



Dexter Township

planning commission

6880 Dexter-Pinckney Road
Dexter, MI 48130

Telephone: 734-426-3767
Fax: 734-426-3833

www.twp-dexter.org

John Shea,
Chair
Ken Tappe,
Vice Chair
Vickie Kooyers
Twp. Brd. rep.
Mary Adams
Secretary
James Korcek
Molly Wade
Tom Lewis
Commissioners
Kim Jordan,
Recording Secretary

REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION Tuesday, January 13, 2009 7:00 PM

Present: John Shea, Chair; Ken Tappe, Vice Chair; Vickie Kooyers, Township Board Representative; Molly Wade; Tom Lewis and James Korcek.

Also present: Patrick Sloan, Director of Planning and Zoning and Pat Kelly, Supervisor.

Absent: Mary Adams

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 PM.

I. Approval of Agenda - Motion by Tappe, supported by Kooyers, to approve agenda as submitted. **Carried 6-0.**

II. Approval of the Meeting Minutes - Motion by Tappe, supported by Lewis, to approve the minutes of December 23, 2009, as amended. **Carried 6-0.**

III. Public Comment - None

IV. Action Items –

1) Election of Officers-

Motion by Tappe to nominate Shea for the position of Chair, supported by Kooyers.

Motion by Kooyers to nominate Tappe for the position of Vice Chair, supported by Lewis.

Motion by Wade to nominate Adams for the position of secretary, supported by Lewis.

Motions Carried. 6-0

2) Public Advisory Meeting to discuss future development policies in the Agricultural areas of Dexter Township.

Shea welcome everyone and briefly gave an overview of the process for the review of the Master Plan. He stated that this is the first of three public advisory meeting to be held. The Planning Commission is looking for input from the public and confirmation that they want to continue to support agricultural activities in Dexter Township. Shea stated that recent Township survey showed positive numbers regarding the desire to continue and encourage agricultural activity. He said that Sloan will give a presentation and then the floor will be open for questions and comments.

Patrick Sloan, Director of Planning and Zoning gave a thorough PowerPoint presentation. A copy of his presentation can be obtained at the Township Hall and/or the Township web site, and will be part of the approved meeting minutes.

Shea opened the floor for public comment. He said that the Planning Commission is seeking feedback and/or comments on what the public thinks they would like to see in the Master Plan and what our future development policies should be.

Robin Warner, 4222 Dexter Townhall Rd, Dexter – said he had two evolving issues with the housing market: First, he is concerned about all the large homes being built, stating that fewer families today are requiring larger homes. He suggests we discourage these large-home developments. And second, the cost of traveling and commuting to and from work has increased which has people moving closer to their jobs. This creates more empty houses. He also believes that agricultural use has more of a future than “McMansions.”

Bill Gajewski, 9820 Stinchfield Woods, Dexter - said that he recently attended a seminar on the importance of preserving all of our natural resources, which included farm land. He noted that many farmers today are becoming last generation farmers. He is in support and encourages agricultural activity.

Ed Buchta, 5985 Madden Rd, Dexter- stated that he lives at the end of Quigley and Madden Road. He said that the map he was reviewing this evening was not correct and didn't show lands that have changed from agricultural use since 2000. He is concerned about poor planning procedures with regard to subdivisions, citing Copper Meadows drainage issues as an example. He is in support of keeping with rural areas.

Sloan explained that the map that was handed out this evening shows land use/land cover from 2000 and is the most recent and updated one available. Because the map is overlaid with the current parcel lines of Dexter Township, you can see where agricultural use in 2000 has been converted to residential use.

Dale Lesser, 12651 Island Lake Road, Dexter – said that Dexter Township has many existing woodlots that could be tilled and put into productive agricultural use. He thought the draft Master Plan looked pretty good. He supports farmland preservation programs to encourage farming. However, he does have issues with Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) on raising live stock. He stated that the State has its own requirements and definition of animal units and suggests the Township keep with what the State requires. Additionally, he stated that he has worked with the Ann Arbor Greenbelt Advisory Commission and supports their goal to make agricultural more viable for the farmer and/or producer.

Shea said that the CAFO issues have been raised and the PC was reviewing for their own definition of standards.

Ed Buchta- asked why the Colby property was being held up for sale?

Shea said that the planning commission doesn't know and wouldn't have that information on file.

Mary James, 8393 Thurston Rd, Dexter- asked if a cross tabulation was done in the survey results for the likes and dislikes in the agricultural district.

Sloan said he would review and get back with Ms. James.

Jack Campbell, 4721 Northgate, Ann Arbor- asked about Agricultural buffers zones and why zoning.

Sloan said that a possible strategy to encourage farming would be to restrict development within agricultural buffer zones while at the same time allowing a density offset elsewhere on the site.

Campbell said at the time the 2003 existing Zoning Ordinance was being drafted some farmers voiced their opinion that they wanted to be zoned Rural Residential instead of Agricultural and still have the right to farm.

Shea asked Dale Lesser if he thought agricultural activity was still viable in Dexter Township.

Dale Lesser- replied, Yes. It is viable as long as the rent is low enough. However, agricultural activity is often seen as the lowest fallback use of land. He has heard of agricultural viability problems in places like Ann Arbor Township, but doesn't foresee agriculture ever ending in Dexter Township. The biggest problem threat to farming used to be those farmers who wanted to sell their land for development versus those who wanted to continue farming. Now, the major problems appear to be property line disputes between farmers and their neighbors, increased vehicle traffic in agricultural areas, and setback distances of common areas within a development that are used to buffer the houses from the agricultural use.

John Wissinger, 6700 Reilly Dr., Dexter- Had some question about the designated agricultural areas on the zoning map and asked if the PC was considering making the AG district bigger. Additionally, he asked the PC what they would do should a developer proposed a huge development and get denied and wants to sue. Does the township have any recourse from being sued? Also, as development moves west from metro Detroit and Ann Arbor, the rural townships appear to be consumed by the development.

Shea responded, most developers are local. Most of the bigger developers are driven by freeways that give superior access. Additionally, our zoning ordinance caps the build-out population and open space communities allow for more density and open space. He stated that Dexter Township tries to strike a balance and doesn't think we have a problem.

Carl Lesser, 9221 Island Lake Road, Dexter- stated Dexter Township used to be all farming, and that was before electricity in 1935. There used to be slaughter and grain houses in close proximity to the farms. Now there are only two markets that are open and they are driven by volume. If volume goes down, the agricultural activity may no longer be viable. He would like to see the farmers have more control over the wildlife population. It has become a big problem. As long as wildlife such as deer and geese are encouraged more crops will continue to be damaged. Buffer zones encourage habitats for such wildlife. The State of Michigan only allows five permits to shoot deer, which is not enough. Damage to crops affects volume; volume affects prices.

Traven Pelletuer, 7005 Jackson Rd., Ann Arbor- said that he was waiting to close on a house in Dexter Township this week. He owns a landscaping business and his pastime is a beekeeping. He asked where the thrust for of agricultural was coming from because he didn't think the survey supported it. He supports smaller dwelling sites with greater density and suggests we should be looking at how to cluster residences tighter with shared resources (i.e. shared septic, wells and composting). He is a licensed builder and stated that houses are built because they are needed. He said we should concentrate on preserving more open space and encouraging smaller house sizes. Shared septic fields would allow for this.

Shea stated that shared well and septic have been done in Dexter Township.

Ed Buchta- said he was concerned with dumping of unprocessed sewage in farm fields on Madden Rd.

Robin Warren, 4222 Dexter Town hall Rd., Dexter- asked what lands were where protected via the map.

Sloan said he was working on showing the open space and preserved areas on a proposed future land use map.

Shea said that connected open space is a key objective for the Planning Commission.

Mary James, 8393 Thurston Rd, Dexter- -asked if wind farms were an option and in what district would they belong in.

Shea said that southeast Michigan hasn't proven to be an attractive area for wind farms. He sees them as more of a utility at this point that would be regulated as a special land use.

John Wissinger -noted that two test towers have been erected in Washtenaw County to determine if wind is a viable source in southeast Michigan.

Bill Gajewski -stated that sustainable development requires sustainable rules. He would like to see low impact development standards for open space communities and other developments. The length of driveways and road frontages encourage more land consumption than is necessary. Farm buffers, when created, do increase the deer population and other edge habitat. Finally, the tax base from developments oftentimes pays for itself in terms of the public services they receive.

Dale Lesser- stated for the record that it is very important as farmers that they are able to maintain their drainage. Also, the Township should not be any more restrictive than the Michigan Department Environmental Quality regarding wetlands.

Mary James – stated that the Michigan DNR has a proposed land acquisition map, and questioned if any additional land in Dexter Township was on that map.

Carl Lesser- reiterated Dale Lesser’s comments. Agricultural districts do not need any more restriction on drainage or the cutting of trees.

Shea thanked everyone for coming and their sharing their comments with the Planning Commission.

No further discussion.

V. Township Board Up-Date –

Township Board has not met since the Planning Commission last meeting. Nothing to report.

VI. Concerns of Commission Members, Director of Planning and Zoning, Supervisor, and Recording Secretary-

Sloan up-dated the members on the following items

1. He stated for the record that the letter received from Barry Lonik [regarding the Master Plan](#) would be included with the approve minutes and will be posted on the Township’s web site.
2. He said that the Planning Commission’s draft annual report to the Township Board and 2009 work plan would be available to the members for review prior to the February 10, 2009 meeting.
3. He said that Washtenaw County Road Commission and Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission are working on possibly moving the entryway of the park.
4. The City of Ann Arbor is working on an approval of a wetland mitigation site in Dexter Township (Hartman Farms) for Guenther Homes.

Kelly reminded the members that at their first meeting in January they are directed per their Bylaws to review the Bylaws.

Planning Commissioners reviewed the current Planning Commission Bylaws and concurred they had no amendments at this time.

VII. Public Comment – None

VIII. Future Agenda Items –

Saturday, January 24, 2009

1) Public Advisory Meeting to discuss future Development Policies in the Lakes Residential area of Dexter Township

Tuesday, January 27, 2009

- 1) Public Hearing for John Kelly Landscaping, Preliminary Site Plan
- 2) Washtenaw Parks & Recreation Commission, Preliminary Site Plan

Thursday, February 5, 2009

- 1) Public Advisory Meeting to discuss future Development Policies in the Rural Residential and Commercial areas of Dexter Township

IX. Adjournment – Shea, Chair, declared meeting adjourned at 9:07 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Jordan, Recording Secretary

Molly Wade, Acting Secretary