



**Washtenaw County
Department of Planning & Environment**

**Planning Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 31, 2008**

Members Present

Blistein, Dopkowski, Gartin, Gray, Grewal, Lewis, Lovejoy-Roe, Smith, Walz

Members Absent

Blackmore (excused), Bobrin (excused), Callan (excused), Kelly (excused), Meyer (excused), Solowczuk (excused), Williams

Staff Present

Brinkman, Denig, Kowalski, Lenart, Milton-Pung, Scholl

Guests Present

Cal Locklin

Call to Order and Roll Call

Grewal called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Roll Call was taken and quorum was met.

Approval of Minutes

Lewis moved to approve the minutes from the February 25, 2008 meeting, Gartin seconded and the motion carried.

Approval of Agenda

Gartin moved to approve the agenda, Blistein seconded and the motion carried.

Public Comment – none

Report of the Chair

Grewal gave a brief summary of the discussions she has had with corporation counsel, the nominating committee, and Patricia Denig and Tony VanDerworp, as it relates to the question of whether the PAB or the BOC appoints representatives from the PAB to Parks and Recreation. She proposed a short-term solution for 2008 of having that representative be a Washtenaw County Commissioner and since Conan Smith was already the Parks and Recreation representative to the PAB and a Commissioner), have him serve as the PAB representative to Parks and Recreation. Grewal also mentioned that resolution of this issue should be part of the larger discussion the PAB is going to have around Charges and Duties and suggested having a retreat late spring/early summer on PAB Charges and Duties might be an optimal approach. This will be discussed more fully under “Old Business.”

Old Business

PAB Comments on Conant Farm Preliminary Study Committee Report

Milton-Pung pointed out that the Conant Farm is specified as a “conserved area” in the Salem Township Master Plan, which will be discussed later in the meeting. The earliest date that the comment period could be over is April 14, and therefore even if the PAB recommends approval at this date individuals will still be able to submit comments to her after today’s meeting. Smith

motioned to table the report and bring it back to the next meeting. There was no second to the motion. Walz motioned to accept the report and recommend that the HDC move forward with adoption, Smith seconded and the motion carried.

Nominating Committee Update

Gartin discussed an e-mail that was sent today that stated that Corporation Counsel would provide an opinion on who makes the selection for the Parks and Recreation representative. Grewal proposed that Conan Smith be appointed by the BOC as the Parks and Recreation representative, and that the “status quo” be maintained for the liaisons to ALPAC and the HDC and PAB officers as well. The topic would then be revisited at a retreat later in the year, possibly amending the bylaws and clarifying the procedures for appointing representatives to other boards and commissions and electing officers. It was noted that the BOC had not appointed a representative to the Parks Commission, but that the representatives to the HDC and ALPAC had been appointed by the BOC. In small meetings over the past month, the nominating committee has discussed the subject and spoken with Corporation Counsel (Curt Hedger), who has not given an official opinion but informally stated that it is a gray area and a compromise could be that the PAB make a recommendation of the liaison to WCPARC, with the BOC officially appointing that person.

K. Lovejoy-Roe moved that the PAB receive the decision from Curt Hedger and that the nominating committee bring a report back next month, and to have the PAB vote at the next meeting. M. Walz seconded, and the motion carried.

New Business

Salem Township Master Plan Update

Brinkman updated the PAB on the Salem Township Master Plan update, and noted that the plan meets state requirements for agricultural preservation, but the map on page 81 should be clearly labeled to point out agricultural preservation areas. There has also been a designation of an urban service district and the Hamlet of Salem. This also meets the County planning objectives. Brinkman suggested adding a reference to the County’s non-motorized transportation plan and to establish interconnected natural features. The Conant Farm, which has acquired a conservation easement by the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy, is included within the Urban Service District – this could serve as conserved open space within the Urban Services District. Buffering should be included surrounding the property as part of any future site plan review, and the conservation easement should be identified on the Urban Services District Map on page 148. Brinkman noted that the update is comprehensive and can serve the Township well, but that these suggestions can enhance the document.

Smith moved to send the document forward to the BOC with a recommendation for approval, Lovejoy Roe seconded and the motion carried.

City of Ypsilanti Master Plan Amendment

Scholl stated that the three parcels within the amendment housed the Ave Maria school, and that the change in zoning would be from institutional to mixed use. There is a photography company interested in moving onto the parcels, and the amendment is consistent with infill suggestions in the County Comprehensive Plan.

Lovejoy Roe moved that the Master Plan Amendment be moved forward to the BOC with a recommendation for approval, Walz seconded and the motion carried.

425 Agreement Resource Paper

Lenart discussed the Paper, stating that it was presented to the PAB late last year and that it would be posted on the Planning Toolkit and marketed to regional groups if there are no more comments or suggestions.

Lovejoy Roe moved to approve the resource paper, Gartin seconded and the motion carried.

Presentation/Discussion Topics for 2008

A few suggestions from PAB members for future presentation and discussion topics at this year's meetings include a presentation on 425 agreements and Transfer of Development Rights; Regional groups as related to the Comprehensive Plan; updating the Comprehensive Plan to include Health, Education, the WMA Coordinated Open Space Plan, and transportation; various methods of collecting tax revenue; and attracting "green" businesses to the area (possibly Dan Jacobs to give a presentation on LEED certified development).

Report of the Director of Planning Services – Patricia Denig

Denig passed out copies of the new Consolidated Planning Act and noted that MSU Extension will be offering training related to the new Act in June. She stated that the Planning Service Department can help to offset the cost of attending the training, but that the Department cannot pay in full for all PAB members. Additionally, the National Brownfields Conference will be taking place in Detroit from May 5-7, and the WCBRA will have a booth along with other municipalities in Southeast Michigan. The Brownfield planner will also be doing a presentation on planning. It is a free conference.

There are currently eight people signed up for the next MSU Citizen Planner course, and the class needs more participants or it will be cancelled – if anyone is interested in signing up they will need to do so within the next few days to ensure that the session will take place. Lenart noted that the Board of Commissioners will be reviewing recommendations for changes to the budget to cover the deficit, and that this information is available to the public.

Other Items for Discussion

Regional Group and Outside Agency Updates

Lewis updated the PAB on SWWCOG, noting that Gary Blades has resigned as Sharon Township supervisor. They are looking at shared services, including a burn ordinance and a possible preferred hauler program. Manchester Township would like to expand their town hall, and there are plants expanding in Manchester Village. There will be an open house at the Manchester Chamber of Commerce on June 5. The MCJPC is looking at future land use coordination on maps, looking to coordinate the categories and are working with Mark Roby and Brett Lenart on this. They hope to have an initial public meeting in late May or early June after getting feedback from local communities.

Gartin stated that there are 82 opportunities for development through Ann Arbor SPARK and that around 30 companies are looking to develop. There were 10 MEGAs in 2007, and already 9 in 2008. There has been a great deal of expansion in the area with a number of high-tech innovation/software companies coming in as well as some movie production companies looking at the area. There will be a new Business Development specialist starting at SPARK on April 21.

Dopkowski updated the PAB on MORE, and noted that there is a new Mayor of Milan and several new City Council members who appear more willing to participate in regional planning. The last MORE meeting was held at the Town Hall, and the deputy director of the Michigan Fair Tax Association gave a presentation on the benefits of a flat tax. Denig noted that the Department has received the City of Milan's notice of intent to plan.

Gray update the PAB on the Historic District Commission, specifically that they are working with parks and Recreation on placing markers near Indian Trails throughout the County and coming up with a plan to save the Rawsonville School. Hopefully the school will become a trailhead on the Border to Border Trail.

Walz updated the PAB on the Board of Public Works, noting that they are working with the Drain Commissioner's office on educating the public on correct disposal of unused drugs and will be starting on some lake management projects in the spring. A couple of the lakes have few residents on them, and therefore a special assessment may be costly for the individuals. There will be two county cleanup days – on May 3 at the Western Washtenaw Recycling facility and on May 17 at the City of Saline's Department of Public Works.

Public Policy News

PA 33 of 2008 – Consolidated Planning Act

This was discussed under "Report of the Director."

Public Transit Subcommittee Report

MSHDA "Qualified Allocation Plan" to be Reviewed by outside consultant

These were included as informational.

Committee Reports – none

Public Comment – none

Adjourn

Gartin moved to adjourn at 7:53 p.m.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for April 28, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. in the **MSUE lower level Conference Room.**