



DEXTER TOWNSHIP

OPEN SPACE AND LAND PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

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REGULAR MEETING OF THE OSLP COMMITTEE Thursday, April 7, 2022

Present: Chairperson Laura Sanders, Vice-Chairperson Michelle Stamboulellis, Secretary Dianne Monier, Kathy Bradbury, Ginny Leikam, Dale Lesser, Mark Teicher. Absent: None.

Also present: Barry Lonik, OSLP Consultant; and Janis Miller, Recording Secretary.

Audience present: Nick Stamboulellis, and Rick Monier.

- 1. Call to Order:** Chairperson Sanders called the meeting to order at 8:01 PM.
- 2. Approval of Agenda:**
Motion by Leikam, seconded by Lesser, to approve the agenda as presented. All ayes.
Motion carried.
- 3. Approval of minutes from February and March OSLP meetings:**
Motion by Bradbury, seconded by Teicher, to approve the minutes for the February 3, 2022 and March 3, 2022 OSLP meetings. All ayes. Motion carried.
- 4. Reflecting on Landowner' meeting:**
The narrative was that attendees were happy and appreciated the information that was shared. Several people stayed after the meeting to continue the discussion.
- 5. Report on Consumers [Energy], state and federal applications:** Barry
Barry submitted an application to Consumers Energy [Planet Award up to \$250,000.00] for the Monier property. Dexter Township did not make the cut although it is an annual award so we can submit for it again in the future. Regarding the State of Michigan application last December for the Monier property, Barry said the grant (not as large as anticipated) was given for a property in Berrien County, as they scored higher. If they do not use the money within a year, the grant will go to the second highest scorer Dexter Township. The Federal Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) grant he applied for last year did not get an award but he resubmitted an application in March which will be awarded in July or August.
- 6. Finalize Ord 37 changes for recommendation to the BOT at their April meeting:** Barry
One of the State requirements for issuing grants is that there be an ordinance on the municipality books. An Ordinance states what standards are needed for State Funds (Grants). Barry presented a clean draft of the changes he had previously made to Ordinance 37.
Additional changes recommended by OSLP Committee: Page 7: Initial Screening, remove #3 Contamination as that is an unknown with the initial screening. Part I – Characteristics of the

Farmland remove “other productive soils” as it is vague, and insert “other locally important soils”. The following page has the percentage of the property that is in actual agricultural use. Part II – Stewardship of the Land includes other programs in addition to P.A. 116. Dexter Township Ordinance 37, as adopted, does not have a system for evaluating open space lands as it was only written for preservation of agricultural lands. Page 13, the section titles Open Space Land was added by Barry. Page 15, change Section 6 #1 representation from five members to seven members. The State statute allows for historic preservation easements. Ordinance 37 does not address historic preservation easements. Dexter Townships Zoning map includes Recreation Conservation Zoning (RC) which are privately owned lands that are not really agricultural but have natural features. The committee also added a new criterion in A. Agricultural Land, Part III Pressure for conversion to non-farm use; added the category of “Master Plan Designation”.

Motion by Leikam, seconded by Lesser, to approve [Ordinance 37] based on the changes presented tonight [Barry’s draft] and the modification that were discussed. All ayes. Motion carried.

7. Public Comment: Opened 9:14 PM. No public comments. Closed 9:14 PM.

8. Discuss OSLP impact on planning and zoning: Discuss the idea of amending the zoning ordinance for commercially zoned land to allow for agriculture and expand the agricultural preservation area map to include all lands not in public ownership or subdivisions. Barry, Kathy, Mark and Ginny

Discussion: Agriculture is not a permitted use in property zoned commercial. Make a recommendation to the Planning Commission to amend the Zoning Ordinance to permit agriculture as a use in the Commercial District.

Motion by Lesser, seconded by Teicher, to make the recommendation that agriculture be a permitted use in commercially zoned property, as it is already being used for that anyway. All ayes. Motion carried.

Discussion: The State Statute makes an entity like the township eligible for state funding by having an area designated, in the Master Plan, as Agriculture Preservation. Dexter Township has a central area that is designated agriculture but there is a lot of other land that is currently used as agriculture that is not in that central area. Barry suggests to expand [the Master Plan] that to include any land that is not already in a subdivision or is not in public ownership.

Motion by Leikam, seconded by Lesser, to recommend to extend the AG Preservation overlay in the Master Plan to include lands not in public ownership or subdivisions.

9. Report on HRWC coalition of townships pursuing millage ballot proposals: Michelle Northfield Township will have a land preservation proposal on their ballot.

10. Review our timeline for millage proposal and next steps: Laura and Ginny

Discussion of educating the community prior to the millage proposal. Review of previously agreed upon timeline from April through June. Barry Lonik and Michelle Stambouellis will construct the ballot language. Attorney Roberts will review the language. The proposal will be presented to the OSLP on May 5th and then be remanded to the Board of Trustees for their May 18th meeting.

11. Discussion of the creation of an official OSLP board: Laura

The OSLP Committee would disband and an official Board would be appointed. Positions for the OSLP Board would be posted. The new Board would look at, and possibly score, potential properties. Barry suggested the new OSLP Board be appointed after the revisions to Ordinance 37 are adopted by the Board of Trustees.

12. Discussion of Creation of a millage campaign committee which will be separate from the functions of the OSLP committee or board: Laura

Outside interests need to step forward to campaign for the millage as the OSLP committee members cannot promote the millage. Need a grass roots effort of people who are supportive of land preservation to fund raise and advocate for it.

13. Update on lake land preservation: Mark

Mark reported there is currently no map, although he is still gathering information and working on it, to present to the OSLP.

14. Public Comment: Opened 9:48 PM. No public comments. Closed 9:48 PM.

15. Adjournment: With the agenda completed, Chairperson Sanders declared the meeting adjourned at 9:49 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dianne Monier, Secretary

Janis Miller, Recording Secretary