

NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP

Township Board Workshop

Minutes

July 28, 2015

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE

The workshop was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Supervisor Engstrom at 8350 Main Street.

Supervisor Engstrom led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Marilyn Engstrom, Supervisor	Present
Kathy Braun, Treasurer	Present
Angela Westover, Clerk	Present
Janet Chick, Trustee	Present
Wayne Dockett, Trustee	Present
Jacki Otto, Trustee	Present
Tracy Thomas, Trustee	Present

Also present:

Township Manager Howard Fink
Public Safety Director William Wagner
Police Lt. Tim Greene
Township Attorney Paul Burns
Township Engineer Brian Rubel
Zoning Administrator Kurt Weiland
Members of the community

FIRST CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Community Survey. Glen Mulcrone, 366 Glenmoor Drive, critiqued and made suggestions for the improvement of the draft community survey. Craig Warburton, 560 W. Joy Road, and Mike Cicchella, 7789 Sutton Road, were critical of the questions in the survey and said it is unnecessary and being done only in response to the Biltmore Development proposal. David Gordon, 5558 Hellner Road, said members of the community should be involved in developing the survey, and more information should be made available to the public about the survey and the Biltmore proposal. Lenore Zelenock, 1440 Six Mile Road, said she is concerned about changing the Master Plan at the request of a developer, and expressed concerns sewer issues and costs.

Mary Devlin, 9211 Brookside, said without development the township will be doomed and urged people to work together for progress.

ADOPT AGENDA

Engstrom asked that discussion of waiving fees for the Northfield Township library.

- **Motion:** Engstrom moved, Chick supported, that the agenda be adopted as amended.
Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Taxes. Dockett said most of the taxes mentioned by Mr. Cicchella were approved by voters, so to lower taxes voters should reject future tax proposals.

CORRESPONDENCE & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Township Manager Fink:

- informed the Board of the need for a future budget adjustment,
- reported that the Civic Event Permit for the Elevate Concert Series does not need to be acted on,
- noted that the Board may want to provide input to County Commissioners about the 10 year road improvement millage they are considering.

VOTING ITEMS

1.

Front Desk Clerk Offer: Lisa Bradford

- **Motion:** Engstrom moved, Otto supported, to approve Lisa Bradford for the part-time front desk clerk position at the rate of \$15/hour.
Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.

2.

Civic Event Permit for Old St. Patrick's Labor Day Weekend Festival

- **Motion:** Chick moved, Braun supported, to approve a Civic Event application for the Old St. Patrick's Labor Day Weekend Festival to run from September 5th through September 6th contingent upon approval from the State and proof of liability insurance regarding serving of alcohol.
Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.

3.

Civic Event Permit for Elevate Concert Series

Removed from the agenda.

4.

People's Express Contract

Fink noted that People's Express was not financially able to increase their insurance coverage from \$3 million to \$5 million as recommended by the Township's insurance agent. Lenore Zelenock, People's Express Board member, said similar services have \$1 million in coverage.

- **Motion:** Otto moved, Thomas supported, that the Township move forward with awarding People's Express \$10,000 for transportation services in Northfield Township.

Dockett requested a roll call vote.

Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.

5.

**Ordinance 15-43:
Sewer Billing Due Date Amendment**

Fink noted this will expand the amount of time for payment of utility bills from 15 to 30 days.

- **Motion:** Chick moved, Engstrom supported, that an Ordinance of Northfield Township amending chapter 32, Utilities, of the Northfield Township Municipal Code, to amend the due date for utility billing. **Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.**

6.

**Resolution 15-528 Dedication of
Whitmore Lake Road
Sewer Assessment District Easements**

Paul Burns explained that the Township is still trying to get an additional three or four easements for this project.

- **Motion:** Engstrom moved, Chick supported, to approve Resolution 15-528 for the dedication of easements for the Whitmore Lake Road Sewer Assessment District. **Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote**

7.

**Resolution 15-529:
Investment Policy Amendment**

- **Motion:** Engstrom moved, Chick supported, that Resolution 15-529, Investment Policy Amendment, be approved.

In answer to a question from Dockett, Braun explained that the purpose of this amendment is to add the Bank of Michigan to the list of financial institutions the Township uses for deposits.

Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.

8.

Planning Consultant

Chick reported that the Planning Commission recommended hiring either McKenna or Beckett & Raeder as the Township's planning consultants.

- **Motion:** Engstrom moved, Braun supported, to approve Beckett & Raeder as the preferred Township planning firm subject to negotiation of contract terms and legal review of the contract. **Motion carried 5—2 on a roll call vote, Westfall and Dockett opposed.**

9.

Waiving of Library Fees

Not discussed. It was agreed to add this to the next agenda for the Board to act on.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1.

Van Curler Property

The Board discussed the pros and cons of possibility of the Township purchasing this property which is listed for sale for \$3.3 million. Fink recommended that the Board do a development of the property to see what its potential is, although he agreed with comments that Township purchase of the property would be extremely risky.

2.

Code Enforcement Priorities

Fink asked the Board to set code enforcement priorities, especially concerning sales of cars and boats on front lawns, commercial sign violations, and outdoor storage of materials. He said he would like to do a survey to develop an inventory of all code violations in commercial districts.

The Board discussed what constitutes blight, possibly amending ordinances to set limits on some activities, and whether the Township should be pro-active regarding enforcement. Zoning Administrator Kurt Weiland agreed the ordinance could be more "user friendly" so that front yard car sales are allowed on a limited basis. The Board agreed he should draft an ordinance to that effect.

Chick said the sign ordinance was revised to be more flexible a couple years ago and it is a good ordinance. Weiland agreed, and said after an inventory of commercial signs is done he can prepare a presentation to the Board showing how violations compare to the current regulations.

Fink said the Planning Commission needs to develop an Overlay district for Whitmore Lake and Horseshoe Lake because the current regulations to not allow a house to be built in those areas without variances. He added that administrative approvals for RTM properties should also be considered.

8.

Cobalt Survey

The Board made comments about the draft community survey prepared by Cobalt Community Research:

- A lot of revision is needed.
- Comments made during the First Call to the Public were on target.
- How strongly people feel about issues needs to be measured.
- Question 11 regarding the proposed Biltmore development should be eliminated.
- It should be shorter.
- Questions should not be tied to the Master Plan, rather it should be used to determine what community members want.
- The questions do not meet the stated objectives.
- The questions are too leading.
- Some questions would lead to answers being contradictory.
- Asking about what people's positions on issues will not lead to anything usable.

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- If the next draft is not much better the Board would question whether to continue working with Cobalt.

Fink said he asked a Cobalt representative to be at this meeting, and they responded that that is not in the budget for the project. He said the Township would owe them money if the Board decided to stop working with them at this point. He added that development of this survey is a very nuanced, difficult matter.

It was agreed the Planning Commission should review this and work on revisions with Cobalt if the Commission decides to continue working with Cobalt.

3.

Ordinance 15-44: Sewer Usage Appeals Process

Fink referred to the draft ordinance he had prepared and explained that it covers a number of different types of appeals. Board member comments included:

- It is appropriate for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent and Township Manager to jointly grant appeals in certain cases.
- The ordinance should address situations what should be done in which a building is damaged and unusable, not occupied, etc.

4.

Salvage Vehicle Inspections

Wagner referred to the report from Lt. Greene, and Greene answered questions from Dockett. Dockett said he did a lot of research about this and he does not think this would financially benefit the Township. Greene said after the time needed to set up the program, it will not require a lot more time on the Township's part. Engstrom noted that when this program was previously in operation the Police Department took in about \$45,000 over 18 months.

Greene noted the agreement is being reviewed by the Township attorney. Wagner said he will have answers to Dockett's written questions at the next meeting.

5.

Downtown Planning Group

Barbara Griffith, Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Chair, explained that Fink suggested the idea of forming a

downtown planning group made up of dedicated people to work with Fink to look at the feasibility of creating a nice downtown. She said this has been talked about for many years, but little has happened. She noted this may eventually become a DDA project, but now they are charged only with managing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds.

Fink said action needs to be put behind a vision, and this group would create a downtown master plan, much as was done by the Parks & Recreation Committee, developing ideas, projects, strategies, and interventions. He said everyone—the Board, Planning Commission, Parks & Recreation Committee—would eventually all be asked endorse the plan that is developed.

Fink said he will work with Griffith to prepare action items for the group that the Board will approve, and after that the group would work autonomously for 6-12 months preparing a plan.

6.

Boardroom Construction

Not discussed.

7.

DDA Appointments

Engstrom reported that two people have expressed interest in the two open four-year terms, and anyone else who is interested should contact the Township within the next two weeks.

SECOND CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Lenore Zelenock commented on the Cobalt survey and DDA appointments. David Gordon recommended that the 1996 community survey be used again.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

The Board briefly discussed how to improve acoustics in the meeting room.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:52 P.M.

Submitted by Lisa Lemble.

Corrections to the originally issued minutes are indicated as follows:

Wording removed is ~~stricken through~~;
Wording added is underlined.

Approved by the Township Board on August 25, 2015.

Angela Westover, Clerk

Official minutes of all meetings are available on the Township's website at http://www.twp-northfield.org/government/township_board_of_trustees/