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WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP

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WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting
7525 Highland Road
White Lake, MI 48383
July 21, 2011 @ 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Martinko called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll was called:

ROLL CALL: Steve Anderson, Chairperson - **Absent**
Todd Birkle, Board Liaison - **Absent**
Steve Martinko, Vice Chairperson
Peter Meagher, Secretary
William Pierson
Gail Novak-Phelps
Beverly Spoor
Stan Woodhouse - **Absent**

Also Present: Sean O'Neil, AICP, Planning Director
David Birchler, Township Consultant
Kristin Goetze, Township Engineer
Lynn Lindon, Recording Secretary

Visitors: 0

Approval of Agenda

Ms. Spoor moved to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Novak-Phelps supported and the **MOTION CARRIED** with a voice vote. (5 yes votes)

Approval of Minutes

- June 16, 2011

Mr. Pierson moved to approve the minutes of June 16, 2011 as submitted. Ms. Spoor supported and the **MOTION CARRIED** with a voice vote. (5 yes votes)

Call to the Public (for items not on the agenda)

Mr. Martinko opened the discussion for public comment on items not listed on the agenda, but none was offered.

Continuing Business:

a. White Lake Township Master Plan 2011 Implementation Priorities

Mr. Birchler reviewed a compilation of the survey results that stay focused on the Master Plan and implementation. Since the requirement was put into place of sharing the draft document with the

neighboring communities, he feels continuing simple discussion about implementation and the need to prioritize would be beneficial.

Mr. Birchler interpreted the responses from the survey and questioned how the commission might want to proceed with prioritizing these items for action. They came up with a scheme of going back to the introduction of the Master Plan and the notion of sustainability. The 3 main areas of focus are the natural environment; the economy, and the community of people that make up the township. Sustainability is achieved when those 3 areas come together.

They looked at the results and concentrated on items that affected all 3 main areas of focus. The highest priority ranked pertained to water and sewer facilities. Mr. Birchler noted that this is a solid policy of the township and it is well underway.

It's important to keep this vision in mind when prioritizing projects. Mr. Birchler feels the vision of what the township is trying to achieve should not be limited by how much money it may cost. Staying focused is the most important activity and there is always a way to make things happen, even if it takes a little longer than projected. If sustaining this community is important, then we collectively have to find ways to make it happen.

Mr. Birchler asked the commissioners to review the document presented this evening and discuss at the next meeting whether this proposal is a legitimate approach.

Mr. Pierson stated that he understands the concept, but being publicly funded, costs must be considered. Mr. Birchler indicated that he doesn't want costs to limit the vision. There are opportunities for grant funds, so costs don't necessarily have to come from the township general fund.

Mr. Martinko referenced the list of priorities from low to high and questioned whether any items would be a catalyst to drive others. Focus groups could be formed to study the strengths and weaknesses to help develop this further. What has been done specifically with action taken can help us move forward with promoting other things. He'd like to narrow the list down with what projects could be done within the next few years and proceed from there.

Discussion continued on paved roadways and there is the ability to sit down with MDOT and RCOC, but the township has less control over timing as it does with things that are fully within the township's control.

Also discussed was the Pontiac bridge project. There are many potential stakeholders and it would be disappointing if there weren't plans to do something special with this down the road. There's been talk about committees and convening a joint Planning Commission of the 2 communities and creating an authority of some sort.

Mr. O'Neil reported that MDOT will be repaving M-59 for 6 miles starting very soon, but yet they have denied the request to coal patch the concrete barrier at Oxbow Lake. The township has suggested using the \$147,000 grant money for corridor enhancements that could be done while the crews will be already working, but MDOT has stated they cannot do this.

It was suggested doing a Streets component to the Master Plan and by law, MDOT would have to sit down and negotiate with the township. The new complete streets plan would put into motion that the township has the right to negotiate how MDOT will respond to that plan.

Mrs. Spoor indicated that she has listened to discussion on the causeway project for many years and she doesn't know where the push is to get it beyond the desk. The commission is still dealing with the same issues as it did in the past. She questioned whether it would be wise to take all the plans, sit down with the other communities, and have a plan on how to get this from point A to point B, etc. She is enthusiastic that the township is getting input from people and she would love to see this happen, but there has to be a plan. Mr. Meagher agreed that without a clear plan to make these things happen, we're just treading water.

Mr. Birchler noted the intent of the survey results is to get to a planning stage. He asked whether Master Plan Action Steps should be a regular agenda item for future meetings.

Mr. Meagher feels that whatever the group arrives at, it has to include high priority items that address all 3 needs, and provide short term gratification. Some items can be taken care of by ourselves and others we will need to partner with others. Mr. O'Neil added that there are things the commission thinks are important, but not necessarily for the short term. He suggested looking at a blend of what's important and what's attainable in the short term. Mr. Martinko feels that infrastructure should be pulled separately since it is high cost and long term.

Ms. Novak-Phelps agreed with Mrs. Spoor's comments. Mr. O'Neil added to not get frustrated if the list doesn't get completed within 5 years. The intent is to chart a course and review it every 5 years. This is just one piece among all the other things the commission does. The community has seen and benefited from many changes.

Ms. Novak-Phelps noted that there are ordinance within the Master Plan and there could be a point system where points are earned when the listed priorities are a part of the developer's plan. There could be points for open space, water and sewer, etc., where they clearly meet the intent of the Master Plan.

Mr. O'Neil added that political capital could be expended rather than fiscal resources. There has been talk about a joint Planning Commission with Waterford and developing a point system. There should be a way where if someone wants an expedited plan review, a "super committee", that gives the power to approve on the spot. There is no other community in the state where anyone can come in and get preliminary and final site plan approval immediately. This is a totally different approach and a way to streamline processes from typically 4 months to 4 weeks.

The rapport between the 2 groups (the Township Board and the Planning Commission) has allowed some changes where things can be done in house in the Community Development department. Ease of approval is a major incentive for developers. Mr. Meagher feels a developer might be more amiable to doing some of the other things on the list as well.

Liaison's Report

Mr. Birkle was not present to give an update.

Ms. Novak-Phelps reported on the ZBA. She indicated there were 2 requests last month and one of them had court proceedings involved that the board didn't know about. This will be back on the agenda next week. Mr. O'Neil stated that he would be present at that meeting.

Planning Consultant's Report

Mr. Birchler had nothing further to add.

Director's Report

Mr. O'Neil announced that the rezoning of the township property was approved by the Board last week and will now be designated (GB) General Business.

Bed Bath and Beyond, and JoAnn Fabrics will be the new tenants in the old Farmer Jack building. They will do minor changes to the façade and will resurface and restrripe the parking lot.

Gin Mill Party Store submitted their renovation plans, but did not include a check to cover the fees. Once the check is received, they will start the project.

Elaine Sabady is retiring effective August 2.

The draft CIP will be presented on August 18 and the public hearing is scheduled for September 1. September 15 is set for the Master Plan public hearing.

Communications:

Next meeting dates:

- Regular Meeting – August 4, 2011
- Regular Meeting – August 18, 2011

Adjournment

Ms. Novak-Phelps moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m. Mr. Meagher supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a unanimous voice vote. (5 yes votes)