

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE MONROE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE and TIME: October 14, 2015, at 7:30 p.m.

PLACE: Monroe County Courthouse Annex
Board of Commissioners' Committee Room
125 East Second Street
Monroe, MI 48161

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mary Webb (Chairman), Scott Assenmacher, Dan Brooks, Mark Brant, Rebecca Curley, Floreine Mentel, Herb Smith, Mike Sperling;

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Patrick Miller, Larry See Jr., Gary Wilmoth

MCPC STAFF PRESENT: Rob Peven, Planning Director; Lee Markham, Planner; Ryan Simmons, Planner

OTHERS PRESENT: Dan Curley; Bruce Speck, Tire Depot, Dundee; Nick Speck, Tire Depot

1. A quorum being present, Chairman Webb called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and the Commission proceeded to transact business.
2. Chairman Webb led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Adopt/Revise Agenda

Motion by Mr. Smith, supported by Mr. Sperling, to adopt the agenda

MOTION CARRIED

4. Approval of the Minutes of the September 9, 2015 meeting minutes

Motion by Mr. Assenmacher, supported by Mr. Sperling, to accept the minutes of the September 9, 2015 meeting as submitted and place them on file.

MOTION CARRIED

5. Call to the Public – The members of the public present who wished to speak agreed that they would wait until their case is discussed on the agenda.

6. Correspondence & Information

A. Correspondence

1. Letter from Trendwell Energy Corp regarding application to drill an oil and gas well in Summerfield Township – Mr. Peven stated that this is the same company that proposed the controversial brine disposal well in the karst geology region of the County. He stated that he does not believe that this present application for an exploratory oil and gas well is raising the same kind of concerns among the public, though, and that this application is not for a disposal well. He stated that he does not believe that the Township officials have expressed concern, either.

B. Information

1. River Raisin Watershed Council – Semi-Annual Fall Meeting – Chairman Webb stated that Mr. Peven would be speaking at this meeting, among other items that will be discussed at the meeting.

Motion by Mrs. Mentel, supported by Mrs. Curley, to accept the Correspondence and Information and to place them on file.

MOTION CARRIED

7. Old Business:
 - A. Partners in Planning Update
 1. Erie Township Mapping Project – Mr. Peven stated that Staff is still waiting for the Township to finish their review of the maps.
 2. Mr. Peven stated that there are presently no other Partners in Planning projects but that the County is hoping to do a zoning ordinance shortly for Milan Township.
 - B. Monroe County Remonumentation Program – Mr. Peven presented a report from the State which showed how Monroe County compares to the other counties in the State in its remonumentation progress and expenditures. He stated that this is the first such report that we have ever received from them. Chairman Webb stated that she thought we were farther along in our progress than the report indicated. Mr. Peven stated that he believed that it was because we include the centers of sections which are not official remonumentation corners. He stated that French claims also complicate matters. Mr. Peven also stated that the 2015 program is proceeding well.
8. New Business:
 - A. Consent Agenda

TOWNSHIP ZONING REVIEWS

200.1-10-15-15 Ash Township (map)

This is an official request to change the zoning on the front portion of a 2.06 acre parcel from C-1, Local Commercial District to R, Residential Single-Family District. The applicant wishes to remove the old house and to build a new house on a different portion of the property. The site is located on the east side of Grafton Road at the intersection of Monroe Street, just east of the Village of Carleton.

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Monroe County Planning Commission advise the Ash Township Board that it recommends approval of the proposed zoning change request, as the rezoning is in agreement with the Monroe County Comprehensive Plan and with neighboring residential uses, and for the reasons stated above.

200.1-10-15-16 Dundee Township (map)

This is an official request to change the zoning on three parcels totaling approximately 3.7 acres from R1A, Single-Family Residential District to C, General Commercial District. The applicant wishes to use the location for a tire sales business. The site is located on the south side of M-50 west of the intersection of M-50 and Dixon and Irish Roads.

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Monroe County Planning Commission advise the Dundee Township Board that it recommends denial of the proposed zoning change request, because the rezoning is not in agreement with the Monroe County Comprehensive Plan's designation of this property as Secondary Agricultural, because it is in conflict with the neighboring land uses, which are primarily agricultural and residential, because it could possibly cause traffic access, safety and congestion concerns, and for the other reasons stated above.

OTHER REVIEWS

200.3-9-15-3 Bedford Township Master Plan

Bedford Township has forwarded a copy of their 2015 Master Plan Update to the Monroe County Planning Commission for review and comment. In compliance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, the Township is

required to submit the Plan to the County Planning Commission for review and the County has 63 days to review the Plan and offer any comments.

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Monroe County Planning Commission submit comments (from the staff review) to Bedford Township.

Motion by Mr. Brant, supported by Mr. Smith, to approve the items on the Consent Agenda with the exception of Case 200.1-10-15-16, which will be pulled for further discussion.

MOTION CARRIED

Bruce Speck, owner of the Tire Depot spoke regarding Case 200.1-10-15-16. He stated that they are renting their current building on the west side of Dixon Road and are looking to relocate and expand their business onto the property to the east of Dixon, which is why they are seeking a rezoning. He stated that they are having Poggemeyer Design Group help with engineering the site plan on the property. He stated that the engineer made it appear that they wanted commercial buildings across the entire property but really their only intent is to put their tire business onto the property and he thought that this might have misled the Township Planning Commission. He stated that the new property would be next to the currently existing commercial property but that the Township Planning Commission seemed to discount this and instead stated that they should look to relocate elsewhere in the Dundee area. However, he stated that he did not believe that there were a lot of available suitable sites. He stated that he would like a discussion and a decision because he did not think that it was discussed to the extent that it should have been by the Township Planning Commission.

Mr. Brant expressed concern regarding the amount of water that accumulates on the site and stated that the applicant would have difficulty getting a seepage bed onto the property without incurring significant expenses. Mr. Speck stated that he believed the engineer took this into account which is why there are retention ponds in the site plan. Mr. Brant stated that he thought that this would only work well if there were sanitary sewer available for the site, and it is not. He suggested perhaps the applicant could possibly seek a new location, such as the former nursery site that was recently rezoned in Raisinville Township. Finally, Mr. Brant stated that the rezoning is contrary to the County Plan.

Nick Speck asked if traffic was an important component of determining the future land uses in the County Plan. Mr. Brant stated that this was looked at somewhat but that water, sewer and electricity access are more important determiners. He stated that the existing commercial use has been there for many years but that expanding the commercial footprint in this area might not be the best option. Mr. Speck stated that he did not think the property was a spot zoning due to the existing commercial and said he thought the new site is an improvement in safety as it is farther from the intersection.

Mr. Brant explained that the County Planning Commission and the Township Planning Commission are both recommending bodies and that it is ultimately the Dundee Township Board that will make the final decision regarding the rezoning. Mr. Peven clarified that the proposed site plan is not actually relevant to the rezoning process as, if the site is rezoned commercially, any commercial use allowed by right in the Township's Zoning Ordinance would be allowed on this site, not just a tire shop. Chairman Webb explained the public participation process by which the County Planning Commission arrives at its decision of how to designate each area on its Future Land Use Map.

Mr. Bruce Speck asked regarding the amount of traffic along M-50 and whether the Planning Commission thought that it was a lot. Mr. Brant stated that he thought that a tire store would not have a substantial impact on traffic compared to a development like Cabela's. Mr. Nick Speck asked about the details regarding conditional zoning. Mr. Brant explained that conditional zoning provisions were required to be voluntarily proposed by the applicant, and could include the use of the site as only a tire store. Mr. Brant also stated he believed that the conditions would stay with the site if sold, but the site would revert to its previous zoning if not developed within a year.

Motion by Mr. Brooks, supported by Mr. Brant, to accept Staff's recommendation for Case 200.1-10-15-16 and recommend denial of the proposed rezoning. The motion carried, with one vote against the motion.

MOTION CARRIED

- B. J. R. Whiting Community Transition – Future Use Study – Mr. Peven stated that this study was prepared by Consumers Energy to look at a possible future site use for the current power plant. He stated that this will tie into the I-75 Corridor Plan that currently has bids from 12 different consultants as well as the soybean plant study that we received a grant for. Mr. Peven went over the possible uses that were suggested for the site by the Study. He stated that he believes that the study will be used by Consumers as a marketing tool to sell the site and that Consumers will not be developing it. Chairman Webb stated that while it would be nice if the site were made into a nature preserve, that it is important to provide the workers in Luna Pier with jobs and tax revenue.
- C. Monroe County Farm Bureau – 2015 Resolutions and Affirmations – Mr. Peven stated that Chairman Webb received an award at the meeting for her years of hard work for the County Fair. Chairman Webb detailed the resolutions and affirmations in the document that would eventually be sent up to the state level and reviewed for acceptance. Mr. Sperling brought up the resolution regarding slow-moving vehicle signs placed next to mailboxes. Chairman Webb stated that these signs are only supposed to be for moving vehicles.

Chairman Webb also brought up the resolution regarding bicycle safety and the need for lights on bicycles traveling at night. She also talked about the details of the MAEAP program and mentioned that many farms are now certified in the County and that the program is voluntary for farmers. Finally, she mentioned the EPA and mentioned how they now can regulate even the water on farms that is in ditches.

9. Budget & Finance

- A. 3rd Quarter Financial Statement – Mr. Peven stated that there are no concerns at the moment about the budget. Mr. Brant stated that there will be a public hearing coming up on October 20th board meeting regarding the County budget.

10. Committee Member's / Director's Report

- A. Lake Erie Transit (LET) Commissioner Report – Mrs. Mentel stated that the important issue at the moment is to get the millage passed in Frenchtown Township. Bedford Township's millage will be in March of next year.
- B. Monroe County Parks and Recreation Commission Report – Mrs. Mentel stated that there have been 186 reservations this year. Waterloo is being cleaned up and maintained. An invoice for water and sewer charges from the City has finally been received. Vienna Park is being mowed and maintained and the trash is being taken care of. The disc golf group is holding a night golf event there in November. They will be making an effort in the future to keep their discs from getting into the drainage area. Nike Park is being maintained and cleaned up. Heck Park is being maintained and sprayed. Loranger Square has been taken care of for the year. St. Antoine is being weeded, landscaped and sprayed. The maintenance at Navarre-Anderson has also been taken care of for the season. West County Park is being weeded and cleaned and there is now a gate.
- C. Monroe County Road Commission Report – Mr. Assenmacher said that the repair season is winding down but there is still a lot of work that needs to be completed. Plank Road's repairs are almost complete. The bid for the Lewis Avenue repairs came in under estimate. However, the repairs will be held off on until spring of next year so that quality is not sacrificed. Finally, SEMCOG is asking for the 2017-20 Transportation Improvement Plan projects for the County. There will be an upcoming Federal Aid Committee meeting on November 18th to discuss these projects.

Chairman Webb asked about Nadeau Road. Mr. Assenmacher stated that this is a safety that involves widening and putting up a signal flashing at Vivian and Nadeau. There will also be some work done by the same contractor

at Vivian and Cole. He stated that there will be a bypass lane put up there. They are also planning on fixing the pavement surface around the railroad tracks at S. Otter Creek Road.

- D. The County Planner – Mr. Peven stated that he would like to get out the newsletter by the end of the week so if a commissioner sees a change that needs to be made to make sure to let him know. He stated that this issue focuses on community appearance. Mr. Assenmacher asked if the Federal Aid Committee meeting could be put onto the upcoming events. Mr. Peven stated that he would place it on there.

11. Other Items from Members – There were no other items from members.

12. Chairman Webb asked if the Commissioners would like to reschedule the next meeting from November 11th to November 18th due to the Veterans Day holiday and the County government being closed for the day. Motion by Mr. Smith, supported by Mr. Sperling, to move the next Planning Commission meeting to November 18th, 2015.

MOTION CARRIED

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 18, 2015 at 7:30 p.m. Mr. Peven stated that he would post the change of date for the meeting on the doors.

13. Adjournment: Motion by Mr. Brant, supported by Mr. Smith, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting concluded at 8:45 pm.

MOTION CARRIED

MEETING ADJOURNED

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