

Schoolcraft Township Planning Commission

Minutes for: Monday, October 2, 2023

Commissioners:

Name	Present	Absent
Barry Visel (Chairman)	X	
David Aubry (Vice Chairman)	X	
Rich Bailey		X
Eric Jasiak		X
Tamra Stafford	X	
Jim Jastifer	X	
Nathan Miersma	X	

Also present:

Name	Description
Don Ulsh	Township Supervisor
Brian Pittelko	Consultant, W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research
Leslie Abdoo	Township Attorney

Call to Order

Chairman Visel opened the meeting at 6:00 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Agenda

Vice Chair Aubry moved to approve the agenda, supported by Commissioner Stafford.
Motion carried 5-0.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Aubry motioned to approve the minutes of the September 11, 2023 meeting as presented, seconded by Vice Chair Miersma. Motion carried 5-0.

Public Comments

Todd Batts of 14870 North Barton Lake Dr made comments and asked questions regarding the membership of the PC and availability of draft minutes.

New Business

a. Master Plan Update

Consultant Brian Pittelko introduced proposed changes to the Township's Master Plan. He went through the demographics and advised that the Township's population has outpaced Kalamazoo County. He provided population projections. The Township is strong in the wealthier, working age population. He indicated that the demographics are strong for a growing community with a good level of income.

Mr. Pittelko also went over policies and procedures revisions to the Master Plan (i.e. site plan review process updates and goals).

Mr. Pittelko went through the Rural Character and Community Relationships section updates including those related to outdoor lighting standards. Chair Visel commented about the PC needing to be more sensitive to natural requirements as part of site plan approval (i.e. water, natural landscaping, etc).

Mr. Pittelko next went through the Business and Economic Development Goals section updates.

Finally, Mr. Pittelko went through the future land use map and summarized that the PC had initially recommended no changes to the future land use map. The PC discussed the area around the mill and whether or not the PC wanted to revise its future land use designation if it is developable. Chair Visel indicated that the PC was waiting for the mill to come to the Township for potential uses for the property and that it made more sense for the PC to update the plan/zoning map at that time instead of trying to anticipate future land uses there. Mr. Pittelko indicated that survey results showed Township residents were satisfied with preserving the way the Township is now. The PC also discussed accessory dwellings/short-term rentals and their impact on the future land use map.

The PC discussed the survey responses which were consolidated to those respondents

who are Schoolcraft Township electors. Mr. Pittelko advised that there was a mixed bag of comments. Comment summaries included those about wireless internet access/cell service, wind/solar, marihuana dispensaries, water/sewer as an economic development goal, and preserving the Township's rural character.

Mr. Pittelko will provide a final draft of the amended Master Plan for the PC's review at its next meeting.

Old Business

None

Report from the Township Board

Commissioner Stafford provided a summary report of Township Board activities: approved 2022-2023 fire authority contract; discussed ARPA preferred expenditures (new electronic sign, roads); approved Ordinance 284 zoning map amendment; approved Schoolcraft Library appointment; Swan Park updates; approved cost recovery ordinance.

Report from the Zoning Board of Appeals

None

Supervisor Don Ulsh passed out broadband internet survey/information to Commissioners for their reference.

A motion to adjourn was raised at 7:04 pm by Vice Chairman Aubry and seconded by Commissioner Jastifer. The motion carried 5-0.