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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:** Syed Mohiuddin, Steve Jentzen, Craig Kovarik, Jan Romero, Lucas Romero, Assistant Planner Suzanne McCoy, Senior Planner Paul Montagno, Planning Director Bruce E. Fowler, and Recording Secretary Laura Ford.

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

**MOTION CARRIED**

**4.0 Items from the Floor**

None.

**5.0 Public Hearings**

None.

**6.0 Old Business**

None.

**7.0 New Business**

**7.1 Annual Evaluation of the Comprehensive Plan**

Mr. Steven Jentzen stated that he contacted the Township to determine what steps he needed to take to rezone his property. He was told to submit a request in writing. He said that he would like to amend the Comprehensive Plan for 10.2 acres to be rezoned for one-acre residential uses. He said that the property is between Harwood Farms and other developed parcels.

Chairperson Lirones stated that this is in the Comprehensive Plan for 2 ½-acre lot sizes.

Planner Montagno stated that the future land use plan calls for rural residential at 2 ½ dwelling units per acre. He said that there are lots immediately behind the lot fronting on Green Hills Drive that are not developed. He said that these lots have planned access to Green Hills Drive.

Chairperson Lirones stated that the parcels on Green Hills Drive were originally sold as ten acre parcels with the potential to split them to additional 2 ½ acre lots.

Planner Montagno stated that with a ten-acre parcel you would be allowed four new parcels without going through the plat procedure.

Chairperson Lirones stated that the development pattern has been set on 2 ½-acre lot sizes in this area.

Commissioner Ward stated that if this were a larger parcel then it would be worth considering. He said that ten acres does not seem to represent a transitional zoning.

Chairperson Lirones mentioned that it seems like spot zoning. She said that she was concerned that this area has developed nicely over time on the 2.5-acre lot sizes. She said that she was not sure of the advantage of interjecting the one dwelling unit per acre density in the midst of the 2.5-acre lots.

Mr. Jentzen stated that the property is unique because it is located on Warner Road. He said that there could be access to the parcels through this parcel rather than the residents using the feeder easements to the south. He passed around a conceptual drawing for the property.

Chairperson Lirones stated that she is concerned with impacting the character of the existing neighborhoods. She said that the area is developing consistently. She was concerned about the quality of the soils and did not want this to become a magnet for a package treatment plant.

Mr. Jentzen stated that he was able to see what the soil was. He said that there is sand fifteen (15) feet deep on this property and Harwood Farms. He said that it would perk for the drainage fields. He discussed the possibility of hooking up to the Township water because the line comes to the corner of the property. He said that the parcels could support drain fields.

Chairperson Lirones stated that the current zoning pattern is very well established.

Commissioner Norton agreed with Chairperson Lirones. He said that there is a clear transition at the moment.

Commissioner Ward stated that he felt uncomfortable with changing the land use category for a single parcel. He said that the area is still developing well and it has turned out okay. He said that it is marketable at 2.5 acres per unit. He said that there are few remaining parcels of this size that are marketable in the Township.

Chairperson Lirones stated that this could lead to negative impacts on the existing subdivision.

Commissioner Ward stated that when the Commission had discussions with the developer of Harwood Farms the residents were concerned with buffering for the neighboring properties.

Commissioner Plisko stated that this is a nice size parcel and when it gets broken down, it will keep getting smaller and smaller. He said that he has seen this happen up north and the area is built-up and jam-packed.

Commissioner Constant stated that this is too much of a change.

The Commissioners agreed not to reopen the Comprehensive Plan for this area.

Mr. Jentzen discussed splitting the properties. He said that with the easements they might only be able to get three parcels. He said that he sees this proposal as a transitional use. He said that one house per acre is different from four houses per acre.

Commissioner Dowty asked Mr. Jentzen why he needs seven parcels when he could develop four now.

Mr. Jentzen stated that if they could do four parcels it would be great. He discussed the road easements and the setbacks and stated that they might need a variance.

Chairperson Lirones stated that the Commission is looking for things that will mesh compatibly within the area. She said that Harwood Farms was planned since the 1995 Comprehensive Plan for this use and she is comfortable maintaining it.

Director Fowler stated that there might be an easement through lot 6. He said that they might only be able to get three parcels on the site.

The consensus of the Commission was to not reopen the Comprehensive Plan for this proposal.

Craig Kovarik, Centennial Development Company, stated that they are proposing a senior facility at the corner of Waters Road and Oak Valley Drive.

Commissioner Ward asked if this was the property that was rezoned five years ago to R-2B, medium density six units per acre.

Chairperson Lirones replied yes, and stated that they illegally filled the wetlands.

Commissioner Constant asked what density is being proposed.

Mr. Kovarik stated ten to twelve units. He mentioned that with this density they would not be overburdening the property.

Commissioner Constant asked if this would be a multiple story building.

Mr. Kovarik stated that the building could be two to three stories. He said that they have completed market studies. He discussed the different components of the site including the parking requirements. He added that there would be open space to enhance the utility of the site.

Chairperson Lirones stated that when the rezoning for the corner property was ongoing the Commission heard strong objections from the neighboring residents. She said that they were scared that the property would go to a higher density than theirs. She said that whoever buys the property would have to take into consideration the filled wetland issue.

Planner Montagno stated that the wetland was illegally filled with unstable material. He added that this material would have to be removed and refilled. He said that assisted living would have to fit into one of the three zoning categories.

Mr. Kovarik said that Van Buren Township added a senior living overlay district and identified what densities would be required for that use.

Commissioner Constant asked Mr. Kovarik if he was aware of the wetland issues.

Mr. Kovarik replied yes. He said that there are no remaining R-3 or R-4 zoning districts that are not already used or would accommodate the size there requesting, within the Township.

Commissioner Ward stated that there is always a need for senior housing. He said that this property would be on the public transportation route. He said that he is struggling with the density number. He said that this might be a viable site for the use proposed while maintaining the densities in the Comprehensive Plan. He said that there could be a creative way to achieve the proposed goal and maintain harmony with the area and the Comprehensive Plan.

Chairperson Lirones stated that this area was always contemplated as a higher density area for condominiums. She said that she agrees with the senior housing proposal although a convalescence care facility would become more of a commercial use.

Planner Montagno asked Mr. Kovarik if this proposal would be viable with a lesser density. He mentioned building something unique that would allow for this use at a lower density.

Mr. Kovarik replied yes. He said that they want to determine a density that will make sense when they return with their proposal.

Chairperson Lirones recommended working with the neighboring residents and receiving their input.

Syed Mohiuddin spoke in favor of the project.

The Commissioners and the applicant discussed opening the Comprehensive Plan for the whole corner to look into condominium type density.

The Commissioners agreed to open the Comprehensive Plan to look at this site and shifting the boundary over.

Director Fowler reviewed the planning staff report. He said that it proposes studying the Michigan Avenue corridor from US-23 to Platt Road. He said that this is a key location and a gateway to the Township. He said that the area has the potential to develop as a functional area in the Township.

Planner Montagno said that they are reviewing three sites in their proposal. He said that area 1 includes twelve (12) parcels. He said that area 2 is a used car triangle and residential parcels. He said that area 3 is in front of the Township and is zoned for office. He said that one parcel in area 1 is a property owner occupied home, and the other homes are rentals or office uses. He said that this could be either one development or multiple developments with shared access. He discussed a few areas including the bank site which could become a physical therapy business.

Commissioner Ward stated that this is a great idea and it is desperately needed.

The Commissioners agreed to open the Comprehensive Plan for this area.

Director Fowler reviewed Item 2 of the report. He said that this proposal is for the Sutherland-Wilson Farmstead on Textile Road. He said that this site is designated suburban residential moderate density and they would like to designate it public facilities and public and private recreation/open space.

The Commissioners agreed to open the Comprehensive Plan for this area.

Director Fowler reviewed Item 3 of the report. He said that this proposal is for Ellsworth Road between I-94 and US-23. He mentioned that this area was left off the future land use maps.

The Commissioners agreed to open the Comprehensive Plan for this proposal.

Director Fowler reviewed Item 4 of the report. He said that this proposal is for the reclassification of existing roads. He said that this would be for Platt Road from Ellsworth Road to Bemis Road. He said that these roads should be changed from collector roads to major or minor arterial roads. He mentioned that Carpenter Road from Washtenaw Avenue to Michigan Avenue is classified as a minor arterial road and should be a major arterial road. He stated that State Road from Ellsworth Road to Michigan Avenue should be reclassified from minor arterial to major arterial. He added that Moon Road from Michigan Avenue to Bemis Road should be changed from a collector road to a minor arterial road.

The Commissioners agreed to open the Comprehensive Plan for this proposal.

Director Fowler reviewed Item 5 of the report. He said that this is for the adoption of the State Road corridor study.

The Commissioners agreed to amend the Comprehensive Plan to include the State Road corridor study.

Planner Fowler reviewed Item 6 from the report. He said that there are various text amendments needed in the Comprehensive Plan.

The Commissioners agreed to open the Comprehensive Plan for these amendments.

Director Fowler discussed the timeline for the amendments to be completed.

Planner McCoy reviewed her report regarding rezonings. She said that there are various areas with isolated parcels that are not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. She said that staff and the Commission should look at rezoning these areas to allow for uses that are more viable. She mentioned a rezoning request for parcels north of Morgan Road for residential development. She added that these parcels are currently zoned industrial (I-1) and one parcel is zoned agricultural (AG). She said that this area should be brought into compliance with the surrounding area. She said that staff would be identifying the potential areas to bring into compliance.

Commissioner Ward asked if staff would consider downzoning where appropriate. He discussed the zoning of his property.

Planner McCoy stated that staff could look at these areas. She said that they have to take the setbacks into consideration.

## **8.0 Planner's Report**

Director Fowler stated that the Comprehensive Plan amendments from last year are being sent in for review by the county and other townships.

## **9.0 Chairperson's Report**

Chairperson Lirones announced the reappointment of Maria Constant, Stuart Dowty and herself to the Planning Commission.

## **10.0 Commissioner's Report**

Commissioner Constant stated that she is opposed to the proposed senior facility. She discussed the area around her property.

## **11.0 Approval of Prior Minutes**

### **11.1 Minutes of September 7, 2006**

**Motion by Commissioner Ward, supported by Commissioner Norton, to approve the minutes, as corrected.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

## **12.0 Adjournment**

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

**MOTION CARRIED**

Chairperson Lirones adjourned the meeting at 9:33 p.m.