

OTTAWA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

PROPOSED MINUTES

DATE: August 6, 2003

PLACE: Ottawa County Fillmore Complex, Board Room

PRESENT: Betty Gajewski, Robert Rinck, Bill Miller, Jim Miedema, Cornelius Vander Kam

ABSENT: John DeGrazia

STAFF: Mark Knudsen, Soonja Hixon

GUESTS: Arthur Lucas, Polkton Township; Norma Sterk, Georgetown Township; Stan Sterk, Georgetown Township; Asher Pimpton, Grand Haven Tribune; Jason Miller, Holland Sentinel; Wayne Linderman, Olive Township; John VanderKooi, Ottawa County Farm Bureau; Chuck Pistis, Ottawa County MSU Extension Office; Tom Dudek, Ottawa County MSU Extension Office; Philip Kuyers, Ottawa County Commissioner; Calvin Van Timmeren, Ottawa County Farm Bureau; Sharon Carlson, Ottawa County Farm Bureau; Lester Langeland, Ottawa County Farm Bureau; Fred Walcott, Ottawa County Farm Bureau; Wayne Vander Zwaag, Olive Township; Chester Bartels, Olive Township; David VanDyke, Ottawa County Farm Bureau; Jim Fuerstenau, Michigan Farmland and Community Alliance; Mark Schoenborn, Ottawa County Farm Bureau; Roger Victory, Ottawa County Farm Bureau; Ian Storey, Lakeshore Press; Michael Bronkema, Holland

Call to Order:

Chair Gajewski called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. A quorum was present to conduct business. Invocation was given by Bill Miller.

Approval of the Agenda:

03-27 Motion: To approve the amended August 6, 2003 Agenda.
Moved by: Rinck Supported by: Miller **UNANIMOUS**

Approval of the Minutes:

03-28 Motion: To approve the minutes of the June 4, 2003 meeting.
Moved by: Miedema Supported by: Rinck **UNANIMOUS**

Announcements:

Chair Gajewski asked the members of the audience to introduce themselves.

B. Reports of Meetings Attended

Robert Rinck attended a conference in Milwaukee where they discussed the reauthorization of transportation funds.

Bill Miller had no report.

Betty Gajewski attended the Parks & Recreation Commission meeting. She reported that the county is exploring the issue of "hunting" on county properties. They are also studying the management of open spaces. She said that there would be an open house and dedication on October 9, 2003, for the Hemlock Crossing at Pigeon Creek. In addition, the Ottawa County Drain Commission has begun to update the Ottawa County's flood map inventory.

Jim Miedema reported that he just returned from a trip to Alaska.

Cornelius Vander Kam attended a conference in Milwaukee. He obtained material for the Planning and Grants library on groundwater solutions, air conditioning, and solid waste. He also attended a presentation at the Grand Valley Metro Council on "land use."

Mark Knudsen reported that he has been meeting with Chuck Pistis on the Citizen Planner Program. He said that the brochures for the event will be available for mailing in the near future and asked if the Planning Commission members would be interested in attending the training. Jim Miedema and Betty Gajewski expressed an interest.

Petitions & Communications

A. FYI Folder

B. Correspondence to and from Polkton Charter Township Regarding Rezoning Request, 15499 48th Avenue, from G-2 General Commercial District to I Industrial District

C. Correspondence to and from Grand Haven Township Regarding Rezoning of Parcel No. 70-07-34-400-021

D. Correspondence to Grand Haven Township Regarding Rezoning of Parcel No. 70-03-27-51-074

E. Correspondence to Grand Haven Township Regarding Rezoning of Parcel No. 70-07-24-200-006

F. Correspondence to Chester Township Regarding Chester Township's Master Plan

G. Correspondence to Georgetown Charter Township Regarding Zoning Ordinance Amendments, Rezonings and Planned Unit Developments.

H. Correspondence to Georgetown Charter Township Regarding Review of PUD0302, REZ0303, and REZ0304

I. Correspondence to Tallmadge Charter Township Regarding Rezoning of Parcel No. 70-10-25-400-022

J. Correspondence to and From Tallmadge Charter Township Regarding Rezoning of Parcel No. 70-10-11-100-008

K. Correspondence to and from Crockery Township Regarding Rezoning of Parcel No. 70-04-15-300-003

L. Correspondence to "On-staff" Planners in Ottawa County Regarding a Roundtable Discussion on July 10, 2003.

M. Correspondence to Area Construction/Building Contractors Regarding the "Ottawa County Planning Commission Right of ay Task Force Report: Narrow Street Benefits and Residential Street Dimensions"

03-29 Motion: To receive for information Items A - M

Moved by: Rinck Supported by: Vander Kam **UNANIMOUS**

Chair Gajewski recommended amending the Agenda in the following order: "New Business" Item A; "Presentations"; followed by "Public Comments".

New Business:

A. Emerald Ash Borer - A Future Threat to Ottawa County - Tom Dudek, MSU

Extension Office, Ottawa County

Tom Dudek provided a brief summary of the Emerald Ash Borer, an exotic beetle from Asia, and the devastation it has caused to Ash trees throughout Southeast Michigan. The purpose of the presentation was to educate consumers on the Emerald Ash Borer. Tom distributed pamphlets to show the type of damage the beetle can cause to a tree and the identifying factors to look for in trees that are infested. He also discussed the strategies being used to prevent the spread of the beetle.

Presentations:

Presentation on "*Purchase of Development Rights Program Development Opportunities for Ottawa County*" - Jim Fuerstenau, Michigan Farmland Community Alliance

Jim Fuerstenau gave a presentation regarding his views on a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program for Ottawa County. He provided a brief overview of the results of a study and the reasons Ottawa County should support and implement a PDR Program. The study focused on the following areas: Value of agriculture in Ottawa County; Local agricultural land trends; Appropriateness of local PDR program; Local program structure opportunities - pros/cons; Preliminary farmland owner support for a PDR program; Direct economic benefits of PDR; and How much land to preserve.

Public Comments:

- Lester Langeland indicated support for a PDR Program in Ottawa County
- Chet Bartles, Olive Township, indicated support for a PDR Program
- Fred Walcott, Ottawa County Farm Bureau, indicated support for a PDR Program in Ottawa County, and requested that the Planning Commission "table" their motion. He requested that a work group be created to explore the PDR Program in further detail.
- Stan Sterk, Georgetown Township, stated that he opposes a PDR program. He feels that a PDR Program is a temporary solution for farmers and will not ensure preservation of a farm.
- Ted Bosgraff, Holland, stated that he opposes a PDR program.
- Mark Schindler, Ottawa County Farm Bureau, indicated support for a PDR Program.
- Tim Dykstra, Olive Township, indicated support for a PDR Program.

Old Business:

A. Farmland Development Rights Ordinance

Mark provided the pros and cons of creating a PDR Program for Ottawa County, and his reasons for opposing a program for the county. They are as follows:

Argument Favoring a PDR Program

- Land can be permanently restored
- Land will be available for future generations of farmers
- Sprawl and the cost of infrastructure associated with sprawl is reduced
- Farmers receive a cash infusion to assist in the operation of their farm.

Argument Opposing a PDR Program

- Program would require substantial taxpayer funding
- Necessitate expenditure of substantial resources for administration and enforcement
- Provides no assurances that "farming" will be preserved
- Uses taxpayer dollars to purchase development rights, but citizens are not permitted access to the land
- Artificially intervenes in a proven, market-driven, economic system where demand, production, and profitability determine a business' viability
- Decreases the amount of available land for development and may increase the price of the remaining developable property and the cost of housing; and could divert county funds away from studies, technology, and resource based investments to land purchases.

After a lengthy discussion, the Planning Commission members voted to oppose a Farmland Development Rights Ordinance in Ottawa County.

03-30 Motion: To approve and forward to the Board of Commissioners a Resolution opposing a Farmland Development Rights Ordinance

Moved by: VanderKam Supported by: Rinck **MOTION PASSED**

Yeas: Gajewski, VanderKam, Rinck, Miedema (4)

Nays: Miller (1)

B. North/South Corridor Study (Update)

Mark reported that the draft document is nearing completion. He said that the Planning & Grants Department should be able to meet with the local units of government to distribute the plan within the next thirty (30) days.

C. M-104 Study (Update)

Mark said that a kickoff meeting was held with the local units of government and that another meeting will be held in a few weeks.

D. Ottawa County Planning & Grants Web Page (Update)

Mark reported that the web page will be downloaded within a week.

E. Non-Motorized Pathways (Update)

Mark reported that the Friends of Ottawa County Trails and Paths decided to not meet during the summer months, but will resume their normal schedule in September.

F. Ottawa County Development Plan (Update)

Mark reported that a draft document has been prepared. The largest challenge at this point is obtaining data layers from the Geographic Information System (GIS) Department.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.