

PROPOSED MINUTES  
LAKETOWN TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
4338 BEELINE ROAD  
ALLEGAN COUNTY  
HOLLAND, MI 49423  
(616) 335-3050

SPECIAL WORKSHOP MEETING HELD AT THE FELT MANSION

April 21, 2009

ARTICLE I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bob Cook called the Planning Commission workshop meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Cook, Ed Stielstra, Linda Howell, Bob Slikkers, Al Dogger

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Al Meshkin – Township Manager  
Ron Bultje – Township Attorney  
Diane Ybarra – Recording Secretary

ARTICLE II. OLD BUSINESS

A. ZONING ORDINANCE DISCUSSION

Bob Cook welcomed John Jackson of McKenna & Associates. Mr. Jackson presented the visual preference survey scores from the January meeting and reviewed the outcome of the data. Following were noted items for discussion:

The development model with stores facing the main artery did not score well. Ed Stielstra commented that the aerial shots of the project were not a good representation. It was also difficult to visualize the parking lots as they relate to the streets and buildings.

The box store shopping center photos were not scored favorably.

Slides showing detailed pedestrian areas were positively scored. Bob Slikkers stated that caution should be taken to afford generous pedestrian walkways due to feasibility given the space. John Jackson reviewed the urban standards for sidewalk structure zones. Ed Stielstra suggested a narrower sidewalk and the use of bump outs for landscaping.

The shopping center of Rochester Hills with parking on the fringe, the main street in the middle and stores facing the main street was scored most favorably. Linda Howell commented on having walk through capabilities rather than passing through stores to reach inside other destinations. Ed Stielstra asked if there is a means of pedestrian conveyance in any of the centers. John Jackson responded that it does not exist in these Michigan models but there is a lifestyle center in Ohio that has a trolley system. Al Meshkin asked what the occupancy rate is in this Rochester Hills project. John responded that occupancy level is at approximately 80% and is owned and managed by a single owner. Linda Howell asked what the guidelines are for the tenants. John responded that there is a tenant's manual providing guideline but it is not restrictive. The project was done as a P.U.D.

John Jackson noted that the slides with the larger scale scored more negatively than the smaller scale projects shown. Ed Stielstra commented that the type of tenants would dictate the parking requirements. John stated that it is important to have high utilization of the parking spaces and it must be taken into consideration when clustering the mixed uses. Local structures shown scored highly based on the scale of the buildings. Ed asked if the berm and screenings cause personal safety issues for pedestrians. John responded that landscaping as such is used on the external perimeter and heavy screening would not be used on internal landscaping. The two story structure scored favorably. Ed commented that in the two story slide was favored wherein the second story level was open. John commented that the four story hotel slide did not score positively. Comments made were that the structure was too large.

John stated that the result is there is a lot of interest in the pedestrian areas and ample landscaping in the two story range of structures. Linda Howell commented on the flat industrial look of the four story hotel and how it might look very different if the roof lines were altered. Ed Stielstra commented on the look of the awnings but cautioned if it would be possible to make that requirement in the ordinance. He also commented on the pole mounted lighting versus the building mounted lighting. Al Meshkin asked if anyone has done a covered area with outdoor structure not fully enclosed. John responded that it has been done. Linda commented that it had been done in the Holland Outlet Mall and was not successful. John's conclusion is that the emphasis is on landscaping and attractive pedestrian areas. From an approach standpoint concerning priorities for the ordinance, it may be done through the form of incentives establishing minimum standards with a streamline review process. It must be a way of getting high quality of projects through the process quickly. Al Dogger asked if he meant that the developer approaches the board with its ideas. John stated that the board should be open to a broad spectrum of projects. Al Meshkin commented that

the ordinance should afford a streamline process. Bob Cook stated that the demographics and population are not present here for such a project requiring the need for the ordinance. Al Meshkin stated that there was a smaller scale project proposed in 1988 and 1992 that were rejected due to the sewer and water issues. Bob Cook stated that it is a 3-month tourist season in this area and the population base is not there. Al Dogger stated that he doesn't see large shopping centers being constructed on Blue Star Highway. He sees a hotel, possibly a restaurant, maybe an upscale grocery store like a Trader Joe's. Ed Stielstra commented that Trader Joe's has been discussed in Holland before. Al Meshkin stated that Laketown Township has the highest per capital income in the county. Bob Cook stated that he does not see a project of this caliber coming to fruition in his lifetime. Al Meshkin stated if there are quality desired stores, people will come to it. Ed Stielstra noted that it sounds like the ordinance should be more nebulous with fewer restrictions. Bob Slikkers does not see a high volume of development occurring that public hearings could not be done. John Jackson stated that if someone comes in with the desired project, why would you want to draw the process out? Bob Cook stated that the ordinance would have to be such that it would be open to just about anything. Al Meshkin stated that an ordinance that meets the stated requirements (on a point system) should be a streamline process. Ron Bultje stated that the Flying J project took an inordinate amount of time. Ed Stielstra does not feel that a 5 to 6 month timeframe for a developer is unusual. Al Meshkin stated that it is not the actual time but the length of the approval process that is important. He sees a standard process with basic minimums and a stream line process.

Bob Cook asked to justify why the Planning Commission should spend the time and money to develop an ordinance for a pie in the sky project. Al Meshkin stated that 9 months of the year there is affluent population in the Saugatuck area. Bob Cook stated that he sees nothing more than rural conservative development on this property. Al feels that second level structures might be used as condominiums that would attract favorable tenants. John Jackson stated that at a minimum there should be an ordinance that would meet the highest standards desired. Bob Slikkers stated that he would like to see an ordinance that would prohibit undesirable projects. What don't we want? Ed Stielstra stated that he would rather take one year's worth of energy that might be wasted on an undesirable project be put into developing a new ordinance. Bob Cook asked if we are going to put a 26 point ordinance in place that will restrict putting anything there. Ed Stielstra stated that we do not have a premier space but we may be trying to create a rose between two thorns. Al stated if you look at the pie in the sky here and the truck stop there put an appropriate option in the middle. John Jackson stated if you put the right ordinance in place now you will not have an undesirable project application to deal with later. Ron Bultje stated that we can look beyond our township borders when creating the ordinance. John Jackson stated that this area is not a typical rural population area. Bob Cook stated that in his opinion the south 12 acres of the property will develop first and doubts the remaining 30 acres on the north side would become occupied.

Al Meshkin commented on how it might be feasible to get Dick Darby's perspective on what the ordinance might look like. Ed Stielstra commented that he cannot appreciate what the ordinance

should look like due to his inexperience of creating one. John Jackson does feel that consensus needs to be reached before you can move forward but it is certainly feasible to create an ordinance. All commissioners agree that the development should be mixed use. John Jackson advised to put the highest standards on the portion of the property falls on 63<sup>rd</sup> Street area to set the stage for the remainder of the space.

Bob Cook noted that the minimum standards that Al Meshkin is implying could be met by developers that are not desirable. Why would you put an ordinance such as this in place? Linda Howell suggested including a point system in the ordinance. If the developer meets a certain number of points the plan will be approved. It would be the developer's plan but the ordinance points would dictate the requirements of the project. She feels it would be a lengthy process but would provide the desired flexibility. Ron Bultje stated that even with detailed ordinance, it is difficult to cover all the possible scenarios. The distrust of the residents is a huge factor in the development of the ordinance. It must be a document that is easily understood by a lay person. Ed Stielstra is not averse to having public hearings if necessary. Al Meshkin asked what incentives could be given to developers. The density allowed and the process time would be important. We need to provide incentives. Al Dogger stated that he would not like to give up the Commission's review side of it. Bob Slikkers asked if Al Meshkin felt applicants come to the public hearings with the notion they will be approved or not. Ron Bultje stated in Grand Haven the overlay standards were used for the Wal-Mart project. A planning consultant would likely be contracted in the case of a large questionable development. Ed Stielstra expressed concern over the perception of the quality of the ordinance standards. Ron stated that he would recommend setting standards that the township really wants no matter how long it takes to develop the ordinance. Should the standards be lowered for someone who wants to take the more lengthy process? What do we want? The sizes of buildings, parking lots, lighting, etc. are all things to be considered. Bob Cook rejected the idea of two story developments due to the expense. Al Meshkin asked why it is so undesirable, doesn't it double the square foot are to use? Bob said it is useless space as retail and it has been proven to be useless. Al stated that it is the Meijer model and it doesn't apply here. Al asked what the occupancy rate is in the two story buildings in Holland.

Bob Cook suggests making a list of what we absolutely want and don't want. Al Dogger suggested allowing two story structures versus recommending it. Al Meshkin feels it will be our downtown area. The rest of the Commission does not see it happening. Linda Howell and Al Dogger do not feel the residential area will draw the population. Ed Stielstra feels the downtown Holland area is more attractive than this development. Al suggested a mix of 1, 2, 3 and 4 story structures. Ed asked if we would consider LEED certification as a qualification. Bob Cook stated it is difficult and expensive to require. Al Meshkin suggested each commissioner compile a list of design and uses that are and are not desired and submit it to Al within the next ten (10) days. He will compile without edit for discussion at the May Planning Commission meeting.

Bob Slikkers requested a review of the WECS Ordinance at the next meeting. Ron Bultje stated

that Ottawa County created a very specific ordinance based on size of unit and property. He will forward a copy of it to AI for distribution.

### ARTICLE III. ADJOURNMENT

**Bob Cook adjourned the meeting at 7:55 P.M.**