of the master plan is to move away from anything that could be considered zoning via the master plan or specifics in the master plan, instead going back to the broad goals section and leaving the specifics to the exercise of zoning. It was a big change and it was intentional.

Discussion followed regarding the master plan not being a zoning document, goals the PC had in going through the document, the fact that there is not a whole lot of change structured into the document, the fact that the 2009 Community Survey was not supposed to be the only survey, using the document as a guide, as well as general and broad goals.

Link stated the first question is: Does this Board agree with this broad stroke?

Dean added: Does this current approach inhibit change through the zoning process in line with these goals after this is approved?

Lengthy discussion followed, including reference to the zoning ordinance being the law, the master plan being the guiding document, the previous draft master plan not faring well with the public, zoning ordinance pressure, review of the master plan again in 60 months, current protections in the zoning ordinance, defining "change," and Section 125.3807 of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act.

Page by page review of the draft master plan ensued, with Benak, Goss, and Popp providing their comments to the Planning Commission members. The entire document was reviewed.

Benak thanked the Planning Commission for all their hard work and hopes there will be a lot of constructive comments from the surrounding areas when it goes out. She stated she does understand the direction the PC went, and as long as it is handled in the zoning, it is acceptable to her.

In response to a question from Dean, Popp sees no reason why he would not support the document. Popp believes the County will go more toward the technical "ZO" side of it, but it is Whitewater Township's master plan, not anybody else's.

Goss asked what the next step is.

Mangus stated to tweak and return to the Township Board.

Discussion followed as to the next steps and the timetable for accomplishment of those steps.

Consensus was reached that the Planning Commission will review/make changes as suggested by the Township Board and that the Township Board will review the document again on July 8th. Highlighting will be used to track changes.

Popp stated, if needed, the schedule can be moved.

New Business

None

Tabled Items

None

Board Comments/Discussion

Popp stated he was recently informed in writing of Micaiah Foust's departure from both the fire and ambulance service, and he has been verbally made aware of the departure of Jeremy Jennett from both fire and ambulance. Both may be temporary, but this is unknown at this point. That leaves four people. There were supposed to be a couple agenda items, but Hubbell requested that they not be added without him here. They will be priority one on July 8th.

Brief discussion followed.

Benak stated tax bills are going out July 1st. Newsletter submissions need to be given to her this week, as soon as possible.

Announcements

Next Township Board meeting is July 8th.

Public Comment

Lois MacLean, 5919 Linderleaf, stated that if it is 2009, neither Annie Hill nor Lynn Delong's names should be on the master plan document. They were both done in 2008.

Also, she inquired if once the Township Board gives the okay, does the PC need to meet again to do a distribution. If it does require another meeting after the 8th, should we schedule a special meeting immediately after for distribution?

Popp stated he will distribute his step-by-step process document to the Board.

Tim Shaffer, 5309 Moore Road, stated Micaiah's absence is job related and he does plan to come back, but will be gone for 2-3 months. He stated Jeremy Jennett's absence is for personal reasons, but he plans to be back within 6 months.

Adjournment

Motion by Lawson, seconded by Goss, to adjourn. On voice vote, all those present were in favor, none opposed. Meeting adjourned at 10:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl A. Goss
Whitewater Township Clerk