



ACME TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Acme Township Hall
6042 Acme Road, Williamsburg, Michigan
7:00 p.m. Monday, February 18, 2013

Meeting called to Order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:00 p.m.

Members present: V. Tegel (Chair), B. Carstens (Vice Chair), S. Feringa, B. Finch, T. Forgette, D. Rosa, M. Timmins, K. Wentzloff, D. White

Members excused: None

Staff Present: S. Vreeland, Township Manager/Recording Secretary
N. Lennox, Zoning Administrator
J. Iacoangeli, Planning Consultant
J. Jocks, Township Legal Counsel

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Motion by Wentzloff, support Timmins by to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

INQUIRY AS TO CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: None noted

1. Continuing Education/Special Presentations:

- a) **Complete Streets, Next Steps:** Julie Clark, TART Trails & Harry Burkholder, LIAA: A copy of [Acme Township Board of Trustees Resolution R-2011-07](#) supporting Complete Streets was provided, as was a ["Michigan Complete Streets Tool Matrix."](#) TART received a Rotary Charities Grant, and is using it to work with LIAA and local citizen Gordie Howe to present the complete streets concept to local townships. Mr. Burkholder gave a [PowerPoint presentation](#) discussing complete streets trends and community impacts, barriers to increased walking and biking, benefits, and misconceptions. It covered 2010 state complete streets legislation and MDOT policy and implementation. Ms. Clark suggested that as the township updates ordinances and master plans it can take the opportunity to include complete streets requirements. The township can also seek opportunities for physical implementation.

2. Consent Calendar: Motion by Timmins, support by Wentzloff to approve the Consent Calendar as presented, including:

- a) **Receive and File:**
1. [TC-Talus Board Report October 2012](#)
 2. **Draft Unapproved Minutes of:**
 - a. Board [02/05/13](#)
 - b. Farmland Advisory [02/06/13](#)
 3. **Planning & Zoning News December 2012**
- b) **Approval:**
1. **Planning Commission minutes [01/21/13](#)**

Motion carried unanimously.

3. Limited Public Comment:

Steve Smith asked Carstens about a comment he made about speed limits in Suttons Bay.

4. Correspondence: None

5. **Public Hearings:** None

6. **New Business:**

- a) **Ordinance Amendment proposal 6.10.3 Uses Permitted by Right Within 500' of the M-72 Right of Way:** Lennox received a request from Wolverine Power to expand a substation at the intersection of M-72 and Arnold Road. Their station is a grandfathered non-conforming use not listed as an allowable use within 500' of the M-72 right-of-way, so expansion would require a visit to the ZBA. The zoning ordinance allows for only a limited number of land uses within 500' of the M-72 right-of-way that seems to conflict with other sections of the ordinance.

Carstens recalled an earlier draft of an M-72 corridor overlay district that addressed access management and landscaping. This draft was recommended for approval by the Planning Commission but was not adopted by the Board of Trustees. That proposed overlay district is not known to be related to the existing ordinances in question. Vreeland believes that Section 6.10.3, which provides for a limited list of uses allowed by right within 500' of the right-of-way, seems to conflict with the uses by right anywhere in the district in Section 6.10.2. Jocks suggests making all of the uses listed in Section 6.10.3 uses permitted by right per Section 6.10.2. Iacoangeli concurred with Jocks' recommendation. He also offered that if a power substation needs are increasing, it would be most desirable to have them expand at their current location rather than at a different location that doesn't already have the necessary infrastructure. He recommended proceeding with the ordinance amendment without waiting for the master plan update.

Motion by Wentzloff, support by Forgette to set a public hearing on the proposed ordinance amendment for the March 18 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

- b) **Wayfinding Signage:** <http://www.corbindesign.com/case-studies/index.html>: A group of local municipalities has been discussing possibilities for wayfinding signage that would be different for each location but have some regionally common elements. Lennox reported that there is discussion between staff and legal counsel about whether and how a uniform wayfinding signage program could be designed and implemented for the township. Traverse City and Elk Rapids both have their own programs. One concept behind the discussions is that while locals may know where one jurisdiction begins and another ends, many locals and most visitors do not. They are geared towards finding specific amenities and destinations within the region as a whole. There are state and federal traffic manuals to be followed for lettering. If done poorly it can add to signage clutter.

7. **Old Business:**

- a) **Master Plan/John I Update: Meeting Summaries**

1. **Agricultural:** Six members of the agricultural community attended. There was discussion about the history of agriculture in the township, agricultural input to creation of the master plan, and concerns about township planning and zoning for agriculture. The attendees expressed concern about potential future encroachment of residential development into working farmlands. They suggested viewing agricultural areas in terms of function and providing for a spectrum of reasonable allowable uses to make agricultural operations more economically viable. There was strong support for the purchase of development rights program (PDR) to prevent residential encroachment. They would not increase the minimum allowable lot size, and might support a reduction from 5 acres/unit to 2.5 acres/unit with clustering to reduce the amount of unproductive land. They would like the ability to add a second

homestead to a farm without having to divide it onto a separate parcel. They suggested that the township consider the creation of a hamlet at Bates to allow for development that does not encroach into agricultural areas. They recommended revisiting the “white paper” the farmland preservation advisory provided to the Planning Commission several years ago.

2. **Agency Stakeholders:** About 13 agencies and other governments were represented at this meeting. BATA expressed strong interest in creating a bus transfer station within the township where busses from Kalkaska and Antrim and Grand Traverse would stop so passengers could make transfers. MDOT discussed their upcoming 2015 reconstruction of US 31 N between Holiday and Three Mile Roads, and needs for better safe pedestrian crossings. MESA mentioned the township needing a public water supply in key areas to accommodate new commercial growth. TART stressed the need to complete the section of the trail between Lautner and Bunker Hill Roads. TC-TALUS is in the process of upgrading their long-range plan. The Land Conservancy mentioned the need to create better non-motorized connections to and awareness of the location and assets of protected lands available for public enjoyment. Several agencies that did not attend thanked us for the invitation and said they would send some thoughts via e-mail. A special meeting between the Commission and the agricultural community was suggested.
3. **Business Owners:** Approximately 40 business owners attended. Concerns about infrastructure such as the need for public water were expressed. Road improvements and more flexible and understandable signage standards are desired. They would like to be able to use more temporary signs. The business community desires partnership with the township to promote economic development. There is eagerness to see the shoreline preservation project proceed and have old buildings removed. The business community desires zoning ordinance changes that allow more uses by right and shorter approval processes. They would welcome incentives to attract businesses to the township, and feel that setback requirements from key roadways are too large. They wish to attract a youthful demographic, and suggested using daily Twitter posts or employing a “millennial marketer.” They would also like the volleyball courts at Bayside Park improved.

As to approval processes, Iacoangeli does not find Acme to be substantially different than other municipalities. Many of the requirements for the process are set forth in state law. He believes that there are some land uses for which we currently require Planning Commission review that don’t always need it. If the land use would not generate significant traffic or public infrastructure needs, the site plans could be reviewed solely administratively. Currently the majority of business uses in the township require a special use permit rather than being by right. The SUP process generally takes several months. He suggested that typically 85% of land uses can be permitted by right, with only 15% having the type of impact on surrounding land uses sufficient to require full planning commission review. Generally applicants want processes to be fair and predictable, with little room for variable discretion.

- b) **Existing Land Uses/Asset Inventory:** Iacoangeli asked that the Commissioners pair up and use some base maps he provided. Each group will be assigned an area of the township to visit, where they will map the existing land use pattern. Beckett & Raeder will compile the data into one aggregate land use pattern map. Commissioners should choose areas they are not familiar with, because one point of the exercise is for Commissioners to learn more about their community. Completed

maps should be returned at the March 18 meeting.

- c) **Goals and Objectives Survey for PC members**: New goals for the township will be developed after the upcoming community surveys are returned. Iacoangeli prepared this survey to gauge Commissioner opinions regarding the goals and objectives in the current master plan. He did not ask about the agricultural section goals and objectives because they have been fairly recently and thoroughly updated, and the agricultural community indicated a strong orientation towards retaining the current master plan elements regarding agriculture largely intact. NMC is completing work on the community survey, and the mailing list is being geo-coded according to the 7 sub-areas selected by the Commission previously. Approximately 3 weeks will be provided for responses to come in after the survey is mailed. Every address receiving a survey will receive a postcard 2 weeks in advance.

- d) **Parks and Rec. Master Plan**: A working draft of some elements discussed by the Parks & Recreation Advisory was provided for review. Many found the typeface too light and small to read easily. Timmins stated that Megan Olds came to the last Parks & Recreation advisory meeting and shared the results of the recent Conservancy/TART survey about trails and public parklands. Timmins was concerned to hear that business owners do not recommend trails and parks in the township to their clients for a variety of reasons. Rosa suggested that on page 5 the statement that people originally settled here for “beautiful geography” is likely inaccurate. He also suggested that a sentence indicating that fruit farmland is being developed with housing could be overly political and may also be inaccurate. White countered that the land most people are seeking for residential development are high viewshed lands that are the best for fruit farming. White has been approached by people asking if he would sell his best farmland, and they have refused the non-productive pieces he was willing to offer.

The Chair declared a recess from 9:00 – 9:04 p.m.

- 8. **Zoning Administrator’s Report: Planning, Zoning & Administrative Activity Report**: The Goodwill store is well underway. The Bravo Zulu Brewery is currently submitting to the county for required permits. Tegel noted that the “community” (not “resident”) survey was mislabeled in the report.

- 9. **Items Removed from Consent Calendar**: None

- 10. **Planning Commission Items for Discussion** (*items must be submitted one week prior to the scheduled PC meeting. Discussion limited to 5 minutes for each item listed.*)
 - a) **Are You Organized for Business** - **V. Tegel**: Tegel encouraged people to complete and return the document to help plan for future meetings.

 - b) **Growth and Investment meeting** - **B. Carstens**: Several grants have been attracted for creating regional planning tools. To obtain broad public input, community “expos” will be held in each participating county over the next several weeks.

 - c) **Stormwater Control meeting** - **V. Tegel**: The Watershed Center coordinated a meeting with interested townships regarding potential consistent approaches towards stormwater control. Discussions will be ongoing.

 - d) **Great Lakes Water Levels** - **K. Wentzloff**: The session was well attended. Many citizen questions had less to do with Great Lakes water levels and more to do with fracking and water bottling plants. Precipitation and evaporation are the largest factors in long-term lake water levels. Recent winters have been too light on snow

and associated springtime water surges, and recent summers have been extremely warm and dry causing more extensive evaporation. The lack of winter ice pack to prevent winter evaporation is also a factor. Exposed timbers in shoreline structures are deteriorating and may need repair. People want to clear vegetation from exposed coastal rocky areas which are key fish spawning grounds when covered, which could cause a long-term habitat problem.

11. Public Comment/Any other business that may come before the Commission:

Mr. Smith appreciated that the township reached out to the agricultural and business communities to solicit their input, and the way the input has been summarized.

Wentzloff attended a conference and learned that the state Realtor's association has a grant program for small placemaking projects we should investigate.

Meeting adjourned at 9:34 p.m. on a motion by Wentzloff with support by Forgette.