

ACME TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
ACME TOWNSHIP HALL
6042 Acme Road, Williamsburg MI 49690
7:00 – 10:00 p.m. Monday, October 11, 2004

Meeting called to Order at 7:00 p.m.

Members present: H. Smith (Chair), D. Hoxsie, P. Salathiel, O. Sherberneau
Members excused: B. Carstens, D. Krause, M. Vermetten
Staff Present: S. Corpe, Office & Planning Coordinator
J. Hull, Zoning Administrator

1. Consent Calendar

Motion by Sherberneau, support by Hoxsie to approve the Consent Calendar as presented, including:

Action:

- a) **Review and approve agenda, inquiry as to conflicts of interest.**

Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Hoxsie, support by Sherberneau to recess the regular meeting and convene as a Committee of the Whole at 7:06 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Study Session Items:

a) **Master Plan Review**

1) **Look at new demographic update information provided by John Hull:**

Hull started with a discussion of what isn't included in his updates. In the 1990 data, he has found information for which he has been unable to find any source reference. He has extensive contacts in this regard which have come up empty-handed. In particular, he does not know how the data regarding daytime employment in Acme Township were developed. Hoxsie asked if Hull has had any contact with Don Hamilton; Hull stated that he has been unable to find any contact information for him. Salathiel believes she may have an old phone number for him. Hoxsie believes that the major business owners in the township were surveyed by staff to determine information about their workforces. He is certain that a system was in place. Hull thinks that some daytime employment statistics may be available through County Planning, but that doing so would require signing off on some pretty stiff confidentiality agreements. He is very willing to continue efforts to obtain a valid updated sample.

Also not included are the numbers of building permits issued and their dollar values. He does not believe this information is particularly informative, as the numbers in the Master Plan are not broken down in terms of new construction and remodeling; nor are they adjusted for inflation on an annual basis. He is still looking into options for making this data more meaningful, perhaps by looking into the changes in character of development over time (bigger houses than previously, perhaps.) Hoxsie asked if the figures could still be included but footnoted; Hull feels this would be unacceptably inaccurate. It would still be possible to list the numbers of permits issued every year and have this be meaningful, but not the dollar costs of the improvements.

Wayne Kladder asked what Hull is trying to demonstrate. Hull responded that he was asked to update the statistics in the existing Master Plan, and is trying to do so in a more truly meaningful way. Mr. Kladder asked the purpose of knowing, for instance, the change in square footage of development in the township. Does this assist the Board with its annual budget? What does it do? Hull stated that he isn't sure of all the ways the data may become useful over time; he is just trying to ensure that the data is accurate so that as it is found to be useful in various applications, it will truly have meaning. Good decisions are based on good information, so he is trying to create the fullest picture possible. Smith feels this will have a significant bearing on development of a future land use map, truly telling us where we have been and where we are heading.

The number of people per square mile has risen from about 137 to 172. About 20% of the people in Acme were born out-of-state. Half of the people living here lived somewhere else five years ago, but this is down slightly from 10 years ago. Population appears to be growing faster than the number of households, but at this time this is a fact without a known reason.

From here, Hull created graphs demonstrating where Acme stands as opposed to the County, state and nation. He felt that placing the township within the bigger context of the world around it would be more meaningful than just comparing statistics for the township itself for different time periods.

The median age of township residents is 40.7 years, which is higher than for the county, state or nation. The township is still predominantly white, and a higher percentage of residents than is average in other places have advanced degrees. Median income is high relative to the other units, having very few families earning under \$14,999 per year and higher-than average numbers of families earning over \$35,000. The poverty rate for households headed by females in Acme, particularly with children under the age of 5, is higher than average. There are more single mothers heading families in Acme than there are non-white residents from all races combined. By contrast, the number of single mothers below poverty level for the County is significantly lower than average.

Mr. Kladder asked how migrant workers are treated in the section regarding the occupations of residents who work. Hull received these numbers from the Census and isn't sure how the numbers are derived. The graph displayed deals with residents only and doesn't discuss migrants at all. Frank Zarafonitis asked how long migrants are here during the year; Hoxsie said that they are here up to 6 months per year, with some eventually settling permanently. Mr. Zarafonitis also asked how migrant workers in non-farm industries are addressed (such as the housekeepers from Jamaica who work at the Resort during the summertime). Hull will try to find some answers.

Acme residents commute to work in patterns similar to the county, state and nation. Hull also received some information from the NW MI Council of Governments about where Acme residents work, and where Acme workers live. On graphs handed out in a separate packet, detail is displayed regarding the flow of people into and out of the community every workday. Hull finds

this information particularly relevant in terms of the concept of a “sustainable community.” This data seems to indicate that Acme has a long way to go if it wants to be self-contained.

About 15% of the population aged 21-64 is disabled, and 70% of those people are employed. Slightly over a third of individuals over age 65 are disabled.

A third of the houses in Acme Township were built during the last decade. Nearly 60% were built in the last 20 years. 80% of housing is owner-occupied. Half of the houses cost more than \$148,900, a 30% increase (adjusted for inflation) over the past decade. Hoxsie recommended that Hull place a calculation methodology page in the Master Plan so that similar adjustments can be made the next time the plan is updated. Rental costs have risen 28% in the past decade. Only 8% of the 81% of people who commute use carpools, and even fewer use public transportation.

New housing construction has been stronger in Acme than in the county, state and nation since 1970. Our owner-occupied housing has a generally higher value than similar housing in the other units. Acme has only 3% of it's housing valued at under \$100,000, compared to about 26% on the County level and close to 50% on the national level. This may be due to the fact that we have a higher percentage of older retired individuals in our population mix.

Monthly home ownership costs are similar in Acme to those in other units. In Acme, a higher-than-average number of people spend 35% or more of their income on monthly rent.

Hull received population forecasts from a study performed by the Chamber of Commerce in 2003. There is less historical data for the township than for the other units, and Acme's population has been more volatile than those units as well. Acme has grown consistently, but the rate of growth has been quite variable. Hull was surprised by Chamber estimates for population growth through 2010 that were significantly lower than he expected.

Real gross regional product and real income in the region are expected to grow steadily through 2010. GRP and personal income are expected to outstrip inflation as well, resulting in a population that is better off financially. The number of people commuting in and out of the region is expected to remain similar to today in absolute terms. Sherberneau asked if this means that the amount of traffic on M-72 is expected to remain fairly constant; Hull replied that at this time we don't know how much of the existing traffic is related to employment and how much to other reasons, and made a note to look into this question further. M-72 is a feeder road into the region and perhaps through to Leelanau County from points east. Smith observed that as Garfield Township and other areas east of us grow, we could see an increase in traffic through Acme Township as a result. Everyone expressed continuing amazement at how low the population growth expectations are; Hull will ask the Chamber of Commerce how the developed their numbers.

The final graph shows the major industry sectors and how total employment

is expected to change through 2010. All of the lines appear to be fairly flat and to remain evenly spaced. This means that it is projected that the mix of employment across industries is expected to remain relatively unchanged for the balance of the decade. No one industry is expected to generate a significantly higher or lower percentage of total jobs during the near future.

Finally, Hull attempted to come up with a verbal summary for the data that did not impose a bias over the data. He couldn't resist the urge to make one pointed comment about the statistic related to female-headed households at the poverty level. He notes that housing costs in real terms rose about 30% while income remained fairly static. This statistic may be more related to the influx of retirees than to a failure to provide employment or housing.

The Commission was impressed by the data Hull had provided, feeling that it should prove very useful to future decision-making. They encouraged the addition of more footnotes to describe the process used to arrive at the data so that the process can be replicated in the future. Hull believes it important to provide the best possible data to support future decision making, without actually seeking to steer the reader towards any particular conclusion.

Mr. Zarafonitis asked if anyone has studied how fast Acme Township will reach its projected buildout of about 14,500. Nobody is certain, although Corpe noted that she believes this figure represents the number of potential new households under current zoning, not number of residents which could be far greater. Another variable introduced into the equation is the fact that if housing is clustered a density bonus can be obtained. Since there is no way of knowing how many landowners might take advantage of this option or how many additional housing units could be created, a prediction of build-out population becomes more difficult.

Smith suggested talking to Jim Wiesing at MSU Extension as another way of finding Don Hamilton.

Motion by Hoxsie, support by Sherberneau to adjourn the Committee of the Whole and reconvene the regular meeting at 8:18 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Any other business that may come before the Commission:

- a) **M-72 Corridor Ordinance:** Smith noted that the Board of Trustees has returned the proposed ordinance to the Planning Commission for further study. He feels that there was a lot of general confusion about the ordinance and how overlay districts are designed to operate. He also recalls that about 2 years ago a public meeting was held to invite participation. Smith suggests that a similar meeting be put together again. He would also like to invite Rise Rasch from MDOT so she can discuss the M-72 corridor from a transportation management perspective. The meeting would not be a public hearing but would be a public forum, and perhaps based on the input some amendments will be made to the proposed ordinance. November 18.
- b) **Winery Ordinance:** Smith reported that the subcommittee met and has discussed some potential changes to the Winery Ordinance. The amendments will require a full ordinance amendment process. A preliminary hearing will be held on October 25. An additional subcommittee meeting will be held.
- c) **Dark Sky Ordinance:** Salathiel spoke with Jerry Dobek, who worked with

Whitewater and Garfield townships on their dark sky ordinances. A meeting has been set for Monday, October 18 at 10:00 a.m. Sherberneau asked that we get copies of the other ordinances in advance to review.

Meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.