



**ACME TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION  
ACME TOWNSHIP HALL  
6042 Acme Road, Williamsburg MI 49690  
7:00 p.m. Monday, April 18, 2005**

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

**Members present:** O. Sherberneau (Chair), B. Carstens, C. David, R. Hardin, D. Krause, D. Morgan, E. Takayama, M. Vermetten

**Members excused:** J. Pulcipher

**Staff present:** S. Corpe, Office & Planning Coordinator  
J. Hull, Zoning Administrator

**1. Consent Calendar:**

**Motion by Takayama, support by David to approve the Consent Calendar as presented, including:**

**Receive and File:**

a) Minutes of the **April 5, 2005** Board of Trustees Meeting

**Action:**

b) Approve **March 28, 2005** meeting minutes: David asked what disposition had been made regarding the Acme Township Sexually Oriented Business ordinance distributed as part of the Consent Calendar at the last meeting. Corpe stated that she provided the Ordinance for the Committee's benefit in case they didn't know that this ordinance, separate from the Zoning Ordinance, exists. There has been recent public discussion about a new nude dance club south of town. Takayama has requested that Bzdok review the ordinance to ensure it is in step with current legislation; Corpe will bring it to his attention. Carstens noted a typographical error at the top of page 7; a stray word "there."

c) Review and approve agenda, inquiry as to conflicts of interest

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**2. Correspondence:**

Corpe provided a reminder that the first of the sessions regarding joint planning sponsored by the NW MI Counsel of Governments is occurring on Wednesday night at 7:00 p.m. She also provided information about the New Designs for Growth breakfast on Thursday April 28. It seems that the presentation may include a case study of The Village at Grand Traverse as it relates to New Urbanist design.

**3. Limited Public Comment:**

Nels Veliquette stated that he would like to echo Corpe's comments relative to the Master Plan stating that creation of a Future Land Use Map is critical to the township. It may be especially relevant to the work the Farmland & Open Space Preservation group is doing to purchase development rights and seek grants to match millage dollars for this purpose. Mr. Veliquette also put in a "plug" for one of his key concerns – the 5 acre minimum lot size requirement for land in the agricultural district is too large in his opinion and encourages the breaking up of agricultural land into lots too big for the property owners to properly manage.

**4. Study Topics:**

a) **Review proposed amendments to date to Master Plan:** Krause asked that discussion turn first to creation of a future land use map as has been discussed. Sherberneau

noted his hope that John Iacoangeli from Beckett & Raeder (reviewing the applications by Meijer's and The Village at Grand Traverse for the township) will do the work, and he noted that the work will have to wait until at least July when the new fiscal year begins. Vermetten asked how long this project might take, and Carstens asked if the Commission needs to request that the Board proceed with this activity.

**Motion by Carstens, support by Krause to request that the Board of Trustees provide funding for consulting assistance in creating a future land use map as soon as possible.**

Vermetten believes it might be wise to wait to send the Master Plan out into the world for review by neighboring townships and local agencies until the Future Land Use Map can be created. Carstens agrees. Hardin asked if Beckett & Raeder is the official township planning consultant at this point; Corpe believes that the scope of their work right now is with the Meijer and Village applications, but that the Board will be open to working with them on other projects. Takayama noted that the interview committee did ask all applicants about their ability and willingness to work on other planning projects. He feels that waiting until the new fiscal year is too long and that the Commission ought to urge the Board to proceed now and should begin organizing and preparing now. The project may be lengthier than it is in some locales because there is a lot of disagreement over the future of development in the township, and waiting 3 months to get started will only make things worse. Vermetten concurred that work should start sooner.

Corpe answered Vermetten's earlier question about whether the Master Plan review should proceed to completion prior to inclusion of the Future Land Use Map. There are two options. If the Master Plan is completed now, addition of the future land use map later would require the full Master Plan amendment process to occur again, including the necessary 3-month waiting input periods. If completion of the Master Plan amendment process is delayed to include the creation of the future land use map (Jim Lively from the Michigan Land Use Institute estimated that it might take three months or so to hold public visioning sessions and come up with the map) then the final steps of the approval process could occur all at once.

Hull was at a meeting with Beckett & Raeder recently when they offered the opinion to him that without a future land use map the Master Plan is worthless. From his personal perspective, it should be fairly easy to come up with the map based on the text of the document. Hull also stated a hope that the township will choose a consulting services provider carefully. He found the Visual Preference Survey used during creation of the current version of the Master Plan to be unscientific and worthless. Sherberneau confirmed with Hull that Mr. Iacoangeli seems willing to assist the township in this regard.

Sherberneau had the motion read back. Vermetten suggested that "as soon as possible" is too vague.

**Motion amended by Carstens, support by Krause to amend the motion to request that the Board of Trustees allocate funding for consulting assistance in creating a future land use map at their May 10, 2005 meeting and to request staff to seek an estimate/proposal for services from Beckett & Raeder to provide firm cost data for the Board's deliberations. Motion carried unanimously.**

Krause noted that last year the document was discussed in sections on a page-by-page basis. It took months, and he would not wish to repeat that experience. He

recommended that the group focus on the areas of change rather than moving page by page. David suggested that the points in Corpe's memo be discussed as a starting point. Carstens noted the final paragraph in the memo and the discussion of the level of mistrust between various factions and individuals in the community. The memo suggested that a third party assist the township in reviewing and revising the Town Center Report portion of the plan, and he believes this would be a good idea. He does not believe it would be worthwhile to tackle this section of the document this evening.

Morgan supported the idea of touching on the revised areas of the document, looking at smaller items and deferring larger items to another day. Takayama also noted Corpe's memo's discussion regarding the Town Center Report and stated that he thinks this is the second-most important portion of the document, the first being the future land use map. In fact, he believes both items are closely related and that it would be well to ask Beckett & Raeder to address both concurrently through the proposed visioning sessions.

Krause feels that there are a lot of things going on right now with regard to the Town Center Report: a complex lawsuit, a proposal for a Meijer store on a property where we don't want it to be as examples. If the judge rules that the Village will proceed as currently approved, the Town Center Report (TCR) will be largely a moot point. Perhaps it would be better to wait and see what the court does. Vermetten stated that part of the reason the township is in court is the level of ambiguity in the TCR. It may be a pie-in-the-sky portion of the document. He also agrees that it would be beneficial to wait until after the expected court hearing on June 6 that may decide the lawsuit. Takayama feels it would be beneficial to have revisions to the TCR in progress so that if the court's ruling is such that the document is still relevant the township will be that much closer to having a viable version ready.

Krause has long felt it would be beneficial to have a plan drawn up for what the township would expect a town center development to look like. Corpe mentioned that in her meeting with Wade-Trim today she brought up past concerns over the proprieties of developing a detailed concept plan for land the township didn't own. The gentlemen from Wade-Trim indicated that there is nothing unusual in a municipality doing such a thing; it may not own the land but the guidance of the community is an important part of what we do. Also, they indicated that having a drawing of what we expect is worth many pages of text. Takayama again stated that he believes the visioning sessions should be used to create both the future land use map and get their opinions about what a town center should be. Hull believes that both Krause and Takayama make good points, and that Mr. Veliquette did as well.

Sherberneau directed the Commission's attention to a review of modified areas of the Master Plan. Discussed changes to the amended copy are highlighted in red, with boldface indicating additions and strikethrough indicating deletions.

Vermetten asked if a new town center ordinance needs to be created, or if the vision of a town center in the master plan is sufficient. He is loath to create yet another document for interpretation and debate by various lawyers and other parties. Carstens believes that a very detailed discussion of what the township desires is important. Vermetten rephrased to state that he is asking if the TCR needs to exist as a separate addendum to the master plan, or if it should be blended into the larger master plan. Carstens favored having the TCR remain separate. Mr. Lively mentioned that there could be a series of future land use maps; one would be township-wide scale and others would deal with sub-areas of the township in greater detail. Corpe observed that it might be possible to distill the TCR down to clear essentials and incorporate it

into the High Density section of the plan, with a correlation to the Culture section as well.

Discussing page 68 of the draft, Morgan asked what the words “downtown central area” mean. Corpe noted that the former wording was “small town central area” but that the change to the word “downtown” was apparently made last summer. David feels that the meaning of the vision should be largely evident through the community context. Vermetten offered the idea that if the page is read in entirety, the comment makes more sense.

David found item #3 on page 69 to be of interest. Why would there be a statement that urban service areas would not expand in the future? Carstens stated that a mechanism to control sprawl is to create a growth boundary. Often this boundary coincides with the boundaries of the area in which public services are provided. Corpe observed that the statement also becomes a tool by which future requests for rezonings and the like are evaluated.

Carstens appreciated some of the points Morgan raised about the use of particular words in the document. He feels that one reason the former Board was voted out was that they did not honor the Master Plan, and that the insertion of particular words may be an indication of their actions and point of view.

Regarding page 73, paragraph 2 David is concerned that the township has gotten into trouble by promoting a town center and that language in this paragraph reflects this. He fears that it sounds like the township is creating a development when it doesn't have the funds to do so, and wondered if the language could be softened to something that conveys more of a sense of facilitation than direction. The paragraph seems to say that township residents believe the township should create such development.

- b) **Discuss process of reviewing business district ordinances:** Corpe provided a brief summary of her memo. Hardin drew attention to the zoning map and the parcels of land zoned B-3 along M-72. He noted the separation of those high density areas and wondered how they came about and if it would be a good idea to reorganize and concentrate them. Corpe stated an impression that essentially the rezonings occurred because there was not an overall plan for the township, people asked for the change and received it. She feels strongly that any discussion of rezoning parcels of land should be entertained until a future land use map is in place.

Vermetten does not agree that there should be store size limits that differ by zoning district. He believes that the other restrictions and conditions in the ordinance are self-limiting in this regard, as are economic conditions. Landowners will build as large or small a facility as they feel they need to make a profit. He believes that the moratorium as proposed is “ripe for attack.” David noted that in this regard, the objectives of a landowner may not match those of the township and the public interest at large. The impacts on others of a development are important. Takayama feels that the disagreement comes back around to the need to address these questions in visioning sessions and to determine what the township as a whole wants to be. How can the ordinances be rewritten without input from the public? When asked by Sherberneau, Corpe noted the point, agreeing that if many questions can be settled by one set of visioning sessions held as expeditiously as possible, so much the better. Carstens is open to considering the idea of size limits by district, but would like to learn more about it. Krause feels that if visioning sessions are held, there are many people in the silent majority that will provide very educational points of view.

## 5. Public Comment/Any other business that may come before the Commission:

Hull spoke regarding public visioning, stating that “the will of the people is a mathematical impossibility.” He stated that the visioning session was essentially the election, and that the current government was chosen to represent the people and has appointed the Commission. An action plan is needed to address the question of what will be done to move forward and consider the changes to the ordinance for which the moratorium was enacted to facilitate. He encouraged the Commission to act decisively rather than looking over its shoulder all the time. Regarding a town center, he believes that until the township has a festival or art fair or something that really makes it a place, it will not succeed.

Jim Lively feels that this is a good time for public visioning, then to be followed by acting decisively to make sense of the opinions received and formulate a plan in which the community can feel ownership. Regarding the master plan, the concept of integrating the town center report into the text of the plan would be a healthy one. He would also recommend a community design charrette that can help people address and understand concepts of scale and design. The words in the town center report do seem to have meant different things to different people. Coming out of the forthcoming process with a picture that can be clearly understood the same way by everyone would be a good thing. Finally, he believes that the idea of “buildout neutrality” needs to be strengthened in the report. The concept that density should be shifted into central areas of the township rather than created should be strengthened in order to support ordinance language that would accomplish it.

Carstens supported the surveys done during the initial master planning process as a way to reach out to individuals who could not attend a charrette or other gathering. Krause asked where in the township a town center will be put once the public designs it? What will happen to the Rollert property?

**Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.**