

**WILLIAMSTOWN TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
October 15, 2013
Minutes**

CALL TO ORDER

The Williamstown Township Planning Commission convened at 7:30 pm at the Williamstown Township Hall located at 4990 Zimmer Road, Williamston, Michigan. Chair LaMore called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda.

PRESENT: Chair LaMore, Vice Chair Dali Giese, Secretary Eidt, Commissioners Schultink, Joscelyn Brown-Timm, Annette Davis and Phil Korson

ABSENT: Commissioner DeShon and Trustee Williams

ALSO PRESENT: Planning Consultant Chris Doozan of McKenna Associates and Planning Assistant Wanda Bloomquist

Chair LaMore welcomed Phil Korson to the Planning Commission. Supervisor Martin added that Phil's experience with other boards and fresh perspective on farming issues will be an added service to the community.

MINUTES APPROVAL

Corrections brought to the attention of the Commission:

Page 1: change "of" to "by" under Public Hearing and correct spelling errors.

Commissioner Davis moved to approve the minutes of September 17th as corrected.

Seconded by Commissioner Eidt

Motion Carries

PUBLIC COMMENT

Commissioner Schultink addressed the Commission regarding the need for internet service.

Supervisor Martin was in attendance on behalf of the Road Committee and stated that the Board needs to develop a policy before access will be granted.

Public Comment was closed at 7:40 pm.

NEW BUSINESS

Road Committee Presentation

Supervisor Martin and Trustee Eyster were in attendance on behalf of the Road Committee to review the process of prioritizing road maintenance, upgrades, along with the review process and funding. Road Committee members also include Commissioner DeShon, Brian Bird and John McLaughlin. The committee has met extensively to develop a 5-7 year plan for road maintenance.

Discussion included:

- Expense of keeping up the roads to current standards.
- The cost of repairing Germany Rd.
- Striping costs run approximately \$9,000 every other year. Contract is currently being negotiated.
- The cost of improving Zimmer Rd. with adding the paved shoulders and bridge.
- Explanation of the road policy to help cover the cost of needed repairs.

- Lack of state support for the Township Roads.
- Possible need of a millage to help cover the cost. Meridian and Vevay Township currently have a millage. Leslie Township did not renew their millage.

Chair LaMore addressed the desire for context sensitive design in the planning and maintenance of the Township Roads. He expressed his disappointment with the vast number of trees removed on Zimmer Rd. Supervisor Martin reminded the Commissioners that the Ingham County Road Commission held public hearings seeking input from residents on the proposed improvements; that were not attended by residents of the Township. Williamstown Township held an open house for residents to review the design based on the public comments. The Road Committee followed the plan as outlined in the Trails and Greenways Plan for paved shoulders.

Discussion included:

- A request by the Commission to have the Ingham County Department of Transportation and Roads (ICDTR) review the goals of the Master Plan before improvement
- An appeal to save older trees from removal for road improvements when possible.
- Current improvements may result in an increase of driver's speed on Zimmer Road.
- Design of Zimmer Road bridge does not reflect the Township's rural character.
- Proposal to meet with neighboring municipalities, ICDTR, and County representatives to discuss context sensitive road design with the goal of develop a collaborative review process.
- The Township's working relationship with the ICDTR is good.
- Discussion of the farming community's need to access fields.
- Consider designating roads for agriculture access.
- Amending the Trails and Greenways Plan to include language for context sensitive design.
- Desire for preservation of natural character and tree preservation.
- Discussion of reinserting Natural Beauty Rd. language back into the Master Plan while balancing the needs of the farming community.

Chair LaMore will address the Board on the desire to meet with County representatives, ICDTR, Board representatives and neighboring municipalities to discuss context sensitive design issues and ways to improve current methods of road design.

Election of Officers

On behalf of the election committee, Commissioner Brown-Timm motioned to approve Vice Chair Giese as Chair, Chair LaMore as Vice Chair and Secretary Eidt to remain as Secretary to serve as officers for the next year.

Seconded by Commissioner Schultink.

Chair LaMore opened the floor for other nominations.

Commission Korson moved to amend the motion that the slate be approved unanimously.

Seconded by Commissioner Davis.

Discussion:

- Thanked Chair LaMore for his service to the Commission.
- Would like to see the rotation continued for representation of the Planning Commission at the Board meetings. This allows an opportunity to have the Board members meet the Planning Commissioners. Consensus to continue the rotation.

Motion approved

Donation Boxes

Planning Assistant Bloomquist explained that the Township was approached about the placement of Donation Boxes in the Township. Currently there are boxes located at businesses on Grand River without regard to placement. The Board has asked the Planning Commission to review this issue and make a recommendation to the Board.

Chris Doozan of McKenna Associates stated that the Zoning Ordinance addresses them as an accessory structure in Section 2.03. Donation boxes are not considered an incidental use to the

principle use and Chris suggests specifically addressing donations boxes in the Zoning Ordinance. not all boxes are non-profit entities.

Mr. Doozan will bring language addressing the donation boxes to the next meeting for consideration by the Planning Commission.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Tree Preservation

- Exceptions for tree removal were included in the packet from Rochester Hills' Zoning Ordinance. Tree preservation would not deal with trees in the right of ways. A tree preservation ordinance addresses what happens on private property.

Discussion included:

- Historic tree designation vs. a tree preservation ordinance.
- Addressed in the ordinance for development.
- Use as an overlay.
- Historic/significant status could require a permit before removal of these significant trees.
- Exceptions provide reasonable restrictions. Regulations could be tailored for the Township..
- Historic/Significant tree designation would show stewardship and promote awareness.
- The Board has not directed the Commission to review Tree Preservation Ordinance language.
- The designation of Natural Beauty Roads, along with an Historic/Significant tree registration, and Ag designated roads would provide for a balanced perspective.

Commissioner Schultink is the representative for the November 12th Board meeting. He will provide a comprehensive explanation of the goals and intent of combining natural beauty roads, designated Ag roads and the preservation of trees.

Consultant Chris Doozan will provide information at the next meeting on Ag designated roads.

Planning and Board Reports and Review

Township Board

- Secretary Eidt and Planning Assistant Bloomquist reported that the Board did not pass the adoption of the Master Plan due to the insertion of the Natural Beauty Road language. The Board voted to deny the SUP for Stamprite Supersine for the proposed sign at 148 E. Grand River. Commissioners feel the Natural Beauty Roads language is important and should be included in the Master Plan. They are encouraged to attend the November Board meeting to show support for the language.

Planning Staff

Planning Assistant Bloomquist shared upcoming events:

- October Charettes will focus on three areas along the Grand River Corridor. Dates are October 22-30th. Information was distributed to the Commissioners.
- Commissioner Schultink is scheduled to represent the Commission at the November 12th Board meeting.
- Steering Committee meeting was held for the development of a regional trails plan that included representatives from communities along the corridor and the county.
- January 28th educational opportunity: Land Use: Defining your Township's Future.
- Need someone to represent the Township at an October 24th Charrette meeting regarding energy and its implications for urban design. Will send Commissioners details for consideration.

- Notice included in packet regarding Woodhull's adoption of their Master Plan.

Planning Commission Chair

Recommended Commissioners take advantage of the opportunity to participate in the Charrettes for the Grand River Corridor. Williamstown Township has significant impact to the rural character along the Grand River corridor and is an important part of the design.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

Review

Welcomed new Commissioner Phil Korson to the Planning Commission

Discussion of road improvements and context sensitive design with representatives of the Road Committee. Planning Commissioners are urged to attend the November Board meeting to support the Natural Beauty Road language. Commissioner Schultink will draft talking points addressing road designation strategy and goals for presentation at the November Board meeting.

New officers for the 2013-2014 year are Chair: Dali Giese; Vice-Chair: Rex LaMore; Secretary: Jerry Eidt.

Consultant Doozan will provide language regarding Donation Boxes for consideration by the Commission at the November meeting.

Reviewed information regarding historic/significant tree designations.

**Secretary Eidt moved to Adjourn
Seconded by Commissioner Brown-Timm.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.

**Wanda Bloomquist
Recording Secretary**

Secretary Eidt