

**Ganges Township Planning Commission**  
**Public Hearing Minutes **FINAL** for June 30, 2010**  
**Glenn Community Center**  
**6953 114<sup>th</sup> Avenue**  
**Fennville, MI, Allegan County**

**Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chair **Howard** called the Public Hearing to order at 7:05PM.

Roll Call: Chair: Sally **Howard** – Present                      Vice Chair: Barry **Gooding**- Present  
Secretary: Phil **Badra** – Present                      Board Trustee: Terry **Looman** - Present  
Commissioner: Ed **Reimink** – Present                      Commissioner: Jackie **DeZwaan** – Present  
Commissioner: Ross **Wightman** - Present  
Zoning Administrator Tasha **Smalley** was present.

**Howard** opened again with comments explaining the process of the Zoning Ordinance Updates. The Updates will incorporate changes that had previously been done, support the Master Plan, be easier to use and make clarifications.

**Howard** explained that tonight we will be concentrating on the Commercial District. The Hearings are not for making changes, but to gather information that will be taken back to the PC and looked at to see if changes need to be made. The current and proposed Commercial maps of the Township were compared. Most of the Commercial District is located along M-89 and Blue Star Highway. Much of the soil along Blue Star will not perk making Commercial property difficult along this corridor. The Master Plan looked at two Commercial Districts, but in looking at the Township, there did not seem to be land that would support intense Commercial usage. The Planning Commission decided to go with just one Commercial District. The consulting company that was used to help in the process, **LSL**, was concerned that there is too much Commercial in our Township. Several years ago there was a group of property owners that wanted their Commercial property to be changed to Res/Ag and they were urged to wait since this was to be worked on in the Update. This is in no way completed and the Planning Commission is open for discussion on this Update.

**Howard** went over letters that had been received:

**Jan Schroeder**, 6944 Lake Shore Court, siting her concern about gas stations or any business that dispenses gasoline or oil for sale. Due to the contamination that is already in the area she would like to keep these businesses out of the new proposes Commercial District.

**Neil Vanleeuwen**, 6751 119<sup>th</sup>, letter concerning semi trucking and farming.

The following are the comments from the public:

**Carmen Behn**, 2276 68<sup>th</sup>, was able to access the web and look at the Draft, she voice concerns about the zero lot line, also groundwater protection. There is a big concern about contamination of wells, if this is not looked at carefully eventually we would need to have public water. She would not like to see any more gas stations in this area. The water needs to be protected. Also in the Commercial District the lot size are at 1.5 acre minimums, if five to six semis can park on that amount of land that seems very close, maybe that needs to be looked at again.

**MaryEllen Geiger**, 1334 Blue Star Hwy., just received a copy of the Draft, has no computer. **Howard** stated that copies will be available at the Township Hall, **Clerk Yonkers** will make a list after these are distributed and more need to be copied. There

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a cost of \$12.00 per copy. **MaryEllen Geiger** continued with questioning how much of cookie cutter plan this Draft is. Is it an experiment here, how local is it? With more regulation seems that property owners are loosing power over their own property. This will be difficult for the farms and small businesses in the area. The language is complicated and overlaps. **Howard** explained that this is a local issue, the proposal from **LSL** came from working from the current Ordinances. It has been gone through intensively by the Planning Commission. The State does regulate some things and some Townships may share information, but this is a local issue.

**Lana Murch**, 2384 Lake Shore, stated that Ganges has a Master Plan, a responsibility to uphold the family farms. The Ordinances are for protection to prevent negative influences. She then read from a letter that she had concerning Section 8 of the Commercial District concerning vehicle repair, service and wash establishments. With the current contamination issue how can it be approved. Mentioned the possibility of closed loop systems or other options for drain systems. She presented her letter to the Planning Commission.

issue,

**Robert Kozinski**, 7036 116<sup>th</sup>, wanted to compliment the Planning Commission on setting up these public hearings. He commented on long term objectives, what are we looking for, what are the risks, water changes and having a plan to take care of this how to address the drainage issues.

**Neil VanLeeuwen**, asked about the inclusion of property to the west of 196,M-89 area as Commercial. This is a mistake on the proposed map, and should have been colored for Res/Ag. The South portion of Blue Star Commercial does not go all the way to the Township line. This is also wrong on the map.

**Lana Murch** asked if a copy of the proposed map is available in an 8x10 size. **Howard** told her it is not but she will ask the County to make those available with the corrections that were just mentioned.

**Jim Birkes** asked if it would be possible for someone to point out on the map the proposed changes versus the current map. **Smalley** and **Howard** went over each of the maps to explain the proposed differences. These are only proposed and it needs to be looked at every five years. There was a question asking if people that currently own land in these change areas could decide for themselves what they wanted to be zoned as. **Howard** explained that this could result in spot zoning, which is illegal, but again this is just proposed, it is open for discussion.

**Carmen Behn**, stated she would really like her property to be in a Res/Ag District, but having the proper protection in place is the most important.

**Lana Murch**, stated she felt there was a lot of confusion in the public, where some could be living in Commercial, but thinking they are in the Res/Ag. Concerning the Sexual Oriented Businesses, she understands the definition, and the SLU, allowing them with more requirements, but she wanted to see as many requirements, restrictives to discourage these. She encouraged the PC to re-look at this area.

**John Geiger**, 1334 Blue Star, concerning the Blue Star water/sewer issues, said the Pier Cove stream needs to be kept as pure as possible. As far as sanitary flow where land is not suited for standard systems, there are companies that can over come these issues. He suggested getting as much input for the public as possible concerning the Master Plan. And in looking at this every five years, we need to keep the best qualities we have, people live here because they like the area. Everyone needs to be open minded and work together.

**Ann Gray**, reiterated Mrs. Murch comment about knowing what district your property is in, people need to be kept informed. She stated that each member of the PC lives in a

different area of the Township, they know their areas, she urged people to go to them and ask questions, but each one of us have a responsibility to find out the information on our own property.

**Jane VandenBerg**, 1910 Lake Shore Drive, asked how many residences are currently located in the Commercial District? Just how many are affected by this proposal.?

**Carmen Behn**, stated that a number of years she had counted 110 residences, and 20 businesses along this corridor. She is in the nursery industry and regulation are getting more strict, it is the same for farms. **DeZwaan** added that she had tried to use aerial maps to locate residences, but these maps are still being updated and it is very difficult to determine. **Behn** asked if this information could be obtained from the tax rolls for the Township. **Cindy Reimink** said there may be a way of getting a report. Several years ago 47 property owners had asked for their property to be rezoned from Commercial to Res/Ag.

**Ann Gray** suggested maybe the Census could help with the addresses.

**Richard Hutchins**, 6326 118<sup>th</sup>, stated that these Commercial Districts were set up back in the 1960's. At that time the Blue Star/M-89 corridors seemed appropriate. Things have changed since then.

**Jim Birkes**, stated that there are 1500 acres in Ganges Township zoned Commercial, if all of this was developed it would serve a community of about .5 million. There are concerns of property owners not wanting businesses next to them, so we need to define Commercial uses that are compatible, less intense. He was disappointed that the PC did not address this.

**Carmen Behn** applauded the less intense Commercial idea, but there is still the possibility of the more intense uses by using the SLU.

**Ann Gray** stated that with the water being such an issue, many businesses could not be in our Township, but the longer we stay away from public water/sewer systems the better.

The comment was made that we need Commercial/Industrial areas, people need to work, we are not making it as a service society. We need to deal with the water/sewer problems and consider the future. Farming is usually not the main source of income for farmers today. Maybe we should consider allowing businesses off the main drags.

**Ann Gray**, concerning the Manufactured Home District, this will probably need to be revisited in the next five years, need to keep an open minded .

**Teresa Warren** stated her family does make their only income in farming. There is talk of all water being made collective.

**Robert Kosinski**, stated we need to identify how we want to grow, what are the risks, and how to set it up. Do we know the water in our county, what it looks like for the next ten years?

**Carmen Behn**, municipal water/sewer is not a choice we want, it will be forced on us because of pollution. We really need to try to avoid this.

There was a comment that in National Geographic, April 2010, the water of the world has been mapped. This area has been looked at. Wells will be metered. We need to work together. Also on the Mobile Home park in the Industrial area, these owners could be young families, small children, do we really want them in the Industrial area?

**Bob DeZwaan**, he has a stream on his property that eventually goes to Pier Cove, everything done upstream affects downstream, any Commercial property along this stream would affect Pier Cove.

**Lana Murch**, we need Commercial development, but what kind? Drain districts still need to go somewhere. We need to deal with the water/drainage issues from any

Commercial uses, and what it will be with the least impact.

**Howard** stated that all the comments from these Public Hearings will be looked at. Some will result in changes, some could remain the same. The Regular Planning Commission meetings are held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month at the Township Hall. If anyone has any further comments about the proposed changes they are encouraged to come or write to the PC. After the comments are gone through and changes made the proposed Updates will go to the **Allegan County Planning Commission**, who have 30 days, then to the **Ganges Township Board**. **Howard** stated that the PC appreciated all the public input.

The Public Hearing was closed at 8:15PM.

**Respectfully Submitted,**  
**Diana VanDenBrink**  
**Ganges Township Recording Secretary**