

BYRON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

MASTER PLAN PUBLIC HEARING

November 8, 2006

7:00 PM.

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER, ATTENDANCE & PRAYER

Chairman Seymour Gould called the Public Hearing to order at 7:00 p.m., on Wednesday, November 8, 2006, at the Zion Christian School gym located at 7555 Byron Center Ave., Byron Center, Michigan 49315.

Commission members present were: Seymour Gould, Dutch Zeinstra, Bernie Schuitema, Jeff Gritter, John Stone and Tim Slot. Absent: Carroll Elenbaas. Also present were Township Planner Larry Nix, Assistant Planner Brian Wegener, and Recording Secretary LaVonne Kuiper.

Chairman Gould opened with prayer.

Chairman Gould introduced Mr. Nix the Township Planner and his assistant Mr. Wegener and thanked them for the work and time they have spent on the Master Plan. He also thanked the Advisory Committee for the time and comments they contributed.

Chairman Gould addressed the audience by saying that the Master Plan Map is only for the future zoning of the Township. It does not change the zoning of your property. This meeting tonight is to discuss the proposed Master Plan only.

Mr. Nix began his power point presentation by giving a brief overview of the past 20 months. He stated that this public hearing is opportunity to officially accept your comments and ideas and for the Planning Commission to provide any additional information about the Master Plan. The law requires all municipalities to have a Master Plan. In 1998 the current Master Plan was adopted. There have been a lot of growth and changes in the Township since then. A community opinion survey was sent out to every resident in the Township a few months ago. 25% of those surveys were returned. The Advisory Committee studied the comments and used those as a guide for the proposed Master Plan. One comment that was received was a strong desire to maintain open spaces. That is a great challenge when considering the demand for change. A balance between preservation and change is a delicate one to achieve.

Mr. Nix reviewed the various future land use categories.

Chairman Gould then opened the meeting for public comments.

Sue Keyes – 2296 Van Singel Lake Dr. – voiced her concern for the area located at 64th St. & Byron Center Ave. They moved here a couple years ago because of the school system and the safety of her children. She has heard comments from various people about neighboring Kentwood. She does not want that to happen here. It is very important to her.

Glen Eckelkamp – 6672 Pleasant Hill Dr. – commented he agreed with Sue and the comments she made. He thanked the Planning Commission and the Planner for all the work, time and thought that they have put into the proposed Master Plan. He said they moved here two years ago to build their dream home. It is a nice peaceful community and a simpler way of life. He had a question for the commission members about phase 5 of Van Single Lake. Chairman Gould stated that phase 5 was not part of the PUD. He would hate to see multi family homes there, but try and keep it zoned for single family homes.

Al VanderLaan – 2764 Beechtree Dr. SW - owns 88 acres on Clyde Park south of Alles Dr. He feels the proposed zoning of RC Rural Conservation is not the best use for this property. He commented that he and his brother have spent a lot of their money and effort to get the utilities there. He asked the Planning Commission to reconsider the zoning for that area and to leave the 88 acres as master planned in 1998.

Ryan Sytsma – 765 Russwood NE - was present on behalf of the property owners of 6837 Clyde Park Ave. SW. He suggested that the Planning Commission look at that property and consider a commercial/light commercial zoning for that corner.

Jeanne LaSurge/Bono – from Signature Associates – is working with some of the property owners who have property along M-6 & Wilson Ave. She asked that the Planning Commission consider moving the proposed zoning for that area further to the south and west.

George Jager – 6879 Clyde Park Ave. SW – he commented that he has lived at this location for 47 years, raised is family there and enjoyed the area. He is asking that the 6 acres plus the neighbor’s property to the north be zoned commercial. He listed a few reasons why:

1. Tax support for the township
2. Great area for business places such as:
 - medical offices
 - financial needs
 - insurance agent
 - restaurants
 - repair shop
 - hardware
 - clothing
 - hobby shop
 - sports store

James Sullivan – 6590 Pleasant Hill - commented that they moved to Byron Center because of the excellent school system the small home town feeling and he would like to see his community remain single family homes. He asked how many acres could this proposed zoning involved on 64th St. Multi family zoning is a big concern and an issue that has to be looked at. How many other areas are there in the Township that has MFR zoning up against expensive homes. He stated that when he purchased his lot he was assured the area north of him would remain single family homes. If this area does change to the zoning proposed he commented he would have to come into the Township and demand that his taxes be lowered since this would affect the value of his home.

David Lubbers – 6820 Wilson Ave. SW - said he came home from work today and their were stakes in his yard. He was wondering what is going on. He thought the road project was done in that location.

Ted Hurja – 4390 – 64th St. SW – commented he owns a small nursery and the property is currently listed as RS. With the addition of M-6 his property has been affected. There is a lot of noise and traffic. He asked that the Commission members to reconsider that area. He feels the best zoning for that area is Commercial. It really is a tough area to live.

Edward Braat – 555 – 92nd St. SW - thanked the Planning Commission members and all those who worked on forming the Master Plan. It is a lot of work.

Chris Sadler – 4143 - 64th St. SW – agreed with Mr. Hurja that his property should also be Master Planned Commercial.

Ray Braat – 411 – 92nd St. SW – commented on the proposed Rural Conservation zoning. He feels that type of zoning severely restricts the property when it could be used for something else.

Cindy Lemmen – 4188 - 104th St. – commented she served on the Master Plan Advisory Committee and considered all the comments that were received. This is a very difficult process. We are all concerned that the Township could attract to much commercial development and become a concrete city with a lifeless environment. She urged the Planning Commission to keep the rural character of the township and open spaces. People want a unique and inviting place to live.

Abe Vander Woude – 8530 Clyde Park Ave. SW – agreed with the comments made tonight but also stated that we must keep a good tax base in the Township.

No further public comments were made.

Township Planner Larry Nix commented on some of the following letters that were received regarding the proposed master plan:

Jeffery Vos – from Infrastructure C & E regarding Carlisle Commons located at 76th & Clyde Park Ave., indicating a desire for commercial use and not office.

Mark Fennema – Thanked the effort of all the people who worked on this project. He would like to see the corner of 64th & Byron Center zoned to commercial to allow more business to come into the Township to help off set the taxes.

Richard & Sharon Algera – would like to see 84th St. south from Clyde Park to Alles Drive, and Clyde Park from 84th St. north to the trucking company on the east side of the road should be zoned business. They also would like to see their property located at 8335 Byron Garden Dr., through to Clyde Park be zoned to allow for business operation. They are currently running a small business out of their home and want to comply with Township zoning.

T & M Partners – Dar VanderArk asked the committee to consider the modification of the text Office/Service district. The proposed Master Plan shows a significant amount of land to the district, but the text provides a relatively limited number of uses. By broadening the allowable retail options with the Office/Service district to allow for retail service businesses that would also serve the expanded neighborhood outside of the office complex and is more likely that successful office/retail developments will be created.

Richard & Carol Boverhof – commented they have lived at 6419 Byron Center Ave., for over 22 years. They have witnessed many changes in the area over the years. The biggest change being the construction and opening of M-6. A traffic count in 2004 showed over 38,000 vehicles per day travels that section between Byron Center Ave. and US 131. They feel a commercial zoning will help Byron Township as far as increasing its tax base.

A & R Development – Allen VanderLaan explained how the proposed Master Plan affects the properties owned by A & R Development. They are particularly concerned about the 80 acre parcel located on the east side of Clyde Park just south of Alles Dr.

A copy of the above letters will be attached and made part of the minutes.

Chairman Gould closed the meeting.

Commission member Tim Slot asked Mr. VanderLaan if he could walk the property along Clyde Park & Alles Dr. He would like to take a better look at that area. It is Master Planned Rural Conservation.

Mr. Nix thanked everyone for their comments and concerns that they have shared tonight. This is a real challenge and we will take all your comments into consideration.

Some people will be happy with the Master Plan and some will not.

Commission member Zeinstra also thank everyone for coming to the meeting and the comments that were made.

After some additional discussion a motion was made Schuitema supported by Gritter to table this decision of the proposed Master Plan until a future date giving time to review and discuss the comments heard.

Yes - 6. No - 0. Absent - 1 (Elenbaas) Motion Carried.

Bernie Schuitema
Planning Commission Secretary