

DRAFT

Casco Township Planning Commission Workshop (Joint Meeting)

Saturday, February 11, 2012

Bruce Barker called the meeting to order at 9:14 a.m. Present: Barker, Macyauski, Campbell, Liepe, Fleming; Graff and Stroud were absent (excused). Also present: Overhiser and Cowie from the Board of Trustees; Pam Blough (consultant) and Sandra Warren from the Parks & Recreation committee; Alfred Ellingsen, Zoning Administrator; and 3 interested persons.

Chair Barker welcomed everyone and reviewed the agenda, and described the purpose of the meeting.

Concerns for John Stroud and his son (who is hospitalized) and Judy Graff and her husband (Ken Graff, who is hospitalized) were expressed, with regrets over their absence and hopes for good recovery.

Barker reviewed the agenda. There was no additional comment about the agenda from anyone present.

**A. Revenue sources, projections and outlook:**

Overhiser provided an update on revenue sharing which comes from sales tax. While historically we have received up to \$250,000/annually, we have more recently budgeted \$160,000. Recent news suggests revenue will be closer to just under \$200,000. Projections for 2013 suggest over \$200,000 in revenue sharing.

Overhiser raised the issue of a special assessment district for law enforcement. A police millage has failed twice. County response times to the SW corner of the Township can take more than 60 minutes. The City of South Haven is open to servicing the entire Blue Star corridor west of Blue Star Highway. They would guarantee full time coverage, and would be the first response onto the scene. Their cost is .7 mils, or approximately \$87,000.

A question was raised about providing police coverage to the SHARP park and the Nature Preserve. This is still under discussion with the City, but it deemed feasible.

The Allegan County Sheriff is also working out funding for road patrols. They would like to organize into 6 districts and Casco would be included with Lee, Ganges, and Manlius. A problem with this is our rural area would be underserved and our interests would be underrepresented at the County level. There is no current millage for police protection collected by the County.

David Campbell, a resident of Glenn Shores, favored the idea of having police protection from the City of South Haven include coverage all along Blue Star Highway/West corridor, including northward of 107<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

The process would be a Special Assessment District established by the Board of Trustees. A potential negative would be securing/funding good coverage for the balance of the Township that would not be specially assessed. The taxable value of the remainder of the Township is less and the area is significantly larger, so the formula would have to be reworked. The District, if established, would not have an end date.

Regarding the State Police that use this site as their office, we have no control over them, nor any commitment to them or from them.

This would be the first time to ask residents if they want to contract with the City of South Haven. Benefits include 24 hour coverage and better response time.

Barker asked about increased revenue sharing for regional cooperation. That potential increase applies only to statutory revenue sharing, not constitutional revenue sharing, which is what the Township receives.

Questions were asked about the registered voters in the district to be covered (it will not come to a vote). A Constable position was eliminated in the early 1980s due to liability issues, the number of actual incidents in our Township, and the types of incidents. Examples of break-ins and the frequency thereof was discussed.

Another option is a law enforcement authority like SHAES. Overhiser was asked to have the City quote on the balance of the Township also being included in the Special Assessment District.

Bob Fender of Glenn Shores asked if the County would reduce the collection for Law enforcement. Overhiser thought this was highly unlikely. Overhiser thought the discussion would continue over the next year.

**Water/Sewer:** mandatory hookup letter went out over the past two weeks. We expect another 150 customers to hook up through the mandatory process. The proposed apartment complex on Baseline Road (with potential WSA revenue of \$600,000 to \$700,000), Meijer, and a potential development in Geneva Township all are potential sources of increased revenue for the Authority, which would potentially result in lowered monthly fees for current users.

**Renovation of the Township Hall:** this project is on hold until the Maple Grove acquisition is completed.

**B: Parks:** Bob Fender of Glenn Shores shared an idea from Naperville IL of selling bricks along a walkway to raise money for parks and community use.

Pam Blough presented an update from the committee. The Casco Township Nature Preserve is being developed through grant funding from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. Construction began in early Fall of 2011, with hopes to be officially open by late Summer, 2012.

The acquisition of Maple Grove parcel to the north of the Stefan parcel is in process. The five year plan is in process now, with the public comment period underway now until February 20, 2012. The updated plan will allow the Township to continue to qualify for grant funding from many State sources.

Committee is also following development of the SHARP park, the Blue Star Bike Trail, and reviewing the budget concerning parks. A question was raised about how much non-grant funding has been spent on the Maple Grove acquisition to date. Pam Blough did not have this number on hand.

The status of Blue Star Trail was raised. There is no construction plan for this, nor funding in hand. It could be constructed in the road right of way. Other questions were asked and answered.

Grants: there are sources of funds but no action can be taken until the Maple Grove acquisition is completed.

**C. Master Plan & Zoning:** The revised Master Plan has been printed and the Planning Commission will be asking the Board to distribute the plan at the next Board meeting, on February 20, 2012. This will start the review period. The Parks & Recreation plan will be included by reference into the Master Plan when it is ready. Census data is still being distributed and will be folded into the plan as it comes out. The Planning Commission has worked on this for the past year and Chair Barker expressed appreciation to the Commissioners.

Due to changes in the Master Plan, there will be changes in the Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Administrator, the Planning Consultant, the Township Attorney, and the public are invited to consider proposed changes to the Zoning Ordinance. Barker would prefer potential changes to be completed by the end of the summer, 2012.

Alfred Ellingsen spoke to those items that need to be changed. He is working with Patrick Hudson to address parameters for the new zoning district that is proposed in the Master Plan. Ellingsen favors a local, hands on practical approach.

Overhiser thanked Chair Bruce Barker and the Planning Commission for working quickly through several issues that arose in December and January that impacted the Master Plan process.

**D. Seniors:** In the short term, the Casco Township Senior Care Program is running the transportation for seniors. Starting April 1, ACRDC will be providing transportation for seniors. Cowie asked that seniors who pursue County services let the Township know how they are served.

A question was asked about the history of the County serving seniors with transportation. Liepe proposed that it is legitimate to ask the County to prove what they've done for Casco. Sandra Warren asked if Susan and Rachel will be involved in evaluating how the County transportation program will operate.

Bruce Barker asked for public comment:

John Geisler asked that refreshments be served at every public meeting. He expressed appreciation for the coffee cake baked by Dian Liepe.

Julie Cowie announced that there is training for persons interested in running for public office. (Training will occur on March 19 or March 20 in the evening).

Barker expressed appreciation to Julie Cowie for acting as Recording Secretary today, given the various recording secretaries over the past several months.

Liepe moved to adjourn, supported by Fleming; adjourned at 10:49 am.

Respectfully,

Julie M. Cowie, Clerk