

Chair
Bruce Keilen
Vice-Chair
Steve Gobbo
Secretary
Adam Bertram
Commissioners
Steve Musselman, Trustee
Dale Dailey
Marsha Zimmerman
Tim Fair
Kristen Krol



1401 W. Herbison Road
DeWitt, Michigan 48820
Phone 517.669.6576
Fax 517.669.6496
www.dewitttownship.org

Township Planner
Jim N. Foulds

Planning Assistant
Tory Niewiadomski

Recording Secretary
Linda K. Parkinson

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
MONDAY, JULY 15, 2013
7:00 p.m.

The regularly scheduled meeting of the DeWitt Charter Township Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Keilen.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was said by those present.

ROLL CALL by Secretary Bertram.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bruce Keilen, Steve Gobbo, Adam Bertram, Dale Dailey, Kristen Krol, Marsha Zimmerman, Tim Fair, Trustee Musselman.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

VACANCY; One

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Fair moved to approve the Agenda with the correction that the approval of the minutes are for the May 6, 2013 meeting rather than the June 3, 2013 meeting. Supported. **MOTION CARRIED.**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Fair moved to approve the minutes of the May 6, 2013 Regular Meeting as presented. Supported. **MOTION CARRIED.**

CORRESPONDENCE: The following correspondence was received and noted by the Planning Commission:

City of East Lansing – Comp Plan Update

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

- I. **Sidewalk Variance Request related to Site Plan Review 12-150004 from Donn Bohde NCARB-Hope Lutheran Church**, for property located at 1180 W. Herbison Road, DeWitt, MI 48820, west of S. US 27 and east of Turner Road, in the southeast ¼ of Section 9 of DeWitt Charter Township.

Planning Assistant Tory Niewiadomski noted that the applicant submitted correspondence dated July 15, 2013 requesting that the Planning Commission postpone discussion and/or action on the variance request to allow time for a representative to prepare for discussion.

Fair moved to postpone discussion and action on the requested sidewalk variance from Hope Lutheran Church until the August 5, 2013 meeting. Supported. MOTION CARRIED.

- II. Proposed Ordinance Amendment (42.2) to amend Chapter V, “District Regulations, and Specifically Section 5.7A, “R6 District: Residential Single Family: Residential Single Family”, to amend Section 5.7A.2, “Uses Permitted by Right”, to add Two-Family Dwellings, and Section 5.7.4, “Uses Permitted by Special Use Permit”, to add Three-Family Dwellings and Four-Family Dwellings. Receive and set for a Public Hearing to be held on Monday, August 5, 2013.**

Fair moved to receive Proposed Ordinance Amendment (42.2) and set a Public Hearing to be held on Monday, August 5, 2013. Supported. MOTION CARRIED.

- III. Non-Motorized Transportation Plan Update.**

Planning Assistant Tory Niewiadomski noted a copy of the draft Non-Motorized Transportation Plan had been distributed to the Planning Commission at the May meeting. He went on to provide a presentation on the Non-Motorized Transportation Committee’s proposed plan reviewing the following points:

- Background of the forming committee and plan
- Project Team- Committee Members
- Provided a brief Explanation on what Non-motorized means
- Why Non-Motorized Transportation is important
- Discussion of Mission, Goals, and Objectives
- Brief explanation of types of NM infrastructure
- Explanation of Map Legend and Vision
- Brief Discussion on Proposed Polices and Programs in plan - Complete Streets, Sidewalk Ordinance, Safe Routes to Schools, etc
- Ranking and Prioritization of Projects
- Top Projects- Few Examples (Old 27, Schavey Road Area)
- Next Steps- Township Board adopt plan, Township address polices and ordinances to address non-motorized transportation, plan creates opportunities for federal and/or state grants, incorporate projects into Capital Improvements Program, implement projects and achieve vision, and continue to outreach with other communities on creating connections to the non-motorized system.

In closing, Niewiadomski stated the Committee is looking for the Planning Commission's input and endorsement on the Proposed Non-Motorized Transportation Plan. Ultimately a final draft of the Plan will be adopted by the Board of Trustees which would allow the Township to begin to address policies and ordinances that would help promote non-motorized transportation within the Township. In addition, adopting the Plan would improve opportunities for grant money to enhance the Township. Adoption of the Plan would continue the regional outreach with surrounding municipalities.

Fair questioned what other municipalities has staff reached out to for information.

Niewiadomski stated that staff looked at all surrounding areas that currently have non-motorized plans. For example, Bath Township, the City of Lansing, Tri-County Regional Planning, as well as Clinton County, who is currently in the process of adopting a non-motorized transportation plan.

Fair noted on Page 38 of the Plan staff has identified three specific townships that would be similar to DeWitt Township (Lansing Charter Township, Delhi Township, Meridian Township). He feels DeWitt Township is a bit different than those three Townships.

Niewiadomski clarified those Townships mentioned are relative to "Complete Streets" rather than the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan.

Dailey advised that recently Delhi Township was awarded a two million dollar grant for an extension of the Lansing Riverwalk Trail. This demonstrates the importance of DeWitt Township having a plan in place. In addition, a few weeks ago the Clerk of Meridian Township was asked why Meridian Township is such a popular area. Her answer was she felt it was primarily because Meridian Township has parks and trails that make the area a good place to live.

Fair questioned how soon would the Plan be implemented.

Niewiadomski stated, once the Plan is in place, the Township can examine the priorities. These are items for the Township Board to consider.

Fair questioned how much input staff received from the public. He further questioned if public hearings were held.

Niewiadomski advised that the committee was designed with the intention of being one form of input from the public. Also, there was an informational workshop held on July 9th where input regarding the Plan was encouraged. The DeWitt-Bath Review ran two articles about the upcoming workshop. Approximately thirty people attended. Twenty-three of those attendee's filled out the survey, which is also available on the Township's website. Most of the input has been positive rather than negative.

Fair questioned if the Planning Commission endorsed this Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, how would it affect the Commission's consideration of the request for a sidewalk variance from Hope Lutheran Church (New Business Item II).

Niewiadomski advised that previously sidewalk variance requests have been considered on a case by case basis due to the fact that the Township had no basis for a long term vision for sidewalks. The proposed Non-Motorized Transportation Plan could serve as a decision tool for the Township when considering such variances.

Keilen concurred that having a Non-Motorized Transportation Plan in place would be a good tool when considering sidewalk variances.

Brief discussion followed regarding the fact that, although the Plan would be used for guidance, each site would still be considered individually when considering a sidewalk variance request.

Zimmerman questioned if a sidewalk variance could be granted or a specific amount of time.

Niewiadomski stated the Township does have a deferment program available that could provide for up to three years before a sidewalk would have to be constructed on a specific site.

Musselman stated the Township has a very strong Sidewalk Ordinance in place. Township policy has always been to promote and encourage sidewalks. In instances where someone may not want to put in a sidewalk because it will not connect to another sidewalk, the thought has been that you have to start somewhere and piece by piece a connection will begin to take place. However, the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan is not specific to sidewalks. It also addresses bicycle and walking trails, etc.

Fair noted that the Plan consists of 40 miles of sidewalk which seems like a lot.

Musselman stated the purpose of the proposed sidewalks is for non-motorized safety. He commended the Committee Members and staff for the work they have achieved on the Plan. He questioned the criteria used for choosing the Committee Members.

Niewiadomski stated the Committee was assembled by the Township Manager, with the consent of the Board of Trustees. The idea was to assemble a committee that would represent the Township as a whole and provide a variety of prospective.

Bertram commented that he would like for staff to be certain to advise any future site plan review applicants of the Plan to assure that they are aware of potential additional costs that may occur.

Fair stated it seems there is a rush to adopt the Plan and wonders if the Township should receive additional community input before adopting the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan.

Gobbo suggested that staff give an overview of the process thus far.

Niewiadomski advised that a public meeting was held and advertised several times in the community newspaper. There were over thirty people who attended and provided 23 survey results. The intent now is to provide the Plan to the Township Board for their consideration.

Fair questioned the results of the survey.

Niewiadomski stated the comments were generally positive. A summary of the comments submitted are included in the document provided.

Keilen asked if the proposed pathways would be intended for year round use.

Niewiadomski advised that the pathways would be intended for all season use.

Brief discussion followed regarding responsibility for snow removal on the proposed pathways.

Dailey stated he would like to see a list of projects to be implemented within the next two years included in the Plan. For each of those projects he would like a detailed execution plan with a timetable. Also, as the Township gets into a specific project, part of the process should include meeting with the key stakeholders. He would also like to have the Planning Commission review the status of the Plan every six months. It might have been beneficial for the Planning Commission to be more involved in the early drafting process of the document to gain input.

Chairman Keilen invited public comments.

Bruce Robbins, 1331 Northcrest, Lansing, MI 48906, stated he has talked to several of his neighbors and they are opposed to sidewalks on Northcrest. They are not interested in being assessed for sidewalks that they do not want. He does not want people from Lansing walking through his neighborhood. In addition, he would have liked to have the Township make more of an effort to get the word out to residents about the proposed plan.

Joe DeMarco, 1454 Northcrest, Lansing, MI 48906, is opposed to sidewalks on Northcrest. They create unsafe practices and increase accidents. In addition, they increase dog waste and cigarette butts on property. He is not interested in being assessed for sidewalks that he does not want. Lastly, he does not feel the Township can afford the costs involved with the implementation of the Plan.

Marie Takis McNair, 1455 Northcrest, Lansing, MI 48906, stated pedestrians and bicyclists are on her street frequently and it is not a problem that sidewalks do not exist. She is opposed to sidewalks on Northcrest. She is in favor of some of the other areas proposed for shared pathways in more heavily traveled areas. Perhaps the money would be better spent by providing a community pool, possibly at the Township Hall.

Niewiadomski noted the proposed sidewalks along Northcrest ranked 38th out of 60.

Brief discussion followed regarding the notification process for the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan Workshop.

Joe Salas, 1540 W. Herbison Road, DeWitt, MI 48820, stated when he first read the notice in the newspaper he was ready to come to the workshop and voice his opposition. However, after downloading the Plan and reading it, he was very impressed and in favor of it. It seems well thought out and includes a lot of good general detail. He noted communities that have a well implemented non-motorized transportation plan tend to have healthier active residents.

Brief discussion followed regarding location of shared use pathways that may be located outside of the right-of-way.

There were no further public comments.

Discussion followed regarding whether the Planning Commission should endorse the Plan or seek further public input.

Dailey stated he is comfortable with the fact that the proposed Plan outlines the fundamental direction the Township would like to go. It should be given a stamp of authenticity. He would also like to be sure the Township continues to receive public input regarding the Plan.

Fair stated the Plan is not bad. However, he feels there needs to be a broader spectrum of community outpouring for the Plan with a greater effort to advertise what the Township is attempting to accomplish. He questioned if the Plan was mentioned in the Township Newsletter.

Niewiadomski stated the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan workshop was mentioned in the newsletter. However, a date had not yet been set for the workshop so residents were directed to look for more upcoming information in the DeWitt/Bath Review.

Fair stated he is not in favor of advancing the Plan until more people become aware of it.

Gobbo moved to move the DeWitt Charter Township Non-Motorized Transportation Plan forward conceptually and in principal, with further input from the public as the Plan moves forward.

Supported by Dailey.

Fair stated there needs to be at least two more public hearings held on this matter so that there can be more public input.

Gobbo noted that if the Plan is moved forward to the Board of Trustees that meeting will be opened to the public.

Musselman pointed out that the proposed Non-Motorized Transportation Plan is a living document that provides general direction and is a good starting point. The Plan can certainly be amended in the future.

Fair expressed concern that much of the Township does not receive the DeWitt/Bath Review and therefore, may not have known about the Plan.

Bertram noted that the Plan was mentioned in the Township Newsletter as well. If an individual was interested in more information they could contact the Township offices.

Zimmerman noted that there was also an e blast that went out regarding the Plan.

Keilen stated there will be plenty of opportunities for public input in the future as the Plan moves forward.

Fair stated he supports the Plan. However, he would like to see it move forward with more public input and not just input within the Township Offices. He reiterated that he would like to see the Township hold two public hearings on the Plan before moving forward.

ROLL CALL vote on motion:

AYES: 7 NAYS: 1 (Fair) VACANCY: 1

MOTION CARRIED.

EXTENDED PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS: None.

REPORTS:

I. Trustee:

Trustee Musselman gave a brief report on business conducted and action taken at the recent Board of Trustees Meetings.

II. Zoning Board of Appeals:

Commissioner Gobbo reported there was no Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting held during the month of June.

III. Committees: None.

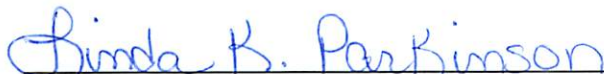
IV. Staff: None.

DISCUSSION:

Keilen commented on the Open House for Gunnisonville Meadows Assisted Living Center. He commended the property owners on their project to reuse the existing former Gunnisonville Elementary School.

ADJOURNMENT:

Fair moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 p.m. Supported. MOTION CARRIED.



Linda K. Parkinson, Recording Secretary



Adam Bertram, Secretary