

**GANGES TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**Special Meeting Minutes FINAL for June 14, 2006**  
**Ganges Township Hall**  
**119th Avenue and 64th Street**  
**Fennville, MI, Allegan County**

Chairman **Gooding** called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Roll Call: Chairman Barry **Gooding** – present  
Secretary Jim **Birkes** – present  
Commissioner Jackie **DeZwaan** – present  
Commissioner Dortha **Earl** – present  
Board Trustee Terry **Looman** – present  
Commissioner Ed **Reimink** – present  
Commissioner Dawn **Soltysiak** – present

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**—none

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Letter dated June 7, 2006, from Roxanne Seeber, Ganges Township attorney, to **Birkes** responding to three (3) questions sent to her regarding the Master Plan. To be discussed later during the BUSINESS SESSION.

**BUSINESS SESSION**

**Approval of Agenda**

Two (2) items were added to NEW BUSINESS: Cottage Home application for a PUD and Ron Conklin private road application. **DeZwaan** moved to approve the June 14, 2006, special meeting agenda with (the above) amendments; **Soltysiak** supported; motion carried.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Master Plan Development Workshop**

The following amendments to the June 7, 2006, draft Master Plan were made:

*cover page*

- Change the phone number for Ganges Township from (269) 561-2215 to (269) 543-8316.

*page 1*

- Under GANGES TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION:  
--change Terry *Looman* to Terry A *Looman*.  
--change *Soltysiaks* to *Soltysiak*.  
--add *recording secretary* after Troehler.
- Under GANGES TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES:  
--change *Herbert* to *Hebert*

*page 5*

- For the paragraph subtitled HYDROLOGY:  
--change the subtitle *HYDROLOGY* to *AQUIFERS*.  
--in the second line, add *by Allegan County* and delete *was*: "...a study of these aquifers *by Allegan County was* started...."  
--in the last sentence, change *Also* to *In addition*: "~~Also~~ *In addition*, Ganges Township...to all township residents." and move to the end of the last paragraph under TOPOGRAPHY, page 6.  
--move the remainder of this paragraph and place before WETLANDS & HIGH QUALITY NATURAL AREAS, page 7.

*Page 8*

- Delete the last sentence: "*Figure 9...*"

*Page 9*

- Under COMMUNITY FACILITIES, second paragraph, first sentence, change *four* to *five*: "The township currently has ~~four~~ *five* active churches...."

*Page 10*

- In the fifth full paragraph, add *still in use*: "...the oldest 2-room rural schoolhouse *still in use* in Michigan..."

**Page 11**

- In the first paragraph, after the eighth sentence, add: *A portion of the Southwest Michigan underwater preserve is located along the Ganges Township shoreline.*

**Page 15**

- Under EMPLOYMENT, change *metro.* to *metropolitan.*

**Page 16**

- In the last paragraph, last sentence, change *1* to *2*: “Figure ~~#1~~ 2 illustrates...”

**Page 19**

- Combine the first sentence on this page with the last sentence on page 21, and change *the* to *its*: “In order to maintain the beauty of the area and to preserve ~~the~~ *its* rural character, the township intends to maintain the integrity and intent of this plan through its consistent application.” Further, make it a separate paragraph and move it to the end of the GANGES TOWNSHIP VISION STATEMENT on page 21 (no bold face).
- In the second paragraph under AGRICULTURE, second sentence, delete (*Prime Farmlands Map*).

**Page 20**

- In the last sentence, add *As of March 2006*, and delete *currently*: “*As of March 2006*, there are ~~currently~~ 217 parcels...”

**Page 29**

- In the first sentence, delete (*Map 1*).

**Page 30**

- In the first sentence under FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES, delete (*Map1*).

**Page 31**

- In the last bulleted paragraph, delete *viewsheds* and add *scenic views*: “...thereby protecting rural ~~viewsheds~~ *scenic views* and the scenic beauty of the Township.”

**Future Land Use Map (page 33)**

- Change the Glenwood Restaurant’s commercial area extending west of the Blue Star commercial corridor from commercial to ag/res.

**Page 38**

- In the third paragraph under CORRIDOR COMMERCIAL DISTRICT, delete *at least*, *wider* in the second line, and *wider* in the third line, and add *deeper* and *greater*: “The depth of a Corridor Commercial District is recommended to be ~~at least~~ 500 feet deep from the center of the street, but could be ~~wider~~ *deeper* if topography and land uses make a ~~wider~~ *greater* depth appropriate.”

**Page 40**

- Under FUTURE LAND USE TABLE delete *Map 1*, and add *the*: “...amount of land designated on ~~Map 1~~ *the* Future Land Use Map...”

The Planning Commission (P.C.) determined that additional maps should be placed as follows:

- locator map after the HISTORY — PAST AND PRESENT section (between pages 4 and 5)
- drains, soil suitability, woodlands, wetlands, high erosion/critical dunes, topography, hydrology, and wells maps after the NATURAL ENVIRONMENT section (between pages 8 and 9)
- road classification map to follow directly after the above grouping of maps, before the BUILT ENVIRONMENTS section (page 9)
- prime farmlands and property class maps after the AGRICULTURE section (between pages 20 and 21)
- zoning map to be placed next to the future land use map (page 33)
- survey map to follow the Appendix section (the questionnaire survey results, after page 46)

Other Master Plan issues were discussed by the P.C.:

- It is better to make a broad statement on page i acknowledging in general the citizens who contributed to the development of the Land Use Plan, as opposed to specifically naming people.
- **DeZwaan** was unable to acquire definitive descriptions of the aquifers from the Allegan County Health

- Department, being told that funding for the project had been discontinued.
- **DeZwaan** will pursue obtaining an updated hydrology map from the health department (if one exists).
- Maps will not be referenced in the text.
- **DeZwaan** advocated referencing the land owned by the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy and Pier Cove Ravine Trust on the zoning map.
- **It was agreed that t**The 1999 zoning map, perceived and approved as accurate up to this date, will be used as a “base” map, with the disclaimer added that any documented changes having occurred after this date (1999) will be added to the map. The 95-day waiting period (after the Master Plan had been sent out) will be used to work on updating the zoning map.
- It was decided that inaccuracies in the size of commercially designated areas on the draft land use map would not be addressed. **Birkes** pointed out that the intent of the land use is clear in the text, and that time would be more wisely spent addressing the zoning map; the other P.C. members concurred.
- **DeZwaan** questioned if there should be a glossary of terms in the Master Plan. **Soltysiak** pointed out that many of the terms in the 1999 Land Use Plan refer to the Zoning Ordinance. The P.C. decided to not include a glossary.

The letter dated June 7, 2006, from Seeber, township attorney, responding to questions regarding the Master Plan, was addressed. The first question asked how maintaining the current spot zones may affect the integrity, validity, and defensibility of the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance. Seeber responded that they are not legal and recommended not continuing with them. She further stated that leaving these commercial spot zones would make it more difficult for the P.C. in its decision making, undermine the future land use plan, and leave the township more vulnerable to lawsuits.

The second question was if rezoning that is inconsistent with the Master Plan could be granted without jeopardizing the plan or Zoning Ordinance. Seebers wrote that the P.C. could grant rezoning if they consider the following:

- Would the proposed rezoning be consistent with the Master Plan?
- Would the proposed location be appropriate for rezoning?
- Would the rezoning be consistent with other zoning districts and land uses in the area?
- Would the rezoning be consistent with the area’s development trend?
- Would the rezoning be equally or better suited to the property than the current use?

She agreed that the P.C. could make rezoning decisions inconsistent with the Master Plan if the above factors weighed in more heavily in favor of rezoning.

It was felt by **Birkes** that Seebers did not understand the third question. Therefore, her response to the question of whether applying to the commercial spot zones a designation similar to the corridor commercial zones would protect these areas was recognized as not being germane to the question.

After the P.C. discussed the above letter, **DeZwaan** asked where the P.C. was going with the issue of commercial spot zones. **Gooding** responded that the P.C. had already voted on it (see motion on page 3, March 15, 2006, special meeting minutes). **Soltysiak** then asked if the P.C. chooses to go against the advice of legal counsel and professional planning consultants. **Earl** responded that it did not matter, that a motion had been made and passed, and that per Roberts Rules of Order, it cannot be changed unless it is rescinded by the person who made the motion.

**Birkes** then asked if any of the commissioners had a change of opinion as a result of the attorney’s letter. He went on to state that no one is bound by a previous vote, but one is bound to the majority opinion that that vote represents, and that a motion could be made to rescind a vote, per Roberts Rules of Order. **Birkes** asked again if anyone’s opinion had changed after hearing the attorney’s response, and **Earl, Gooding, and Looman** responded “no,” while **Reimink** remained silent.

The modifications made this evening will be compiled by **Birkes** and **Soltysiak** and sent to McKenna Associates (planners) for a final draft, with the request to have it by the next P.C. meeting. At that time, the P.C. can vote on whether or not to request permission (of the Board) to distribute the draft Master Plan.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Cottage Home PUD Application**

Site plan review/special use application packets from Brian Bosgraaf of Cottage Home were issued to each P.C. member. Bosgraaf is requesting a PUD for a site condominium (deferring the previously approved land division) at 1502 71<sup>st</sup> Street, parcel #0307-030-021-00. There will be a preliminary review at the next meeting.

### **Conklin Private Road Application**

A private road application submitted by Ron Conklin for parcel #0307-031-022-00 near 114<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 70<sup>th</sup> Street will also be reviewed at the next meeting.

It was noted that an updated private road application had not been used by Conklin; however, the date he received it (April 19, 2006) may have preceded the new form. **Soltysiak** added that a findings-of-fact form in conjunction with reviewing an application would be beneficial to the P.C. to assist in ensuring that all requirements are met. This will be pursued further.

**Other**

Discussion about the availability of Al Ellingsen, building and land division officer, followed with **Gooding** expressing concern about his having only three (sic) office hours available per week. **Looman** reported that Michigan Township Services (MTS) has been hired by Ganges Township to be the zoning administrator, with Ellingsen's position then becoming that of deputy.

**Looman** reported projected township hall hours for the following officials:

Cindy Yonkers, clerk	Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday 11AM to 4 PM
Doug Darling, assessor	Tuesday mornings and the 1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Saturdays of the month 10 AM to noon
Al Ellingsen, building and land division officer	Friday 1 to 3 PM

**Reimink** made a motion to send a copy of the letter (June 7, 2006) from Seeber, township attorney, to the Ganges Township Board members; **Birkes** supported; motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Robert DeZwaan, 2259 68<sup>th</sup> St., apologized for speaking out of turn earlier in the evening.

Dan Sutherland, 2223 Lakeshore Dr., asked how often the Master Plan is reviewed. He then expressed concern about Ellingsen's office hours, stating that it is difficult to contact him, especially when someone is new to the community, taking up to three (3) days to get through to him, and that three (sic) hours in the office is not enough. The P.C. responded that MTS, as the zoning administrator, will be the office to call first, and that Ellingsen will be in the position of deputy. The P.C. stated that the clerk would be giving out this information and also suggested that the signage on the outside of the town hall reflect this information as well.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Looman** moved to adjourn; **Earl** supported; motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elaine I. Troehler  
Ganges Township Recording Secretary