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**PITTSFIELD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**

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**Members Present:** Dennis Ward, Richard Plisko, Wilma Luna, Christina Lirones, Stuart Dowty, John Norton, Maria Constant.

**Members Absent:** None.

**Others Present:** Jim Haeussler, Tom Covert, Chris Miles, Mike Boggio, Patricia Denig, Senior Planner Paul Montagno, Planning Director Bruce E. Fowler, and Recording Secretary Marge Burkheiser.

**1.0 Call Meeting to Order at 7:30 p.m. / Determination of a Quorum.**

Chairperson Lirones called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. A quorum was present.

**2.0 Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairperson Lirones led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3.0 Approval of Agenda**

**Motion by Commissioner Dowty, supported by Commissioner Luna, to approve the agenda, as presented.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**4.0 Items from the Floor**

None.

**5.0 Special Order of Business**

**5.1 Presentation of the Washtenaw Metro Alliance Open Space Plan**

Patricia Denig, Director of Planning Services of Washtenaw County, presented the Metro Alliance Open Space Plan, "A Plan for Coordinated Parkland and Open Space" She said this would also be presented to the Board [of Trustees] Tuesday evening [September 12, 2006]. She said efforts started about five (5) years ago when an initiative was done on the "quality of life" and became the "Washtenaw Metro Alliance". She said that one of the first things that the Alliance wanted was to think about "Open Space Preservation". She said they hired a consultant to help with the plan. She said they have taken into consideration other efforts such as the Detroit Area Study, which had a subsection for Washtenaw County, the Washtenaw County Parks and Rec. survey, and some workshops. She said they also took into account what other groups were working on. She said coordinated efforts are necessary due to limited resources.

Commissioner Ward asked if this initiative was meant to "piggy-back" the [Washtenaw] County plan published two years ago. He said some of this is the same themes as before.

Ms. Denig replied this did “piggy-back” on the County Plan, but also all the local government plans and their master plans for preservation. She said they investigated what all the member governments were saying about preservation. She said a lot of the actions demand a regional approach, especially pertaining to watershed and water quality planning, and interjurisdictional transfer of development rights. She said that natural features do not observe political boundaries. She said open space is central to the region not just to an individual community. She said that some of the past efforts to date included project partners’ workshops, preliminary inventories, completed the projects’ scope, holding general public workshops and drafted the Plan. She said that since then they have developed the plan and besides presenting in various areas they having been doing some case investigations. She said they are trying to review what programs are already in place. She said that some of the “key findings” were that significant natural landscapes remained and that the riparian systems offer a great interconnectedness. She said agriculture remains a significant land use but development pressures are eating up the land. She said in developing the plan it is useful to have a unified philosophy so that all the regions could be aligned. She said that with the population growth there is not much progress since the acreage won’t increase.

Commissioner Ward asked if the County planners thought the population would start to stagnate.

Ms. Denig said the projections are for 2020 and there is still a steady population growth. She said the County felt SEMCOG projections for [Washtenaw] County are pretty close but at the local level not close at all. She said the information from SEMCOG was not current.

Commissioner Ward asked when SEMCOG would correct the data. He said that with the incorrect data, the Township is consistently fighting litigation based on outdated data.

Ms. Denig said acquisition funds are limited and that they need to set their priorities.

Commissioner Ward asked if the Ann Arbor greenbelt fit in with this and whether or not the City [of Ann Arbor] was cooperating.

Ms. Denig said the greenbelt is included in the proposal.

Chairperson Lirones commented that working with the City has been fine. She noted that most of the problems have been with the individual property owners.

Ms. Denig said that the City committee has been very interested in working with the County group and noted that some of the key findings include coordinating land use planning. She noted what the vision of the plan is “To create an interconnected system of open space throughout the region that supports ecological function, biodiversity, water quality, productive farmland, recreational opportunity and scenic character for current and future residents.” She said that this should be thought of as a green infrastructure process. She said this is not just existing open space preservation, natural features complexities, the riparian corridors, and the agriculture preservation areas but combination of them. She said that it helps to reposition open space.

Commissioner Ward said the problem is that “contribution of property values” is not what the general public believes to be true. He said there is a need for an education level that will make people and business want to be here.

Chairperson Lirones said that some people are just looking for a reason to disagree with open space.

Commissioner Dowty asked for a definition of the term “open space”.

Ms. Denig said open space is not just farms, waterways that will be preserved space that will not be developed, both private and public. She said that Commissioner Ward is correct about tangible benefits and that education is important. She asked if anyone found corrections to the maps to contact her. She said the vision for regional preservation included the potential green infrastructure, prioritize natural landscapes, the riparian connectivity and local agricultural preservation areas. She said this would be impressive once achieved. She said the Township already has the Pittsfield Preserve, the linear natural areas connected by the streams and the headwater raisin watershed.

Commissioner Ward asked how they envision Pittsfield in the TDR. He said the County Plan seems to be a trend of Pittsfield being the recipient of extra development and the westerly townships benefit from the increased open space as a result. He said he did not agree with what appears to be the trend.

Ms. Denig said there are portions within the township that were being targeted for development and that there are townships surrounding Pittsfield that are looking for more preservation. She said there are areas where there are sewers in the areas. She asked if it was possible to send development into those areas and then Pittsfield would become the “sending zone” and the outlying townships would become the “receiving zones”. She said a regional approach is a partnership.

Chairperson Lirones said that in the past the County Plan was that everyone came here [Pittsfield Township].

Commissioner Ward said that the impression he received two years ago that was Pittsfield would be developed for the other areas.

Chairperson Lirones said the County Master Plan used to reflect that more in the past then it does now. She said the Township is filling up fast and they would not be able to send us anymore [referring to population growth].

Ms. Denig said when they first started by looking at all the master plans and putting those things into what was already there. She said they were not adding or saying there should be more density except around the activity centers. She said she thought the only activity area was located at Willis and US-23 interchange.

Chairperson Lirones said they would want the riparian corridors, the greenway maps, wetland corridors should be coordinated across township boundaries. She said it would be more difficult with the individual ones. She said at the PDR meeting this year there were no new applications [from Pittsfield]. She said matching PDR Ordinances with everyone working together would help. She said they have talked with Lodi about park space but they have not shown and interest.

Ms. Denig commented that they [Lodi] have not joined the Washtenaw Metro Alliance at this point.

Ms. Denig said that the Washtenaw Metro Alliance is one of five (5) regional groups. She asked the Commissioners to think about using preservation as boundaries.

Ms. Denig said the next steps were to complete the presentations, conduct detailed assessment of local plans policies and regulations, and develop recommendations for a detailed implementation strategy, necessary local actions, necessary regional actions, and present recommended strategy to the Washtenaw Metro Alliance.

## **6.0 Public Hearings**

### **6.1 ZOA 06-174**

[submitted to amend the Zoning Ordinance ]  
(to add a new Section 3.18 Private Sewer Systems)

Planning Director Fowler said there was a recent Michigan court of appeals decision for Lake Isabella that is mandating that municipalities address the issue and that they cannot veto private systems but can be regulated. He said that Mike Luptowski (Director of Utilities), Stuart Dowty (Deputy Supervisor and Planning Commission member), and Jan BenDor (Deputy Clerk) have prepared this and it has been sent to the Township attorney. He noted that this will to be sent Township Board of Trustees.

Chairperson Lirones opened the public hearing.

There were no comments.

**Motion by Commissioner Luna, supported by Commissioner Plisko, to close the public hearing.**

**MOTION CARRIED.**

Chairperson Lirones suggested a change in the wording to one section.

Members discussed and agreed the wording should be changed.

Commissioner Dowty said that while working on this, he became aware that some uses did not work. He related the experience of Genoa Township [Livingston County] (where 5 of 12 systems failed within 7 to 8 years) resulting in problems for the homeowners that the township ends up resolving. He said this is a developing problem. He said the state mandated that townships cannot prohibit them; however can regulate them but that the township does have some rights. He said this would be enforceable through the [Township] Code and monitored through a conditional use permit (CUP). He provided a copy of an article from the Saline Reporter (September 7, 2006) about York Township that DEQ approved 1,000 unit trailer park sewage discharge permit (attached to the minutes).

Chairperson Lirones asked about the unserved areas and whether people in those areas should have R-3 zoning.

Planner Montagno said that there is case law that you can not use utilities as justification for density.

**Motion by Commissioner Ward, supported by Commissioner Luna, to recommend approval, as amended, ZOA 06-174 to the Township Board of Trustees.**

**ROLL CALL:**

**YES: WARD, PLISKO, LUNA, LIRONES, DOWTY, NORTON, CONSTANT.**

**NO: NONE.**

**ABSENT: NONE.**

**ABSTAIN: NONE.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**7.0 Old Business**

**7.1 CSPA 06-02 Miles of Golf**  
[submitted for a preliminary site plan]

Planner Montagno briefly reviewed his Zoning Review of August 31, 2006, stating this will be a PUD consisting of four (4) lots, with two use areas. He said one (1) area is currently being used as a driving range. He said the other lots will have site plans in the future. He said this plan meets all the area and bulk requirements. He said that a 20-foot transition strip will be required for the areas that abut the residential areas. The open area used for the driving range is being placed in a conservation easement per the conditions of Board approval for the rezoning. Lot I is also intended to be used for storm water detention for the entire site. He said that as long as the same owner owned the property, off-site parking would be allowed. He said the Township is asking for a permanent agreement or easement in case a lot is sold in the future. He said there is sufficient parking provided for the uses. He reviewed the list of approved uses.

1. No uses shall be permitted other than those specified on the area plan.  
*- No other use has been proposed.*
2. A preliminary site plan shall be submitted for the entire property in the petition and approved by the Planning Commission before a final site plan may be submitted for any part of the property.  
*- The applicant is waiting for approval of currently submitted preliminary plans before submitting final plans.*
3. The petitioner shall record a conservation easement for the area delineated for the easement on the area plan before a final site plan may be submitted for any part of the property.  
*- This has been done.*
4. Land Divisions shall be applied for and approved before a final site plan may be submitted for any part of the property.
5. Applicant shall submit recorded access easements prior to approval of the preliminary site plan.  
*- This has been done.*
6. Detention must be provided for all entities.  
*This has been done.*

7. A drainage district shall be established for the entire property. Such district shall be in place before the Planning Commission approves a final site plan for either Lot II and III.
8. Phasing shall be shown on the preliminary site plan. *This has been done.*
9. Placements of buildings on the area plan are acceptable as concepts only and may be changed as part of the review of a final site plan for each lot.
10. Landscaping shown on the area plan is acceptable as concepts only. Species, quantities, and location may be changed as part of the review of a final site plan for each lot.
11. Utilities on the area plan are conceptual only and shall be worked out on the final site plan for each lot.

He said the engineering had a number of issues which could be resolved on the final site plan. He said the planning consultant's report noted that all information has been provided and there was no comment on grading, parking, or final site plan issues. He said the CUP was applied for the bank, and the Planning Commission decided to wait until final site plan to approve the permit.

Chairperson Lirones commented that in the planning consultant's report that Lot III did not show a drive-through facility. She asked if the bank was Lot III.

Planner Montagno said the report was correct [Lot III is not the bank].

Chairperson Lirones said the sidewalk is existing and would remain at five (5) foot.

Commissioner Ward said the elevations are showing a large amount of signage.

Planner Montagno said the signs are a separate issue, but staff has had discussed this with the applicant. He said the applicant is looking at some different options. He said elevations are a final site plan matter

Mike Boggio, for the applicant, said when they return for final site plan they will leave the signage off the buildings. He said they will work with staff for acceptable lighting of the facade.

The Commissioners thanked the applicant for the work that has been done on this site. They expressed their enthusiasm for the improvements that will be in the area.

**Motion by Commissioner Norton, supported by Commissioner Ward, to approve preliminary site plan CSPA 06-02 Miles of Golf with the following conditions:**

- 1. Provide an agreement for cross lot access for parking; and**
- 2. Address all items in the Township Engineer's report dated August 30, 2006.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**7.2 CSPA 06-13 Burnham Woods Phase II**  
[submitted for final site plan]

Planner Montagno said there were reports from engineering, planning consultant, zoning review and the wetland consultant. He said Engineering had a number of issues but felt details could be handled administratively. He said the planning Consultant said there were a few minor items which were not on the plan but that items noted in 3.05 of the report is not correct and should be corrected on next submittal. He said the Wetland Consultant's report had concerns about some lots encroaching into the wetlands. He said this is a permitted use. He said as this has been recorded for residential use. He said it meets all the bulk requirements, site, density, floor area and coverage would be looked at on an individual basis when plot plans are submitted for each building. He said the building envelopes meet the setback requirements. He said from the wetland consultants' report of August 28, 2006, that lot 23 will encroach into a regulated wetland. He said typically the Planning Commission does not allow lots to encroach into wetlands; but these lots were recorded prior to the Township adopting the Wetland Ordinance. He said the wetland is outside of the proposed building envelope. He said the Commission may want to consider asking the developer to provide some type of buffer along the edge of the wetland to prevent future homeowners from encroaching into the wetland. He said in the past the Commission has suggested trees and shrubs, or a split rail fence.

Commissioner Ward expressed concern with lawn chemicals going into the wetlands.

Planner Montagno said that increasing the buffer would be important. He said the wetland is part of the wetland for Kirtland Hills. He said it appears the wetland enhancement of trees, shrubs and wetland seed mix which were previously depicted within low areas adjacent to the culvert design to redirect the flow of the water in the wetland under Regina Drive are being shown. He said the Commission may want to consider directing the applicant to include the previously proposed enhancements. He said the sidewalk which was not previously shown along Burnham is now on the plans. The sidewalk going to the west may be more appropriate as a path.

Jim Haeussler, of Peters Building and applicant, said that the path to the west goes to the condos is more a path to nowhere. He agreed a soft path would be the best to have.

Chairperson Lirones asked if the sidewalks will interconnect with the Kirtland Hills sidewalk.

Mr. Haussler replied absolutely.

Planner Montagno said the path could potentially help the residents access the new park in Kirtland [Hills].

Chairperson Lirones requested that staff do a site inspection of the path.

Commissioner Ward said he felt if the path did not provide a destination or connection, it was not needed.

Commissioner Norton said he agreed with Commissioner Ward.

Planner Montagno suggested regarding the wetland buffer of putting in some type split rail fence and shrubs similarly done in other areas.

Commissioner Ward felt staff could handle this issue.

Mr. Haeussler agreed to provide some type of fencing.

Chairperson Lirones noted that the lots into the wetlands predate the Ordinance.

**Motion by Commissioner Ward, supported by Commissioner Luna, to approve final site plan CSPA 06-13 Burnham Woods Phase II with the condition that the applicant submit five (5) sets of the final site plan for administrative review that address:**

- 1. All outstanding comments in the Zoning Review dated August 29, 2006.**
- 2. All outstanding comments in the Township Planner's review dated August 24, 2006.**
- 3. All outstanding comments in the Township Engineer's dated September 1, 2006.**
- 4. All outstanding comments in the Township Wetland consultant's review dated August 28, 2006.**
- 5. Provide appropriate means for delineation of open space such as plantings and/or fencing. Delineation will be approved by Staff.**
- 6. Provide appropriate wetland buffering on lot #23. Buffering will be approved by Staff.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

## **8.0 New Business**

None.

## **9.0 Planner's Report**

Planning Director Fowler said the Comprehensive Plan amendments are proceeding and that comments have been received from York Township. The Washtenaw County Planning Advisory Board will be considering the amendments on September 25, 2006.

Planning Director Fowler said the Township has hired a code enforcement officer [Ed Swope] who is retired officer from the City of Ypsilanti and Washtenaw County Sheriffs' Department. He said he is also former Planning Commission member for the City of Milan. He said Mr. Swope is working on setting up a web site for residents to file complaints and violations and organizing information.

Planner Montagno said the statewide Michigan Association of Planning conference will be held in Detroit on October 12 and 13, 2006. He said the information would be emailed to the Commissioners.

Chairperson Lirones said the Township would pay the fees if anyone is interested in attending.

#### **10.0 Chairperson's Report**

Chairperson Lirones noted that three (3) members' terms were expiring at the end of September and they could be reappointed.

Chairperson Lirones noted there are DVDs available of the proceedings for Wolverine Commerce trial, if anyone was interested in viewing them. She related briefly some past history of events. She said case has been postponed until November [2006].

#### **11.0 Commissioner's Report**

None.

#### **12.0 Approval of Prior Minutes**

##### **12.1 Minutes of August 17, 2006**

**Motion by Commissioner Ward, supported by Commissioner Luna to approve the revised minutes of August 17, 2006.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

#### **13.0 Adjournment**

**Motion by Commissioner Luna, supported by Commissioner Ward, to adjourn the meeting.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

Chairperson Lirones adjourned the meeting at 9:03 p.m.