

BYRON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

April 12, 2007

6:00 p.m.

SPECIAL WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Dutch Zeinstra called the special Work Session of the Byron Township Planning Commission to order at 6:00 p.m., on Thursday, April 12, 2007, at the Byron Township Offices, 8085 Byron Center Avenue SW, Byron Center, Michigan 49315.

Commission members present were: Dutch Zeinstra, Seymour Gould, Bernie Schuitema, Jeff Gritter, Tim Slot, John Stone and Carroll Elenbaas. Also present were Attorney Mark Van Allsburg, Planner Brian Wegener, and Recording Secretary LaVonne Kuiper.

Chairman Dutch Zeinstra asked Brian Wegener from Williams & Works to give an overview of the Master Plan process. A copy of Brian's memorandum is attached and made part of these minutes.

Chairman Zeinstra commented there are three different areas that the Township Board would like the Planning Commission to reconsider. Those areas are 64th & Wilson, 64th & Byron Center, and 84th & Clyde Park. He felt each of these areas should be discussed separately.

Beginning with the area of concern is **64th & Wilson**.

Chairman Zeinstra began by saying he feels it is too early to determine what is best for this area. The State law requires us to revisit the Master Plan in 5 years. Maybe by then we will have a better idea for that area. He felt there really is no need to be concerned about this area at this time.

Carroll Elenbaas voiced her opinions saying there is nothing but residential homes in that area. Plus there are no utilities available. She felt we should just sit and wait to see what the future brings for this area.

John Stone stated with the homes located to the west of the hospital is a nice transition to the residential area. He too felt it is too early to tell what will happen in this area.

Seymour Gould also stated there are no utilities in that area, and the Master Plan has to

be revisited in 5 years. The road system in that area is not the best. We have to remind people that the Master Plan does not change the zoning. It is a guide for future use. That area is not ready for commercial.

Bernie Schuitema commented the DDA had input concerning this area. They are afraid of something coming in and affecting the downtown area of Byron Center. This area is not even ready to look at. Maybe in 5 years.

Jeff Gritter agreed with all the comments made so far. M-6 does and will impact peoples lives. It is a very rural area of the Township.

Tim Slot commented the reason the Township Board sent the Master Plan back to us is their concern for the residents. The Board listens to people! They are asking the Planning Commission to reconsider these areas. They agree that this area is not ready for commercial but maybe apartments would be a good fit just along M-6. Personally he felt the Township would get sometime type of request for a development in that area long before the 5 years are up. Tim stated it is impossible to please everyone and it is our responsibility to look at the best way possible to Master Plan this area.

Jeff Gritter stated that the Master Plan is just a guide to go by, it is not set in stone. If someone comes in with a proposal we would be open to that. We are not blocking ourselves out of anything.

Carroll Elenbaas said the Master Plan can be amended. It is premature to decide what is good for this area.

Attorney Mark Van Allsburg commented that if something was submitted and it make sense for that area we could amend the Master Plan to accommodate that request.

64th & Byron Center

That area is now zoned MFR Multi-Family Residential / OS Office Service PUD.

Dutch Zeinstra said he views this area as a gateway into Byron Center from the north. He does not feel commercial would be appropriate in that area. To put a gas station on the southwest corner is not a good idea. A church owns the property to the west and south of this property and to have that wrapped around a gas station is not acceptable.

Carroll Elenbaas also said that commercial does not fit in this area. There are too many high value residential homes to take into consideration. This is a very difficult corner to work with. It has to fit in with the neighborhood.

John Stone stated it is an odd lot. The church should own it. Maybe an office building would fit well there. The traffic count on that corner is really high. It is a very odd piece of property. Don't really know who would be interested in it.

John Stone then dismissed himself from the meeting.

Seymour Gould stated look at the whole corner. Saint Mary's on the northeast corner nicely tucked away and if the church and school build on the southwest corner, yes maybe an office building would work. Don't forget we can't have commercial there because it will take away from the downtown area!

Tim Slot commented that the neighbors are very concerned about this area! They are in total opposition regarding a gas station.

Bernie Schuitema commented that we have to Master Plan for the Township. We have to be responsible to the community. He stated they have spent 2 years on this Master Plan and common sense was used with their decisions. Would he want this in his back yard? Probably not.

Jeff Gritter stated a lot could change with that corner. Suppose someone with big bucks comes along and the church sells that property. It could happen. Really don't know what is right there.

Tim Slot stated we all worked hard on this Master Plan. We are responsible to the voters of the Township. On a piece of property like this the big things sell! We are looking for the highest and best use for this property without hurting the residence.

Bernie Schuitema commented that what goes on that corner dictates what goes in across the street. That's where responsible planning comes in.

Tim Slot stated that "Township's don't survive unless they grow!" Growth is good.

84th & Clyde Park

Chairman Zeinstra commented that he has served on the Planning Commission for 13 years with a lot of different people. A concern he has heard time and time again is "we don't want 68th St., or 84th St., to be like 28th St."

Carroll Elenbaas state she is not opposed to commercial in that area. It actually makes sense.

Seymour Gould said that all four corners are Master Planned commercial and nothing is being done there. Are we going to listen to one or two voters or look out for the whole Township? He also was concerned about the DDA wanting to see the Site Plans for proposed projects located in the downtown area.

Jeff Gritter stated to leave that area as it is master planned now. A lot of it is wetlands and the soil is pretty black and soupy.

Tim Slot stated that the property would need a huge amount of fill to make it buildable

and bring it up to grade. He thought maybe a slight commercial use could be possible with a service road. Like 29th St., to help with traffic flow.

Chairman Zeinstra then asked if the Planning Commission should sit down with the Township and discuss these issues.

Tim Slot who is also Township Board member suggested we have to have more communications between the Planning Commission and the Board. Tim responded to Seymours concern with the DDA's interest in any proposed projects which would affect the downtown area. Tim assured the commission members that the DDA would not approve or disapprove any projects but are just interested and showing their concern.

Chairman Zeinstra commented that Supervisor Audrey Nevins has made arrangements for someone from the MTA to speak at a joint meeting with the Planning Commission, Township Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals. This meeting will be held some time in May.

Legal Consideration

Mark Van Allsburg suggested we collect what has been said tonight and give a report to the Township Board and do nothing further at this time.

Public Comments

Nancy Hochstetler - 2299 Van Singel Lake Dr., thanked commission member Carroll Elenbaas for her concerns she had for them regarding the possibility of a gas station being located so close to their property. When they purchased their lot there was a lot of empty land but no one ever mention commercial to them. Should she have asked? Yes. No one can stop progress. She then thanked everyone for considering their concerns.

Sue Keyes - 2299 Van Singel Lake Dr., thanked everyone for considering their concerns for the area they live in. She felt a good fit for that corner lot would be the Rainbow Day Care that tried to come into that area earlier. She heard a lot of good discussion and hoped that the communications would remain open for them.

Judy Johnson - 2331 Pleasant Pond - commented that they had over 50 people present at the September, October and November Township Board meetings. We care and are very concerned as to what could come into our neighborhood. She asked the Planning Commission to answer the question that Bernie Schuitema asked himself. Would you like it in your backyard? Put yourself in that situation.

Tim Slot stated that before a decision can be made every single side should be looked at thoroughly. The Planning Commission gets more heat than the Township Board. This was brought back to the Planning Commission just in case something was missed.

A representative of the Planning Commission should be present at the Township Board meeting when this is discussed. Tim stated he would call someone to let them know when the Township Board will be discussing this.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Slot supported by Gritter that the meeting be adjourned.
Yes - 6. No - 0. Absent - 1. (John Stone left meeting early) Motion Carried

Bernie Schuitema
Planning Commission Secretary