

Planning commission
Regular Meeting
March 19, 2015

Members Present: John Bezotte, Gary Fetting, Ed Budzinski, Scott Franzel, Dale Schoen and Sheila Coats, also present Zoning Administrator, Richard Honaman.

Members Absent: Al Stoutenburg

Guests: Mark Batkie

Meeting called to order at 7:02 pm by Gary Fetting, Vice Chairman. All present rose and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda: No changes to agenda. Minutes from February 19, 2015 presented. Ed Budzinski made a motion to accept minutes as presented, seconded by Dale Schoen. Motion carried. Scott Franzel made a motion to accept January 15, 2015 minutes, seconded by Dale Schoen. Motion carried.

1. Rich Honaman stated at Board of Review we should be developing agricultural in the township. Rich introduced Mark Batkie and he led a presentation about hop farming. Raising corn and soybeans is no longer the only crop in the area. We can now say we have added hops to our farming industry. Mark Batkie has turned a hobby into a commercial endeavor. We could have Ag tourism in the county and have tours from City to see hop yards, every day farming life, growing organic vegetables and brewery and wine tours. City tours would see family type organized farming instead of corporate farming. We have a couple of breweries in the area and have talked to him about getting tours started to showcase farming and Michigan products. Hops are a perishable product (100 miles, regional). May start a hops processing facility (there are 2 – 3 on west side of state and Traverse City) none on the east side of state. This would benefit local farmers and offer another opportunity for local farmers. He is shooting for 100 acres, presently has 2 acres. Would like to increase to 100 acres and start facility to process.
2. Further discussion of Master Plan. Development goals. Each member was to bring 3 ideas of future Master Plan ideas we would like to see added to Master Plan. Rich gave us Al's ideas: Dog park at the township hall, bike path to Peck, promote internet access for township. Stated other items of importance to the township, theater, schools, easy access to township permits, be sensible, logical and reasonable township to work with, promote library. He questioned if "Hammer Award" given to vet clinic was the first award outside the city limits? Should work with City to clean up landfill before there is a lawsuit costing much more than the clean up would cost because of pollution.
3. Scott Franzel: Year round trail, farm zoo and YMCA type facility.

4. John Bezotte: Partner with county GIS system, at \$1.50 per parcel (not \$3.00 per parcel it could be) would be a fair deal. He talked with Greg Alexander and suggested we get a member on steering committee. Bill each township \$1.50 per parcel. John suggested Gary Fetting be our contact.
5. Ed Budzinski: He stated jobs are key to the township, without jobs nothing will fly. Consider recycling center in area, maybe a couple of days a year have pickup of recycled materials. Agricultural sight to develop ag uses in area to make every part used. Blight elimination is a constant problem. Demographics, things are changing. Single persons are prominent in society. Gary brought up how to incorporate those ideas into Master Plan.
6. Dale Schoen: Large area East of Sandusky with trees and water, would be great to have camping area. (New Sandusky Game Area) He suggested then just a recreation area.
7. Gary Fetting: Bicycle Path or roadway (bike lane) between Sandusky and Marlette. A turn lane on M-19 between South city limit and Wedge road. Repair to Townline Road between M-46 and Miller Road.
8. Sheila Coats: Would like to see a plan for road improvements, 1 year plan, 5 year plan and 10 year plan. We collect road millage but don't really have a plan to spend.
9. Rich went back to discussion on what Al had said about being a reasonable township to work with. He felt it was in regards to Rich turning down a request for a shed for Leroy Graves in the subdivision. Rich felt he was strong armed by Clint Stoutenburg in regards to Leroy's request to build the shed in the subdivision.

It was decided that we had a good discussion and many good ideas. Decided to look into doing a survey and get ready for next meeting. Gary asked everyone to come up with several pertinent questions to include on a Township Survey and send to Gary and he will tabulate and send them back to each member before next meeting. The next meeting will be April 23, 2015 at 6:00 pm.

Motion to adjourn by Gary Fetting, seconded by Scott Franzel. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Sheila Coats
Watertown Township Planning Commission