

MINUTES
LAKE CHARTER TOWNSHIP BOARD
LAKE CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
JOINT MEETING
Tuesday, February 21, 2006

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to Order at 7:00 p.m. Lake Township Board members included John Gast, Gloria Payne, William "Bill" Geukes, Tom Carson, Betty Korcek and Fritz Wolf. Terry Eichler was absent. Planning Commission members included John Murphy, Charles Toth, Gaylord Rochefort and Fritz Wolf. John Wilk was absent. Two visitors were present. Kate Sheridan of South Bend Tribune and resident, Norm Zelmer.

DISCUSSION OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

Jay Kilpatrick, of Williams & Works met with members of the Planning Commission and the Township board to begin the process of updating the 2001 Lake Charter Township Master Plan. He directed members' attention to the time frame for updating of the Master Plan. February 2006, the first task is to notice other neighboring municipalities, as well as the Southwestern Michigan Commission, holding a start-up meeting outlining what needs to be done. March 2006, surveying a portion of Lake Township, most likely the active voters for gathering data for analysis and using the Community Profile to update the Master Plan. April 2006, identify goals and objectives, June 2006, discuss future land use, July 2006, implement strategies, September 2006, have the rough draft distributed for comments by September 2006, November 2006, make final adjustments, hold the public hearing and in December 2006, publish the document.

Some suggestions in gathering data and analysis included touring the township to identify areas that are currently zoned a specific way and looking at possibly re-zoning areas to what they actually are.

DISCUSSION OF FUTURE LAND USE MAP GUIDANCE RESOLUTION

Jay Kilpatrick, brought members' attention to a Master Plan Resolution designed to address the issue of two maps in the current Master Plan. The current Master Plan has two maps, one identifying aggressive growth, the other citing minimum growth. It is cumbersome to have two maps, could cause potential problems in a court of law, should the Township be sued. His suggestion was for the Lake Charter Township Planning Commission at their next meeting, March 13, 2006 adopt a resolution that states as follows:

1. As a part of the effort to review and update the 2001 Plan, the Planning Commission shall consider the growth scenarios contemplated by both maps such that when the amended Master Plan is completed only one future land use map shall be included.
2. Until such time as the amended Master Plan has been adopted, the Aggressive Growth land use map shall be considered to be an illustration of one possible pattern of growth, but not a guide for policy action by the Planning Commission or Township Board.
3. In the event the effort to review and update the 2001 Master Plan is not completed within a reasonable period, the Planning Commission may re-evaluate and reconsider the policies of this resolution.

4. Nothing in the resolution shall prevent the Planning Commission from considering objective evidence that growth is occurring at a pace significantly in excess of previous patterns, and if the Planning Commission finds such evidence to be compelling, the Planning Commission may re-evaluate and reconsider the policies of this resolution.

DISCUSSION OF COMMUNITY PROFILE REPORT AND KEY IMPLICATIONS

Jay Kilpatrick cited several realities of Lake Charter Township. The township is the number one fastest growing township in Berrien County with a 26.6% growth rate. We have rural living with infrastructure amenities. Lake Michigan is obviously a huge attraction for tourism. We have land available, and we are close to I-94.

NEXT STEPS AND MEETING LOGISTICS

Jay Kilpatrick suggested that the Planning Commission hold extra meetings to exclusively work on the updating of the Master Plan.

MEMBER DISCUSSION

Jay Kilpatrick asked for input from both boards as to what is on the horizon that could impact the township in a dramatic way. Some issues cited are the Indian Casino in New Buffalo Township, the security issues we may face having two nuclear power plants in close proximity, a hi-speed railroad from New Buffalo to Chicago, the influx of new people coming into Lake Township from across Lake Michigan (drawbridge mentality) and, how to deal with spot zoning that we have approved.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.