

# MINUTES

## REGULAR MEETING OF THE MONROE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

- DATE and TIME:** April 12, 2017, 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; Mark Brant; Dan Brooks; Rebecca Curley; Floreine Mentel; Greg Moore, Jr.; Patrick Miller; Larry See, Jr.; Herb Smith; Mike Sperling
- MEMBERS ABSENT:** None
- MCPC STAFF PRESENT:** Rob Peven, Planning Director; Ryan Simmons, Planner
- OTHERS PRESENT:** No members of the public were present.

1. The meeting was called 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 Mrs. Mentel, supported by Mr. Sperling, to adopt the revised agenda. **MOTION CARRIED**
4. Approval of the Minutes of the March 2017 Meeting  
Motion by Mr. Sperling, supported by Mr. See, to accept the minutes of the March 2017 meeting. **MOTION CARRIED**
5. Call to the Public – No members of the public were present.
6. Correspondence & Information
  - A. Correspondence
    1. Letter from Erie Township, March 15, 2017, Notice of Intent to Prepare a Master Plan
    2. Mr. Peven went over a letter that was just received on April 12 from the State regarding the closing out of the 2016 Remonumentation Program. He stated that they were reimbursed everything except for \$29.85, as these were late fees for the internet connection costs at the Dundee surveying tower. He stated that these fees were due to the provider's bill due dates and the County's bill paying dates not meshing well three or four times a year. He stated that they have asked the provider if they can pay the entire amount up front but for some reason we cannot do that. He stated that the Remonumentation Commission is very careful when it comes to looking over bills. Chairman Webb stated that this correspondence would also be placed on file.
  - B. Information
    1. Monroe County Health Department, Healthy Herald, April 2017
    2. Monroe County Historical Museum, Grapevine, April 2017

Motion by Mr. Sperling, supported by Mr. Smith, to accept the Correspondence and Information and to place them on file.

**MOTION CARRIED**

7. Old Business:

A. Partners in Planning Update

1. Village of Estral Beach – proposed planning services contract – Mr. Simmons stated that the Village has sent their Notice of Intent to Prepare a Master Plan. He stated that he answered a question from the Village regarding the timing of when to update their Zoning Ordinance, and that they submitted to him a legal opinion from attorneys at the 2016 County Planning Summit that stated that any Zoning Ordinance not based upon a Master Plan did not have a presumption of validity. Based on this advice, Mr. Simmons informed the Village that they should work on their Master Plan before doing anything with their Zoning Ordinance, and that the Village should keep its moratorium in place until their Plan is done. He stated that he did not hear back from the Village regarding whether they followed this advice.

Mr. Simmons stated that he also received a question from the Village regarding whether their fire chief can sit on their Planning Commission. He stated that he told them that the State Planning Enabling Act mentions that no employee of the Village can sit on the Planning Commission, with the exception of the Village Director, or a person who the Village Director appoints. Mr. Simmons stated that he was not sure whether the Village had a Director.

Finally, Mr. Simmons stated that the Village sent him a notice of their intent to create a Planning Commission. He stated that this is a requirement of the State Planning Act, and that there is no need for the County Planning Commission to review it and that it's just for informational purposes. Mr. Simmons stated that he did not review the Ordinance as the Village did not ask him to, and that he is only helping the Village when specifically asked by them in order to save them money.

2. Mr. Peven stated that he received a request for assistance late last week from Summerfield Township in updating their Master Plan. He stated that he has not gotten back to them yet and that he wanted to bring it before the Planning Commission. He stated that they are not looking at major changes to the Plan but rather just at updating some of the factual information in the Plan. He stated that he thought it would be a fairly simple job, but that the Department is currently short staffed and there is already an existing contract with Estral Beach. He stated that he will bring up the issue again at the May Planning Commission meeting after he talks about it with the Township. Mr. Peven stated that Mr. Bosanac would prefer that the Department at this point focus not on acquiring contractual work but on its primary mission, but that this could be something that could be completed very easily.

Chairman Webb brought up how important it is to try to coordinate planning efforts for all the townships in the County so that there is overall harmony, and that helping them with their Plans is part of this. She asked what the other Commissioners thought. Mrs. Mentel stated that we should probably go ahead and do it if it is not complicated for us. Mrs. Curley stated at the Township's last meeting they stated that it was just the statistical information that they needed help with, and that she told the Township that the County might be able to help with that. She stated that she did not think it would be a project that would involve a lot of work. Mr. Peven asked if the Planning Commission had already gone to the Township Board for approval of this. Mrs. Curley stated that they had. Mr. Peven stated that he would come back with a draft contract at the next Planning Commission meeting.

- B. Monroe County Remonumentation Program – Mr. Peven stated that he reported already on the 2016 closeout. For 2017, he stated that he has put out an RFQ for surveyors and the deadline to respond is April 14. He stated that they have already received responses from the four firms that usually share the contract.

Mr. Sperling stated that he has seen a remonumentation marker in the middle of a field on Ida-Maybee Road. He asked if there was anything he was supposed to do with it. He stated that there is not a post and that it is ground level. Mr. Brant asked if the farmer is working around it. Mr. Sperling that work has been done around it and it has not been hit. Mr. Peven remarked that this is located in the French claims portion of the county where a lot of the remonumentation work has not been done yet. Mr. Assenmacher stated that if he is concerned about it being hit that he should contact Mr. Warnke and that he will make sure that it is visible and does not get disturbed.

8. New Business  
A. Consent Agenda –

**TOWNSHIP ZONING REVIEWS**

200.1-4-17-9 LaSalle Township (text)

LaSalle Township is proposing to amend Article XVIII, Section 3.1 of its Zoning Ordinance. The proposed amendment will slightly alter the wording in the Definitions section for “Lot, Width.”

Recommendation: That the Monroe County Planning Commission advise the LaSalle Township Board that it recommends approval of the proposed amendment.

200.1.4-17-10 Ash Township (map)

Ash Township is proposing to change the zoning on a parcel totaling approximately 2.32 acres from AG, Agricultural District to C-2, General Commercial District. The stated purpose of the rezoning is to place an office, self storage and wood shop business on the site. The parcel is located on the east side of Telegraph Road south of Carleton-Rockwood Road.

Recommendation: That the Monroe County Planning Commission advise the Ash Township Board that it recommends denial of the proposed zoning change request, as the rezoning is not in agreement with the Monroe County Master Plan and would encourage strip commercial development along the Telegraph Road corridor.

200.1-4-17-11 Whiteford Township (map)

Whiteford Township is proposing to change the zoning on two proposed parcels totaling approximately 6 to 8 acres from AG, Agricultural District to R-1, Single Family Rural Residential District. The purpose of the proposed rezoning is not stated. The parcels are located on the east side of Sylvania-Petersburg Road between Temperance Road and Bibb Road.

Recommendation: That the Monroe County Planning Commission advise the Whiteford Township Board that it recommends denial of the proposed zoning change request, as the rezoning is in disagreement with both the Monroe County Comprehensive Plan and the Whiteford Township Master Plan.

200.1- 4-17-12 Whiteford Township (map)

This is an official request to change the zoning on a proposed parcel totaling approximately 3 acres from AG, Agricultural District to R-1, Single Family Rural Residential District. The purpose of the rezoning is not stated. The proposed parcel is located on the west side of Clark Road between Memorial Highway and Sterns Road.

Recommendation: That the Monroe County Planning Commission advise the Whiteford Township Board that it recommends approval of the proposed zoning change request, as the rezoning is in agreement with the current land use of the property, and for the reasons stated above.

**FARMLAND REVIEWS**

200.4-3-17-1 London Township (Owner: J. Briggs)

The property consists of a parcel approximately 28 acres in size. It is located on the west side of Fuller Road between Milan Oakville Road and Darling Road.

Recommendation: That the Monroe County Planning Commission approve this application for inclusion in the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program because it is consistent with the intentions of Part 361 of Public Act 451 of 1994 (more commonly known as PA 116), and for the reasons stated above.

200.4-4-17-2      LaSalle Township      (Owner: Metz Seed Farms Ltd. Partnership)

The property consists of a parcel approximately 64.74 acres in size. It is located on the south side of South Otter Creek Road just east of Minx Road.

Recommendation: That the Monroe County Planning Commission approve this application for inclusion in the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program because it is consistent with the intentions of Part 361 of Public Act 451 of 1994 (more commonly known as PA 116), and for the reasons stated above.

200.4-4-17-3      Whiteford Township      (Owner: Strahan, L. & J.)

The property consists of a parcel approximately 40 acres in size. It is located on the west side of Tarbert Road north of Samaria Road.

Recommendation: That the Monroe County Planning Commission approve this application for inclusion in the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program because it is consistent with the intentions of Part 361 of Public Act 451 of 1994 (more commonly known as PA 116), and for the reasons stated above.

Mr. See asked to pull case 200.1.4-17-10 from the Consent Agenda.

Motion by Mr. Brant, supported by Mr. Assenmacher to approve the consent agenda other than Case 200.1-4-17-10.

Mr. Peven brought up that there was another rezoning case recently in Ash Township in this general area. He stated that this was a similar case and that Ash Township has this corridor designated as strip commercial in its Master Plan, while the County Plan designates commercial development at specific intersections rather than allowing it to develop anywhere along the corridor.

Mr. See stated that the Township and County do not agree about the future development along this corridor. He listed the nearby uses to this site including the commercial uses. He stated that the property is not being farmed and that he is not sure that it would be again, and that the Township will probably just let them do what they want with it. He stated that he has seen it farmed in the past but that he hasn't seen any activity on it this year. Chairman Webb stated that there would not be any work on it yet this year. Mr. See stated that the property is dry. Mr. Simmons stated that the aerials that they had showed the land as farmed, but that the aerials are from 2015.

Mr. Peven stated that this is a borderline case as it is not immediately adjacent to the existing commercial node. Mr. Simmons stated that Staff believed that rezoning this property would set a precedent to rezoning more properties along the corridor and that soon the entire corridor could potentially be commercial, which would be contrary to the County Plan.

Mr. Peven asked what utilities were serving the area. Mr. Simmons stated that there is public water but not public sewer. Mr. Simmons stated that the applicant's original request was for a C-3 rezoning, but that the applicant changed their request to a C-2 rezoning in the middle of it. Mr. Moore asked if it was normal for rezonings like this to occur when the site is not immediately adjacent to a zone of the same classification. Mr. Peven replied that there are three factors that are important: the compatibility of the rezoning with existing plans, the compatibility with surrounding land uses, and whether the site itself is capable of supporting the proposed use.

Motion by Mr. Brooks, supported by Mr. Brant, to accept Staff's recommendation on Case 200.1-4-17-10.

Mr. Peven stated that he believed Mr. See had a good point, and that perhaps Ash Township should be asked to look at and clarify their vision for the Telegraph Road corridor. He asked if they did a sub-area plan for the corridor. Mr.

Simmons stated that he did not think so. Mr. Brant asked when a review of the County Plan would come up and stated that perhaps we should take a closer look at this corridor in our Plan and that maybe the Township's desires for the corridor could be considered. He pointed out the hopscotch nature of commercial zoning and development along the corridor and stated that he doubted any of it would ever back to agricultural. Mr. Peven stated that the Township is limited in other areas that are suited for commercial or light industrial development. Mr. Brant stated that he is voting to support Staff's recommendation though, as it is based upon what the County Plan currently indicates for this area. Chairman Webb stated that she agreed that the Township should take a closer look at their intentions for the corridor, though. Mr. Simmons stated that he could bring down the Township's Master Plan at next month's meeting and the Commission could discuss what is currently written in their Plan about the corridor.

Mr. Peven stated that the Telegraph Road corridor is an important gateway into the County and it sets a tone for the County as a whole. He brought up that currently there is a transition from urban to rural once one enters Monroe County along the corridor. Mr. Brooks brought up that there was a good plan back in 1982 for the corridor, but that there was opposition from farmers at the time. He agreed with Mr. Brant that we should support our Plan now, but that we should take a look at our Master Plan sometime in the future regarding this corridor.

Chairman Webb asked for a vote. The motion carried with one vote against the motion.

**MOTION CARRIED**

9. Budget & Finance

A. Planning Director update – Chairman Webb stated that she was very pleased with what was prepared regarding the Planning Director position. Mr. Peven stated that they looked at other counties and what the role of the planning director is there. He stated that it was a lengthy process but that the board agreed to replace two-part time personnel with one full-time director. He stated that personnel matters are now handled by the newly created Operations Committee, which both Mr. Brant and Mr. Moore sit on. He stated that he and Mr. Bosanac made a presentation regarding the Planning Department and the importance of planning, and that the Board was very supportive. He stated that they are currently taking applications and that the deadline is April 14. He stated that he does not know how many applications have been received so far, but that the position is being advertised in the Michigan planning journals.

Mr. Brooks asked about the organizational chart and whether the 999-hour planner position represented Lee Markham. Mr. Peven stated that that was the position Mr. Markham had filled. Mr. Brooks asked who would pick up the work that Mr. Markham was doing. Mr. Simmons stated that he would pick up the work. Mr. Brooks asked if the new Planning Director would also be doing some of that work. Mr. Peven stated that the new Director would likely pick up some of that responsibility but that it would be something that would be worked out between the new Director and Mr. Simmons.

Mr. Brooks asked about Jeff Boudrie's job duties. Mr. Peven stated that they would stay the same. He stated that the 999-hour work limit per year was a standard established by the Pension Board regarding retired employees. Mr. Brooks asked if they would consider keeping on Mr. Peven as a consultant and if it has been talked about. Mr. Peven stated that overlap between his staying on and the new Director starting has been talked about, but that him staying on after that has not been talked about. He stated that the budget has already been worked out, so the County can afford keeping him on for some overlap, which will be helpful for the new Director.

Chairman Webb thanked the commissioners and Mr. Bosanac. Mr. Brant stated that without Chairman Webb spearheading the effort it may not have gotten done.

10. Committee Member's / Director's Report

A. Lake Erie Transit (LET) Commissioner Report – Dr. Miller stated that when gasoline prices go up their business improves. He stated that the RTA let their executive director go without cause, so he did not know what this meant in regards to trying to get the millage approved eventually. He stated that if the millage were approved, then LET would have to separate their relationship with SMART and LET would have to hire one or two other

people to do the grant work that SMART now does. He stated that until then, they will continue doing business as usual. Chairman Webb asked if ridership is up. Dr. Miller stated that it is up about 2% and that if gasoline prices go up then ridership will go up even more. Mr. Peven asked if LET really does see such a correlation between gasoline prices and ridership. Dr. Miller stated that they do and that ridership numbers are very sensitive to gasoline prices.

- B. Monroe County Parks and Recreation Commission Report – Mrs. Mentel stated that there was no meeting in April but that parks are open as of April 1 and reservations are coming in. She stated that there was an article in the paper about the parks. She stated that they would like to see pictures of the parks on the website. She stated that Nike Park has a lot of water, and that the ground in parts is like walking on a sponge. She stated that they are on the fourth or fifth revision for Vienna Park. She stated that 4-H is doing the fishing derby again. She stated that they are looking at the relationship with the national parks and Scott Bentley in regards to West County Park, which should create more traffic out there.

Chairman Webb asked if the drainage is working at Nike Park. Mrs. Mentel stated that she would wait and see but that she is not totally impressed by it. She stated that Mr. Bosanac and Annamarie Osment told her that it may take some time to work.

- C. Monroe County Road Commission Report – Mr. Assenmacher stated that 2017 will be another busy year. He stated that the gas tax money is starting to come in and they will see the registration fee money come in later this year. He stated that the Board is moving forward with a \$5 million bond to fast-track some projects, and that the County Board has unanimously supported this. This money will go towards fixing 26 miles of road as well as a few other projects. He stated that overall this will be a \$14 million investment in primary roads with 171 miles of roads being improved. With local roads and township help there will be over 240 miles of road improvements.

Mr. Assenmacher stated that the Road Commission will be updating its subdivision guidelines. He stated that there will be a hearing, probably in May, to review those guidelines. He stated that these guidelines along with the site plan guidelines and driveway guidelines will be combined into a right-of-way activities manual, which will be available online where it will be paired with the Streamlining Development guide.

Chairman Webb asked how many subdivisions have dedicated their roads to the Road Commission. Mr. Assenmacher stated that the only method they are using to take over roads now is through the plat process. He stated that due to the economic downturn there have not been many new developments but they are now starting to come back around, and that growth will likely be gradual, and that the subdivisions will be much smaller now and constructed in much smaller chunks. Mr. Assenmacher stated that all of the platted ones are taken over by the Road Commission, but any of the condominium ones or ones created by splits or other methods are not being taken over.

Mr. Peven asked if the Road Commission is required to take over the roads within plats, mentioning that it adds to the total mileage of roads for revenue purposes. Mr. Assenmacher stated that the amount of money received does not cut it compared to the long-term commitment to taking over a road, but that they are committed to taking over roads in platted subdivisions, and that the drain office takes over the drainage. Mr. Peven brought up that the Road Commission then is responsible for snow removal, and that these roads are the lowest priority, which creates ill will with some residents. Mr. Assenmacher stated that residents often take care of their own snow removal as a result, which is allowable as long as the Road Commission receive the required information from the contractor. Mr. Peven asked if they still go into those subdivisions then. Mr. Assenmacher stated that they still do. He stated that there has been some discussion about what to do about the State maintenance contract in the future.

Chairman Webb asked how much federal money Monroe County receives for roads. Mr. Assenmacher stated that in 2017 there is \$4.3 million in projects that use federal dollars. He stated that they usually receive \$2 to \$3.5 million in federal money for projects, and that there is a range because some of the money that comes in is competitive money that is sometimes awarded and sometimes not, but that they get around \$2 million in definite

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money every year. Chairman Webb stated that in her travels that she has seen a lot of roadwork in other states. Mr. Assenmacher stated that it is difficult to compare state to state due to how different states are able to acquire money for their roads. Chairman Webb brought up that Michigan is a donor state.

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

12. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 10, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.

13. Adjournment: Motion by Mr. Brooks, supported by Mr. Brant, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting concluded at 8:23 p.m.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**MEETING ADJOURNED**

:rds