

**GANGES TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**Monthly Meeting Minutes FINAL for May 23, 2006**  
**Ganges Township Hall**  
**119<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 64<sup>th</sup> 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  
Commissioner **Ed Reimink** – present  
Commissioner Dawn **Soltysiak** – present  
Board Trustee Terry **Looman** – present

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mel Davis, 2184 66<sup>th</sup> St., brought to the Planning Commission's (P.C.) attention that his trucking operation is not officially a company or business, as stated on the April 25, 2006, meeting minutes draft. Corrections will be made.

Don Karas, Jr., 2025 Brookhill Dr., thanked the P.C. for their work, and issued to Gooding a list of land divisions in Ganges Township for the years 1999 to 2002, indicating the size and quantity of the new parcels and in which sections they occurred. He stated that he disagreed with the Master Plan language regarding lot sizes, warning that it opens it up to developers to challenge it. Mr. Karas suggested using the language "to our minimum lot sizes" or "per our ordinance."

Theresa Wiley, 6633 121<sup>st</sup> Ave., expressed her support for maintaining the current spot commercial zoning.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

E-mail dated April 27, 2006, from John Hebert, Ganges Township Board Supervisor, to **Birkes** advising that the P.C. review the spot commercial zones and provide some type of overlay district, allowing property owners to rezone.

Letter dated May 1, 2006, from Paul Shamblin, Zoning Administrator, reporting all contact and communication between him, Mel Davis, and John Hebert regarding the possible operation of a commercial business on his property.

Letter dated April 26, 2006, from **Birkes** to Kurt Smallegan giving written approval for Mr. Smallegan's private road construction application, with stated contingencies.

Letter dated April 26, 2006, from **Birkes** to Ronald Colsen giving written approval for Mr. Colsen's private road construction application, with stated contingencies.

Letter dated April 30, 2006, from **Birkes** to John Huyge expressing appreciation for Mr. Huyge's interest in possible commercial business ventures at the Birdcage Antiques location on Blue Star Hwy. (see April 25, 2006, minutes, CORRESPONDENCE). **Birkes** stated that more information was required before the P.C. could respond to Mr. Huyge's inquiries and recommended that Mr. Huyge meet with the P.C. to discuss his plans in further detail.

**ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE**

**Ganges Township Board**

Trustee **Looman**, liaison, reported that the Board is proposing a budget of \$25,000 for the P.C. for the next fiscal year (beginning July 1, 2006). The Board is still working on a PA system for the town hall, with **Looman** suggesting a podium for the audience and a feedback system from the P.C. table to the audience.

**Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)**

**Gooding**, liaison, reported that the ZBA received one (1) application. Lisa VanDine requested permission to add a garage with a breezeway onto the residence at 1586 68<sup>th</sup> St. The application was approved.

**Zoning Administrator Report**

Zoning Administrator, Paul Shamblin, was not present.

**BUSINESS SESSION**

The following modifications were made to the May 23, 2006, agenda:

- delete VI.C.2. — *Approval of Prior Minutes, Special Meeting, May 17, 2006*
- add *Budget Review and Request to Old Business*, to become VI.D.2.

- move *Public Hearing—Verizon Wireless Special Use Application* from IV and place under *Business Session*, becoming VI.D.\*

\*As a result of deleting IV, the main headings move up one (1) Roman numeral from V to VIII.

**Birkes** moved to approve the May 23, 2006, regular meeting agenda as modified; **DeZwaan** supported; motion carried.

**Earl** moved to approve the April 25, 2006, regular meeting minutes with three (3) modifications on page one (1) and two (2) on page four (4); **Soltysiak** supported; motion carried.

## PUBLIC HEARING

Chairman **Gooding** opened the Public Hearing for the Verizon Wireless Special Use application at 7:15 PM. **DeZwaan** recused herself at this time due to family being involved.

Kathy Webber, representing Verizon Wireless, described the proposal for placing a wireless communications tower on the Warren property, stating that all set backs will be met. The compound size will be 100 x 100 ft. encompassed by a nonclimbable fence and with an equipment shelter inside, measuring 12 x 26 ft. She stated that a change had been made in the site plan: the antenna would move from an elevation of 175 ft. to 195 ft. The tower will be able to handle four (4) carriers and reach 10 to 15 miles. Ms. Webber also stated that Alltel is interested in placing its equipment here.

Don Karas, Jr., 2025 Brookhill Dr., asked where the Warren property is, and then questioned why another tower was being built when there is one already along Blue Star Hwy. near 121<sup>st</sup> Ave. **Looman** replied that the current tower is full, and the address for the new tower is 1722 68<sup>th</sup> St.

Theresa Wiley, 6633 121<sup>st</sup> Ave., expressed support for the tower and recommended that the P.C. accept the corrected site plan from Ms. Webber.

Don Karas, Sr., 1672 70<sup>th</sup> St., asked if a customer would have a choice between Verizon and Alltel. Ms. Webber explained that Verizon is building the tower and Alltel will be a tenant on it—a customer would have both options.

Don Karas, Jr., 2025 Brookhill Dr., recommended that a condition be placed in the application that the tower be used until it is full before another tower is erected. The P.C. assured him that the ordinance already states this.

Michael O'Connor, 6635 118<sup>th</sup> St., expressed that the current service is “awful” and welcomed the new tower, seeing it as a benefit to the community.

Chairman **Gooding** closed the Public Hearing at 7:27 PM.

**Reimink** expressed concern about the ability of the Warrens’ driveway to provide access to the tower for Verizon vehicles. Ms. Webber stated that there is an existing farm road that would be used to reach the tower. **Reimink** questioned if the traffic from Verizon would interfere with the Warren residence and its farm implements. Ms. Webber stated that after the initial 7 to 10 days for construction, Verizon would only visit the site on a monthly basis for maintenance. **Reimink** then asked about traffic from the other carriers. Ms. Warren assured him that she and her family are used to traffic and that this is not a problem; **Earl** confirmed that prior blueberry business conducted there had been no problem.

**Reimink** then asked if there would be landscaping. Ms. Webber stated that she had conferred with Shamblin, Zoning Administrator, on this issue, being aware that it is required by the ordinance. Ms. Warren stated that the tower is far back on the property and in a hay field. She prefers that there be no landscaping as this would remove land that could be used for farming.

**Reimink** inquired if other carriers would erect an equipment shelter. Ms. Webber replied that a cabinet would be supplied to each carrier, or there will be enough space inside the compound to accommodate other shelters.

**Birkes** stated that the application meets all ordinance requirements; **Looman** concurred. **Soltysiak** moved to approve the Verizon Wireless special use application with the change in the tower elevation from 175 ft. to 195 ft., eliminating the requirement of landscaping because of the natural features of the land and the setback. **Looman** supported and the motion carried by roll call vote: **Looman**—yes; **Reimink**—yes; **Soltysiak**—yes; **Birkes**—yes; **Gooding**—yes; **Earl**—yes (6/0). **Birkes** will send a letter to Verizon Wireless confirming tonight’s approval.

## OLD BUSINESS

### Master Plan Development

The most recently revised update future land use plan was reviewed, with the following modifications made:

- page 7, delete *SINGLE FAMILY* in the heading “*SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL*,” leaving: “*RESIDENTIAL*”
- page 8, third paragraph, second sentence, replace *due to these areas*,: “Higher quality is desired *due to these*

*areas, the traditional village....”*

**with:** “Higher quality is desired *in* the traditional village....”

- page 9, delete *General* in the heading “*GENERAL COMMERCIAL*,” leaving: “*COMMERCIAL*”
- page 10, second full paragraph, third sentence, delete *including hotels, motels, and retail locations*, leaving: “Under current zoning ordinance...with a range of commercial activities.”
- page 10, second full paragraph, last sentence, replace *can be highly*: “The impacts of large scale...*can be highly* detrimental.”  
**with:** “The impacts of large scale...*could be* detrimental.”
- page 11, first paragraph, first sentence, delete *and limit*, leaving: “...the Planning Commission’s intent to manage commercial uses along these Township corridors.”
- page 11, first paragraph, third sentence, replace *more stringent*: “The *more stringent* commercial zoning...”  
**with:** “The *less intensive* commercial zoning....”
- page 13, third category line, delete *SINGLE FAMILY*, leaving: “*RESIDENTIAL*”
- page 13, fourth category line, add *DISTRICT*: “*MANUFACTURED HOUSING DISTRICT*”
- page 13, fifth category line, add *DISTRICT*: “*VILLAGE MIXED USE DISTRICT*”
- page 13, sixth category line, delete *GENERAL*, leaving: “*COMMERCIAL*”
- page 13, seventh category line, add *DISTRICT*: “*CORRIDOR COMMERCIAL DISTRICT*”

In reference to the Village Mixed Use District (pages 8-9), **Soltysiak** reminded the other P.C. members that in the Master Plan, residential lot size decreases only if public water and sewer become available—all other lot sizes in the Master Plan are larger than zoning ordinance requirements. No comments were expressed.

The P.C. next revised the Land Use Update. **Soltysiak** noted that modifications suggested at the April 25, 2006, meeting have been made. The following modifications were made this evening:

- page 4, table 4-1, last row, replace *Westerley* with *Westerly*
- page 6, from the first full paragraph to the end of the page, move text to page 5 and insert after the second paragraph: “A small inland lake...high risk erosion areas (Ganges Township does have).”
- page 7, fourth paragraph, first sentence, replace *three*: “...has *three* active churches:...”  
**with:** “...has *four* active churches:...”
- page 7, fourth paragraph, fourth sentence, delete *is located on 110 acres and*, leaving: “This group has grown in membership...”
- page 8, second full paragraph, delete *formerly known as Consumers Power Company*, leaving: “Consumers Energy currently supplies....”
- page 8, fifth full paragraph, last line, replace *existence*: “...schoolhouse in *existence* and only serves....”  
**with:** “...schoolhouse in *Michigan* and only serves....”
- page 9, first full paragraph, third sentence, delete *which*, leaving: “The township’s B & Bs are listed below:...”
- page 11, first paragraph under *INCOME*, last sentence, delete *Likely due to the Lakeshore prosperity*, leaving: “...the chart below. Ganges Township exhibits....”
- page 13, last sentence on page, replace *There*: “There may be due....”  
**with:** “*This* may be due....”
- page 16, in the heading replace *Residential, Commercial & Industrial*:  
**with:** *LAND USES*
- page 17, third paragraph, replace *160*: “...approximately *160* citizens....”  
**with:** “...approximately *166* citizens....”

Other issues to be addressed are:

- page 4, under *HYDROLOGY*, **DeZwaan** will research the description for the third aquifer noted but not described in the text
- page 6, second full paragraph, **DeZwaan** will search for a more recent soil survey than 1987
- page 8, third full paragraph, **Soltysiak** will acquire updated information on *Aquila*

**Gooding** commended **Soltysiak** on the work that she has done on the Land Use Update. **Birkes** summarized what remained to be done at this time:

- Check the update future land use map, making sure that all current spot commercial zones are on it, and check the status of Glenwood Restaurant’s property that extends beyond the 500 ft. of the Blue Star Hwy. commercial corridor. **Gooding** will address both of these tasks.
- Need a preface and table of contents for the Master Plan. Per **Birkes**, the planner will prepare the table of

contents.

- Await a response from the township attorney regarding the three (3) questions about the Master Plan (see May 17, 2006, meeting minutes, pages 4-5).

Robert DeZwaan, 2259 68<sup>th</sup> St., made a point of order at this time, questioning the presence of the land statistics in the Land Use Update for Vivekananda Monastery and the Michigan Department of Transportation. Both had already been deleted from the text.

The final issue to be addressed was the spot commercial zone areas on the future land use map. **Gooding** read again Hebert's e-mail, with the suggestion to create an overlay district, allowing the property owner to request that his property be rezoned should he so choose. **Gooding** asked if anyone saw this as a disservice to these property owners. **Reimink** suggested waiving the \$250 fee for those who want to rezone their property at this time. **DeZwaan** responded that it would not be fair to make exceptions for a few and not for all. Besides, the current Master Plan would not allow for rezoning of these areas.

**DeZwaan** noted that the P.C. will need to review the zone definitions at a later date. Also, as property is rezoned, it will be the P.C.'s responsibility to update the zoning map.

The P.C. deferred making any decisions regarding the spot commercial zone areas this evening, wanting to receive a reply from the attorney before doing so. **Soltysiak** and **Birkes** will forward this evening's corrections on the Update Master Plan and Land Use Update to the planner.

### **Budget Review and Request**

A legible copy of this fiscal year's budget (July 1, 2005—May 16, 2006) was distributed to the P.C. members. **Birkes** disagreed with the proposed \$25,000 budget for next fiscal year, suggesting \$36,000 would be more appropriate. He stated that there is still much to do with the Master Plan, and that the use of a planner will be even more beneficial during the implementation phase. There will be more questions for the attorney as well; **DeZwaan** concurred. **Looman** advised that the P.C. send to the Board a request for a specific amount, with a breakdown of and rationale for expenses. **Birkes** will send this request in a letter to the Board.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Michigan Zoning Enabling Act Implementation**

**Birkes** asked what the P.C. would need to do to comply with the new act. **Soltysiak** replied that the majority of changes affects the township Board, and that the few issues that affect the P.C. can be addressed during the 90-day review period of the Master Plan.

**Reimink** asked if variances are still allowed. **Soltysiak** and **DeZwaan** explained that there are non-use and use variances, but neither one is covered in the Ganges Township ordinance. **DeZwaan** asked if precedence (past practices) allows or requires one to continue the practice, even though it is not covered in the ordinance. **Birkes** replied that the act states that use variances will be allowed only if they are in a township's ordinance or if they have been granted in the past. From this, he concluded that the P.C. would be able to allow use variances since the ZBA has issued them in the past.

#### **Future Meetings Schedule**

The P.C. special meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 14, 2006.

The P.C. regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 27, 2006.

**Other Business**—none

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ann Gray, 1974 68<sup>th</sup> St., asked if the Interfaith Institute (across from Vivekananda Monastery) were not considered a church, referring to the information stated in the Land Use Update. Ms. Gray also asked if cucumbers, pumpkins, etc. were considered cash crops. The P.C. determined that the Interfaith Institute is considered part of Mother's Trust/Mother's Place, and that cucumbers and pumpkins can be cash crops and are covered in the text under the term *vegetables*.

Theresa Wiley, 6633 121<sup>st</sup> Ave., complimented the recording secretary on the P.C. meeting minutes.

Don Karaus, Sr., 1672 70<sup>th</sup> St., referring to commercial property, questioned the different words used in conjunction with commercial: *corridor*, *overlay*, and *interior*. He pointed out that there are many parcels along the Blue Star Hwy. corridor that are deeper than 500 ft. Mr. Karaus asked how the P.C. is defining *corridor*, and stated that *overlay* sounds better.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Looman** moved to adjourn; **Earl** supported; motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:43 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elaine I. Troehler  
Ganges Township Recording Secretary