

GANGES TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Special Meeting Minutes FINAL for December 14, 2005
Ganges Township Hall
119th Avenue and 64th Street
Fennville, MI, Allegan County

Chairman **Reimink** called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS – None

CORRESPONDENCE

Information packet dated December 7, 2005 sent from Catherine Kaufman and Gregory Milliken of McKenna Associates to the Planning Commission (P.C.) members consisting of cover letter, revised goals and objectives in a Master Plan format, a draft future land use map, and description of each land use category on the map.

Telephone call from Susan Pierson, 6944 Lakeshore Ct., to **Reimink** reminding the P.C. to consider protecting the water quality and wetlands when updating the Master Plan, and requesting also that only light industrial land use be considered (as opposed to heavy industrial).

BUSINESS SESSION

Looman moved to approve the agenda as presented; **Earl** supported; motion carried.

Future Land Use Plan Update

Chairman **Reimink** opened the floor to Catherine Kaufman, professional land use planner. Kaufman offered the list of revised goals and objectives for discussion, changes, or elimination.

Gooding asked what the purpose was for having the two residential land use categories—lake and rural. Kaufman explained that each land use has a different density of residents and different characteristics that are unique to each one. As a consequence, different regulatory schemes for each would be appropriate. **Gooding** concurred.

Reimink asked Kaufman if, in her professional opinion, the presented goals and objectives could be achieved. Kaufman responded with ideas of developing design guidelines, having open space preservation, encouraging clustering with bonuses, or having overlay plans as means to accomplish the goals.

Birkes suggested establishing the first goal on page one as a preamble or mission statement: “maintain the integrity and intent of the future land use plan through consistent application of the plan and the community’s vision.” **Birkes** also questioned the wording of goal 2a. on page four: “small, Midwestern town character.” It was agreed by Kaufman and the P.C. to change 2a. to: “establish a coordinated design scheme that is similar to the existing architectural character, using classic architectural details and quality building materials.” Kaufman advised that written criteria or standards would need to be established to describe the desired character in order to maintain objectivity.

DeZwaan questioned why the phrase “accurately depict on the Future Land Use Map the areas determined appropriate for commercial uses” (1a., page four) was not applied to industrial land use as well. Kaufman responded that there should be only small areas for commercial use, hence they needed to be depicted accurately on the map.

Referring to 2a. on page eight, **Reimink** questioned its validity and the impact the township would have on maintaining the rural character of township roads, pointing out that the county has jurisdiction over roads. Kaufman replied that 2a. is, indeed, a reflection of what the constituency wants, and that the township can only make suggestions and requests to the county regarding the character of the roads. **Reimink** also questioned the safety of narrow roads when farmers need to drive large farm implements on them. **Gooding** also pointed out the necessity to remove old, dead trees along one of the roads, which presently present a danger to road traffic. **DeZwaan** reminded the P.C. that the constituency wants to keep the roads unpaved and to keep the trees along them, and feels that 2a. is a good tool to use in support of this. **Looman** concurred. After further discussion, 2a. was altered to read: “maintain the natural beauty and rural character of Township roads as they are improved, if safety is not compromised or sacrificed.” **Gooding** asked if the township could get Lakeshore Drive designated as a Natural Beauty Road. **Looman** and Kaufman replied that the people who live there would need to petition the county road commission.

Birkes questioned the clarity of 3d. on page eight. It was changed to: “work to provide additional public access to the Lakes.”

Referring to number 4 on page nine, Kaufman recommended working with Allegan County to establish a process that has the county consulting with Ganges Township regarding its Master Plan whenever permission for a community septic system is requested. Kaufman further recommended having community septic systems as special land uses in zoning districts, which would allow for community review. Also, in a special land use application, the township could establish who assumes liability if the system fails. **Birkes** suggested including in this section that a review procedure be established, which would analyze any proposed private waste water system or community septic system.

Future Land Use Map Draft

Kaufman pointed out to the P.C. and public the adjustments that had been made. Kaufman emphasized that the future land use map does NOT change the zoning; it is what Ganges Township wants to develop toward. She pointed out to the P.C. and public the following adjustments that were made, which reflect the goals and objectives of the Master Plan:

- decreased industrial use and concentrated more toward Blue Star Hwy.
- extended commercial use (where industrial use was)
- decreased rural residential use
- areas along Blue Star Hwy that had commercial use were identified and nodes were made
- some commercial use was placed at the Glenn /I-196 interchange

Kaufman reported receiving a letter from the Ganges Township attorney stating that every land use does not have to be provided, and that extensive commercial use is met through Holland, South Haven, and Saugatuck. Kaufman also offered ways of satisfying commercial use, such as allowing home-based businesses or having agritourism, where special use is allowed in an ag district (e.g. hayrides or ice-cream sold at a farm). Kaufman also suggested adopting design standards, having access management (driveways), or regulating landscaping as means of mitigating commercial use.

Birkes responded by suggesting that the commercial strip along M-89 be changed to nodes, and **DeZwaan** added that the type of commercial should be determined by the resources available. **Reimink** proposed that land use along M-89 should be ag, since the best orchards and several large farms are located there, and it fits in better with Saugatuck Township’s zoning as well.

In conclusion, Kaufman will make the following changes to the future land use map draft after the above discussion:

- section 1 (northeast corner of Ganges Township), the rest of section 12, and three-quarters of section 11 will become ag
- the manufactured housing parcel will be reduced by half
- the commercial strip along M-89 will be replaced with nodes at the intersections of 66th Street (southeast corner), 64th Street (southwest and southeast corners), and 63rd Street (southwest and southeast corners)
- commercial use will be removed:
 - west of the Glenn/I-196 interchange
 - on the northwest corner of the 118th Street and Blue Star Hwy. intersection
 - north of the Glenwood Restaurant
 - at the 120th Street and Blue Star Hwy. intersection
- commercial use around 1700 Blue Star Hwy. will be reduced
- the area between Lakeshore Drive and I-196 will be changed from lake residential use to rural residential use

Open House

The open house date was tentatively set for January 31, 2006, contingent on availability of a meeting place. After some discussion, the format will consist of McKenna Associates starting with a 5-10 minute presentation, and then questions will be received from the public. **Birkes** emphasized the importance of explaining the rationale for the future land use map, goals, and objectives, and how they tie in with the township’s survey.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Bob Simonds, 2318 70th St., suggested having a scale on the future land use map.

ADJOURNMENT

Reimink reminded the P.C. and public of the December 27, 2005 regular meeting, stating there will be two (2) site plan reviews.

Looman moved to adjourn; **Earl** supported; motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:46 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Elaine I. Troehler
Ganges Township Recording Secretary