

**WATERVLIET CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
JANUARY 2, 2018**

Present: Joseph Stepich, Colleen Curtis, Glen Gianetti, Kevin Schuhknecht

Also Present: Eugene Jarvis, Diana Householder, Dan Hutchins

Chairman Schuhknecht called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

Roll Call was taken.

The minutes of the December 5, 2017 meeting were read. J. Stepich made a motion to approve the minutes as read. C. Curtis seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

The Commissioners were presented an application for a Special Land Use Permit requesting an off-site sign in the C-Commercial District at 7250 Red Arrow Hwy. K. Schuhknecht made a motion to set the required public hearing date for February 6, 2018, the next regular meeting, at 2:00 p.m. G. Gianetti seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

The matter, that was discussed at last month's meeting, regarding kennels or animal grooming or boarding facilities was again discussed. J. Stepich issued copies of two sample ordinances addressing the subject. It was decided to take up the topic at the February meeting so as to give all commissioners a chance to review the material.

**Master Plan Update**

E. Jarvis presented the commissioners with comprehensive real property reports from 2012 through 2017 that showed the taxable value of all development in the Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial and Residential districts as well as values in utilities and personal property located in the township.

Jarvis, addressing the commission's goal of increasing property values in targeted districts, stated that the only real way of increasing taxable value is new construction or a change of property ownership between unrelated individuals. In an illustration of his point, he stated that the Casey's General Store, currently under construction, and the proposed Culver's "will have big impacts" on taxable values in the Township. J. Stepich told Jarvis that the Planning Commission had discussed establishing goals for increasing the tax base in certain districts, however, he added, "we were at a loss of how to proceed," and, as such, decided to postpone the pursuit of this goal. He continued that with this information he felt the commission had the proper information to readdress the issue and

proceed with the establishment of the goal.

Jarvis told the Commission that the Township may, using averages from the past 5 years, anticipate an annual increase in taxable value in the residential areas of about 20%, but also stated that they should not look for those increases in either the commercial or industrial districts as those zones have not demonstrated the development or the ownership turnover that would significantly increase taxable value.

Turning their attention to the goal of developing a park and recreation plan, J. Stepich told the Commissioners that the Township had developed a comprehensive parks plan in the recent past and added that, with a plan in place, what the commission needs to do now is effect action steps necessary to achieve the goals in the existing plan or maintain the goal of developing a large scale diverse parks and recreation plan using elements from the existing plan in it. K. Schuhknecht said; "Are we reinventing the wheel or is this - pointing to the existing plan - the wheel?" J. Stepich reiterated that both plans, existing and proposed, are viable and the existing plan can be utilized as a guide. Stepich, referencing the Meridian Township Master Plan, pointed out that it includes established policies and action plans for the preservation of open space and resource lands and that those policies should be reviewed and, in furtherance of that goal, should the Planning Commission concern itself with the procurement of lands to provide more parks. It was suggested that because the Township owned land that could be available for park and recreational use that exists both east and west of the City limits, should the Commission be discussing this matter with them in an effort to coordinate a linear park system that begins at the airport and traverses the city to the west. Stepich continued by stating that what he visualizes is a wide spread park system that would not only traverse city land, but would extend into adjoining townships, much for example, as the Kal-Haven Trail network does.

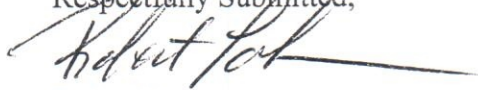
K. Schuhknecht turned to the topic of existing parks in the township. He said that if the township is going to utilize the existing parks and make them available for public use, perhaps the Commission should consider increasing or establishing elements of parking and accessibility. Stepich stated that signage should also be included in that list, pointing to the recent request for the Township to sell Pomono Park. He said that there was considerable opposition to the park being sold, noting that one of the primary reasons for the park's lack of use was for the fact that "they didn't know it was there."

In summation of the discussion, J. Stepich put forth the goal of "Creating a diverse park and recreation system based on the current parks plan.

With no further business to come before the Commission, C. Curtis made a motion to adjourn. K. Schuhknecht seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Robert Lohr  
Zoning Administrator