Peninsula Township
Planning Commission
Zoning Rewrite Process Committee Meeting
October 3, 2016
9:30 a.m.

Meeting called to order at 9:30 a.m.

Present: Chair Monnie Peters, Donna Hornberger, Isaiah Wunsch, Penny Rosi, Laura, Serocki

Also Present: Gordon Hayward, Director of Planning and Zoning; Claire Herman, Planning & Zoning Coordinator
Rob Manigold, Township Supervisor; Joanne Westphal, Township Clerk; as well as approximately 20+ township residents

Approve Agenda
MOTION: Wunsch/Serocki to approve agenda. **MOTION PASSED**

Brief Citizen Comments - for items not on the agenda
Nancy Heller recommended that Claire Herman also attend the meeting and Rob Manigold went to get her. Chuck Goodman asked if this is truly a round table discussion and was told that it is.

Conflict of Interest
None

Consent Agenda
None

Zoning Ordinance Rewrite Process:
Wunsch reported that he, Gordon Hayward and Monnie Peters had met and decided that they would recommend to the full Planning Commission that McKenna do the rewrite so that the things that are easy are done and flag other areas that are controversial for later consideration. The rewritten zoning ordinance could then be sent on to the Township Board. Later the controversial items could be addressed separately. The ordinance that will be worked on will have a good backbone and will be brought into statutory compliance. Later the ordinance can be revisited and can be made to match up with the Master Plan.
Rosi said that the ZBA must be made clear about this direction.
Nancy Heller asked if it would be discussed at the next regular Planning Commission meeting. and Wunsch said yes.
When asked, Wunsch said that overlay districts may have to be delayed.
Gordon Hayward siad McKenna will present a second draft (one copy with annotated changes and one copy that is only the revised wording). A third draft will likely be needed. Both the public and the Planning Commission can see it.

Round Table Discussion

See attached Master Plan Goals and Actions Spreadsheet.

Then the group went through the spreadsheet and discussed items.

The original Master Plan had maps that were inaccurate. The current Master Plan does not have maps showing wetlands and steep slopes. Claire Herman said she can find suitable maps to identify wetlands; however it would be more difficult to create maps showing steep slopes. It was mentioned that we do not want to duplicate what other governmental agencies are doing. What are federal and state requirements? We have asked McKenna to look at this and find out where we fall. The consensus was that more mapping would be good and that Claire would be able to do some of it. Creating minimum setbacks and vegetative buffers require such maps. Different agencies have different maps because of their different standards. We need to decide what our own standards are in defining wetlands. It seems to be a staff task to find or create maps. We need to set appropriate setbacks. A zoning re-write can be used to develop requirements for vegetative buffers. Without a map we are stuck.

Perhaps staff is already overly busy and we need to look for qualified volunteer or intern help. We seem to be able to decide what needs to be done but we stall on implementation.

State and federal regulations vary. Do we need tighter regulations or are we not concerned about that?

The logical next step is to pull existing maps together. USDA soil conservation maps are determined by types of soil. USDA maps are tied to slope too. We are looking for accuracy.

Claire said she can work to find maps but it will take time. Monnie said we need a priority list. Isaiah said we want to get a work plan in place. Claire thinks that getting wetland maps by December is possible.

In terms of slopes, McKenna has said that we need to look at each property and that is too difficult to do.

Claire said that GT County did a fly over, and she is going to download that information showing one-foot gradients maybe today.

In terms of shoreline overlay, we need to identify areas and create overlay maps. Then we can see where we are.

A comment about DEQ was made and that it often is not much help at all. We can make stronger regulations. We need to establish our own regulations.

We need to establish land management practices to protect these areas. We also need a "Cliff's Notes" for people who are purchasing property or who want to develop. This would minimize conflict. There is a gap between zoning and what people expect. The goal of the new zoning ordinance is to get something that is readable by the general public. Let's make it easy for people to understand. Perhaps 3 or 4 people could write an unofficial guide in 3 or 4 months. This could eliminate a lot of conflicts.

Some discussion of enforcement of rules. Do we or do we not have enough personnel for enforcement.

A township newsletter would be good to educate people Also a packet of information to give to people applying for a permit would be good.

A comment was made that additional regulations usually costs money. Rules should be moderate and simple.

Shoreline Overlay

A postcard was sent to all shoreline property owners at one time and the meeting was packed. The sense that the speaker had was that most people wanted more stringent regulations, perhaps a 200' buffer.

The Planning Commission had a robust discussion of the proposed changes to the zoning ordinance and we are waiting for a second draft.

In regard to storm drains, Claire said that she does not know that anyone has that information, at least in a digital format. Someone mentioned that perhaps the GT Road Commission has storm drain information.

It was noted that a lot of what we are discussing depends on McKenna's second draft.

Historic Overlay

We are not interested in state or federally designated historic districts in terms of the zoning ordinance or the Master Plan. We have homes that were built long before zoning regulations went into effect. Perhaps we should call this a Neighborhood Overlay. This would identify different density and setbacks. The 4 areas that we know of are Leffingwell, Neahtawanta, Illini, and the area of Old Mission. The problem is zoning, not preservation. With a Neighborhood Overlay zoning rules would only be put in effect if residents of the Neighborhood wanted them. The re-write would deal with zoning issues and how to deal with some of these action items.

We don't think that we have ever promoted Centennial Farms. The last map of Centennial Farms was done by Michigan State in 2010.

Whatever decisions we make will not affect tax structure.

The 4 areas mentioned are so unique that we want to clarify the issues if they ever come before the ZBA. We are not there yet. Perhaps the creation of homeowners associations would help. We must be very careful not to restrict property rights.

There probably was some work done on this when Dan Leonard was the Planner and that information can be looked at. These areas were developed before people drove cars there. The issue is current zoning. Many houses in these neighborhoods have issues with setbacks and with roads.

Question: Who is going to do the work on this?

Some progress has been made with specific historic structures.

Agricultural Production and Land Use

Skip for the time being, have a meeting focused on Ag

Public and Semi-Public Land Use Goals on page 3 of chart

A 5-year capital improvement plan is required by the state. We need to do this. Blair Township's capital improvement plan was cited.

Center Road is carrying more traffic than it was ever intended to have. People are speeding.Is it inadequate? A meeting between township officials and MDOT is set up for this Thursday. We need to look at how to better count and handle traffic.

Gordon Hayward said that PDR was created to reduce density and preserve farm land.

A land use plan should be used as a bible on where to go.

The township does not control roads but it does control demand. We cannot ignore tourism and we need to encourage it. But we have to be aware of infrastructure and we need a long-term plan to improve traffic flow in Center Road. We need to understand and determine what we want to do.

Penny Rosi said that the township board felt that the sense of the community is that we do not want stoplights on the peninsula. The last survey of township residents was 2006.

Nancy Heller said that farmers need to be heard and questioned whether haulers have noticed increasing problems with traffic. The larger land owners do not want opportunities taken away because of problems on Center Road. You need to keep the rights of property owners in mind.

Final Comments

Monnie Peters said there will be future meetings; perhaps 1 or 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

Gordon Hayward sid McKenna is working on the changes to the zoning ordinance and will have draft 2 ready for the regular Planning Commission meeting in October.

It was agreed that we need to institute a public information program, a newsletter. A survey needs to be done.

Discussion of documents to collect, specifically those kept by Dan Leonard, former Planner.

We think we need to spend a lot more time on getting information out to the public.

Controversial items may require time, amendment of the Master Plan and the ordinance.

A discussion of where we are with the re-write of the ordinance. Parts of three sections have not been discussed.

Motion to adjourn at 11:45 a.m.: Hornberger/Serocki. **MOTION PASSED**

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Hornberger, Secretary
Planning Commission