



# DEXTER TOWNSHIP

## PLANNING COMMISSION

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## PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

October 24, 2023

6:00 PM

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1. **Call to Order**
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Conflict of Interest Review** (*Possible conflicts with agenda items*)
4. **Approval of Agenda**
5. **Public Comment** (*Comment on items that are not on the agenda. The Board will entertain public comments on agenda items as they come up for discussion.*)
6. **Action Items** *None*
7. **Discussion Items**
  - A. Discussion of the Master Plan public comment received to date
8. **Approval of Planning Commission Minutes** – September 26, 2023
9. **Township Board of Trustees Update**
10. **Concerns of Planning Commission Members, Director of Planning & Zoning, Township Supervisor, & Recording Secretary**
11. **Public Comment** (*non-agenda items*)
12. **Future Agenda Items**
13. **Adjournment**

September 19, 2023

**Marty Straub**  
Dexter Township Planning Commission  
6880 Dexter-Pinckney Rd  
Dexter, MI 48130

**Regarding: Public Comment on the Master Plan**



Dear Planning Commission,

Below is a summary of public comment and/or public communication I, Rowan Brady, received on the Master Plan during the 63-day public review period and BRI's recommendations based on the comments.

**Barry Lonik – Township Open Space Preservation Consultant  
Thursday August 10, 2023  
Email Communication**

"I've reviewed the draft master plan and am very impressed. Long time coming! Very well done.

My only comment is on Map 22, Future Land Use. I suggest any parcel that has any ag use be included in the ag preservation area. Being so designated scores points on State and federal grant applications for purchasing agricultural easements. There's only a few that should be added, mostly just south of the institutional/preservation area. That should be obvious but I'd be happy to identify them. There are a couple parcels of wetlands or woods that could be added as well, even though they don't have any current ag use, but might be part of a funding application and it's good to have the ag preservation area contiguous if possible.

Great job overall!

Barry Lonik"

*BRI recommends the Planning Commission incorporate Barry Lonik's revisions into the Master Plan. BRI can coordinate with Barry Lonik to identify all properties that need to be revised to AG Preservation on the Future Land Use Map.*

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Laura Sanders, Maris Metz, and Mark Teicher – Township Elected/Appointed Officials  
Monday 8/14/2023 – Tuesday 8/15/2023  
Email Communication, Thread

[Begin Thread Discussion]

Laura Sanders, Monday 8/14/2023 8:04am

“Hi Maris,

Thanks very much for your hard work and that of the Master Plan Committee.

Here is the list of my questions, concerns, and feedback on the Master Plan draft. We discussed most of them at the last meeting, but I did not get a chance to type them up until now. I am also attaching the list in a document.

I am still mostly concerned about the issues that affect the corner of N. Territorial and Dexter Townhall Rd, where the maps have been confusing in their zoning, and my questions about whether it is possible for an already approved development plan to be changed and resubmitted for increased density based on a new master plan, if they have not broken ground (ex. Hillside Acres). Mark Teicher disagreed with the outcomes of the discussion of this at our last meeting, and the conversation between our attorney and the consultant very confusing. - I still am very confused about this issue and want to understand it completely before I vote on anything.

Thanks so much. Laura

Master Plan Questions and Feedback

From Trustee, Laura Sanders

Pg 3, first paragraph - Expound on Native American History in the opening. Include a land acknowledgement to the specific tribes from the area. Integrate a “Decolonization Model” as mentioned by our consultant.

*This information was added to the Master Plan prior to the distribution of the Master Plan for Public Review.*

Pg 6 - Estimated number of increased residents is by 2045 is only 329. This seems exceptionally low. Most of this number would be achieved by filling the planned Hillside Acres alone with 48 homes if families of 5 move in.



*initiative*



*At the Board of Trustee meeting there was discussion about the validity of population forecasts and the high degree of error involved. BRI stated that they are hardly ever 100% accurate but still provide value as they point to overall trends.*

Pg 19, paragraph 3 – How will we protect wetlands under 5 acres from development?

*Local governments can adopt wetland preservation language in a zoning ordinance that goes beyond the protections offered by the State. The Dexter Township Zoning Ordinance establishes a 10ft setback from all wetlands (Section 23.06(C)).*

Pg 19, last paragraph – I would like to know more about enacting a “Heritage Tree Ordinance”

*Heritage Tree Ordinances are enacted to delineate certain trees (as specified by the ordinance) during the site plan review process. The ordinances generally state that all efforts should be made to preserve those trees. If the development requires the removal of protected trees the developer has to replace the trees on the property or contribute to a community wide tree fund in equal value as the trees lost. The value of heritage trees is defined by the ordinance. Tree ordinances have come under legal challenge in recent years and the constitutionality of such ordinances in part or in whole is still being determined.*

Pg 27 – Subdivisions along Dexter Townhall Rd, should be included in the first paragraph.

*This information was added to the Master Plan prior to the distribution of the Master Plan for Public Review.*

What does “Industrial Vacant” mean

*Industrial vacant is an assessing description for an industrial property that does not have a structure on it.*

Pg 30, right top paragraph - Our local FOSP program should be mentioned along with PA 116.

*This information was added to the Master Plan prior to the distribution of the Master Plan for Public Review.*

Pg. 33 – Land Preservation Suitability Matrix Map - What does the white area mean? Suggest including this in the key

*The white area signifies residential – improved properties. This information was added to the Master Plan prior to the distribution of the Master Plan for Public Review.*

Pg 39, last paragraph – Future Land Use Considerations: Where is development site #2?

*This information was removed from the Master Plan prior to the distribution of the Master Plan for Public Review.*

Big Question: Can an already approved development that has not broken ground (example, Hillside Acres) wait on a proposed zoning changes affected by a new Master Plan, and resubmit a plan proposing higher density and more houses? This is my most significant concern.

*i*

*initiative*

*See discussion at the conclusion of this thread discussion.*

Pg 66 – Future Land Use Zones – Our property is at 11774 Quigley. It is zoned “agricultural”, but according to this map, it is colored pink which is correlated with “rural residential”. The coloring of the corner of North Territorial and Dexter Townhall Rd. is still zoned Agricultural. This needs to be reflected in this map.

*BRI supports the change of parcel number 04-16-400-016 (11774 Quigley) to Agricultural Preservation on the Future Land Use Map.*

Pg 67, map 22 – Future Land Use Map. What does agricultural preservation mean?

*As stated on page 68 the intent of the Agricultural Preservation Future Land Use Category is to “Preserve working agricultural properties and high value agricultural land.” Uses include “Farms, orchards, vineyards, and large lot residential single family.”*

Pg 69 – What is TDR – Transfer of Development Rights? How does that work?

*A transfer of development rights program is a land preservation strategy where density or “potential density” is increased in one area of a community and decreased in another area of the community. Think of it as a see-saw, the total amount of density stays consistent, it is just concentrated in one area and reduced in another. This is a win-win approach because it achieves land use preservation goals while meeting the needs of development.*

**Maris Metz, Monday 8/14/2023 8:27am**

“Hi Laura,

Thank you so much for your thorough review of the MP, comments, questions and concerns. Your input has been very valuable! I understand the need for reassurance.

From my understanding, a master plan is an informational guide or policy document that expresses intent. It is not a legal binding document. However, it should steer changes to the zoning ordinance, which is a legal document. I believe Rowan has stated that the map was an error that would be corrected. I can double check on this for you, and will forward along your questions and feedback to Rowan.

Warm regards,

Maris"



*initiative*

**Laura Sanders, Monday 8/14/2023 8:38am**

"Thanks Maris,

I understand that if zoning does not match the Master Plan a developer can take the township to court to challenge the zoning. Mark has actually represented a developer in doing this. The township caved in order to avoid legal fees. I think a specific clause devoted to the corner of N Territorial and Dexter Townhall Rd. needs to be written into the Master Plan. I hope that happens. I don't think I can support it without that. Too much speculation is happening rather than concrete language that protects that saturated corner of the township. I am involving Mark Teicher and Karen in this conversation.

Thanks, Laura"

**Mark Teicher, Tuesday 8/15/2023 11:04am**

"Hello-

The Master Plan is the desired goal/end result. As such it can be broad at times (such as overall themes) and specific at times (such as a specific parcel). This includes specific properties, such as the N. Territorial - Dexter Townhall Road parcel. The desired end result of this as to what it ultimately is desired to be should be spelled out in as much detail as possible. If there is some uncertainty or lack of specificity, a developer may use that lack of specificity (or conflict between the zoning and master plan) in a court challenge and a circuit (county) court judge can consider what the zoning is as opposed to what the master plan says about it. As Laura stated, I did represent a developer years ago who threatened a township with a lawsuit under similar circumstances and the township caved. Therefore, I certainly think greater specificity here may give greater odds for the desired goal/end result for this property.

I have never represented and do not know the developer here and am not commenting on them, just on how I know things work and the legal options available.

Very truly yours,

Mark”

**[End of Thread Discussion]**

*As the topic of this thread relates to one specific issue, BRI's comment here will focus on this topic. Other questions/concerns that Trustee Laura Sanders had in her original email (8/14/2023 8:04am) are addressed in the body of that email.*



*The property in question was corrected from Rural Residential to Agricultural Preservation on the Future Land Use Map prior to the release of the document for public review. But for the purpose of clarity and understanding an explanation is included below.*

*If an approved property/project has not broken ground, it is only permitted to develop the approved plan. If the developer was to come back to the Township they would still have to follow the same standards and the same zoning for the property which is currently AG. If the Future Land Use Map shows the property as Rural Residential, the developer would still have to follow zoning because the Future Land Use Map is not local law the zoning ordinance is. The developer can challenge this conflict between the Future Land Use Map and the Zoning Ordinance, but I believe the challenge would be unsuccessful in court. However, the developer can request a rezoning from Agriculture to Rural Residential. That change would be supported by the Master Plan because the Future Land Use Map would show Rural Residential. If the rezoning is approved, then the developer can come back with a new plan using the Rural Residential standards in the zoning ordinance.*

*To avoid this conflict and any future potential for a rezoning to a higher density the property is shown as agricultural preservation on the Future Land Use Map.*

*BRI recommends reevaluating the Open Space Community Overlay District when the Township reviews the Zoning Ordinance as the standards set by this overlay appear to be in conflict with the intention of the Agricultural, Rural Residential, and Recreation Conservation zoning districts. This evaluation is outside the scope of the Master Plan but can be mentioned as a need for future work in the action plan.*

**Barry Lonik – Township Open Space Preservation Consultant  
Thursday August 10, 2023  
Email Communication**

“One other comment: the zoning map approved a couple years ago has the entirety of parcel C -04-13-200-032, which spans Dexter-Pinckney Rd. (DPR), designated as Rural Residential (RR), while the proposed future land use map shows the west side of DPR being

Neighborhood Commercial. The future land use map should mirror the zoning map with that area planned for RR, and also be designated Agriculture Preservation.”

*BRI supports the change of the western section of parcel number 04-13-200-032 to Rural Residential on the Future Land Use Map.*

**Bill Gajewski – Township Resident**  
**Tuesday 8/15/2023**  
**Phone Call to Rowan Brady**

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*initiative*

On Tuesday 8/15/2023 Bill Gajewski called me, Rowan Brady at Beckett & Raeder, Inc., inquiring about what the Master Plan says about a parking lot for the Border-to-Border Trail at the intersection of Dexter – Pinckney Rd and Stinchfield Woods Rd. I informed him that the Master Plan does not make any recommendations for a parking lot but does reference the expansion plans of the Border-to-Border Trail. We then had a discussion about trail planning in general. He then inquired what the Master Plan says about large lot zoning, and I informed him about the overall goals on land preservation and land allocation. I then encouraged him to visit the Dexter Township website, review the plan, and provide any comments he has to me in writing.

**Liz Koester – Construction Reporter, Builders Exchange of Michigan**  
**Wednesday, 8/16/2023**  
**Email Communication**

“Good morning, Marty and Rowan. When is this plan anticipated to be adopted? Thank you!”

*I, Rowan Brady, informed her of the timeline for the 63-day public review period and the steps for adoption after the conclusion of the public review period. I did not provide any specific date for adoption. I then offered to add Liz Koester to the notice list, and then she would receive notice of the public hearing and adoption.*

**Scott Burby – Township Property Owner**  
**Wednesday 9/16/2023**  
**Email Communication**

“Good morning all,

Upon reviewing the updated Master Plan for Dexter township, my wife and I have a concern. We reside at 11150 Island Lake Rd, in the mid 90's my mother purchased the property from a farmer who owned and rented the house with 5.24 acres out and then



farmed the surrounding property, she was able to get it rezoned from residential back to agricultural for her horses. The property has obviously stayed within our family and my wife and I still use it in an agricultural manner to this day and plan to for future use. I can't help but notice that the existing land use map (map 10) on page 28 of the Master Plan now shows our property as residential. Is this a mistake in how the map was made or is it the intent of Dexter Township to change our zoning without notice?

Regards,  
Scott Burby"



initiative

*I, Rowan Brady, informed Mr. Burby about the differences between existing land use and zoning. I also clarified that the Master Plan does not change zoning but does direct future changes. I informed Mr. Burby that his and Mrs. Burby's property is classified as "Agricultural Preservation" on the future land use map which guides future zoning changes.*

**Karen Nolte – Township Trustee**  
**Wednesday 9/6/2023**  
**Email Communication**

"Thank you for all your work on Dexter Townships Master Plan - it is greatly appreciated and turning into a wonderful document to utilize as a future road map for our community.

One question or statement I have is in regards to sewers. Currently, we have a sewer authority utilizing only 25% of the plants capacity and servicing a very small percentage of Dexter Twp residents. My general thought is for future housing development over X number of homes we have the developer run the sewer lines to connect to Multi Lake Water Sewer Authority. This leads to protection two fold - a) we are environmentally protective by having sewers rather than septic fields and b) we build the customer base to MLWSA to stabilize the Authority and utilize it to its' full potential and if some growth maybe consolidated if the developer choses not to abide. Much like the Hillside Acre development, when we all agreed to have sewer access, the number of homes was reduced, open space increased and ultimately Multi Lake customer base will grow. This may fall in the Cornerstone of Thoughtful Planning for Future Development.

Additionally, while many of the lake homes in the township are on sewer, we have many river residents and homes near wetlands still on septic. We also have lakes (outside our jurisdiction) on septic but their water flows into Township water ways. I do like the building block in the Preservation Cornerstone regarding developing a detailed map of soil that cannot support septic systems - also can a township have an ordinance that requires septic testing prior to property being sold? I believe Washtenaw does but Livingston does not - can we make it Township wide?

Just a couple thoughts -- appreciate your time

Best regards and thanks again for all your work,"

Adrianna Jordan – Dexter Township Interim Zoning Officer  
Thursday 9/7/2023  
Email Communication



"Hi,

Here are my comments on the draft master plan:

Pg 7: Add Environmental chapter of some kind? (We previously discussed this.)

*The environment and natural features are extensively covered under Chapter 3: Physical Characteristics.*

Pg 18: Although almost 9% of the population of the township has a disability with that number increasing, there was little to no discussion in the Master Plan regarding how the Twp. will integrate universal design, ADA, etc. into its future development. (Obviously ADA is the minimum requirement).

*Discussion can be added throughout the plan, notably when discussion recreation planning.*

Pg. 18: In Figure 5 why would the Twp have twice as many male children under 10 than female children under 10 years old? That seems very strange.

*As stated on page 5, the ACS data figures (used to create figure 5) are estimates of the population, not complete counts. Therefore, there is a margin of error for each estimate and for very narrow estimates of a small population (like the male/female population under 10) the estimates can have high MOEs. I, Rowan Brady, looked at the detailed dataset for Dexter Township and the estimates do show a higher number of male children under 10 compared with female children under 10 but a true 50-50 sex split is within the MOE. Additionally, for small populations like Dexter Township, it is not uncommon to see a skew in a narrow population subset.*

Pg 73: Why are some small lot cluster developments categorized as "low density rural living" in Map 21 instead of "low density suburban living" when the latter is more appropriate?

*Map 21 just shows overall land use typology trends and is not intended to be a parcel-by-parcel level analysis. Map 22 is the parcel-by-parcel level future land use.*

Pg 78: Action Plan seems incomplete relative to Cornerstone "Building Blocks". How did consultant decide what to put in or leave out of the Action Plan?

*The action plan focuses on the next 5 years, there are "actions" in the cornerstones that are outside of a 5-year timeline but still warrant inclusion in the Master Plan.*

Pg 82: Dexter's #1 housing preference is "large lot, SFRs" and Dexter's #1 "Future Growth and Development Goal" is "encourage sustainable development that is sensitive to natural features". Large lot SFRs are the least sustainable housing typology. There seems to be a massive disconnect between these two priorities.

*While the residents' housing priorities are for large lot single family residential development, residents also had priorities for agricultural preservation and natural features preservation. The Master Plan aims to balance the desire for large lot single family residential development and other objectives through encouraging conservation subdivision development in strategic locations and prioritizing preservation elsewhere.*

I hope this is somewhat useful. Thanks"

**Bill Gajewski – Township Resident**

**Saturday 9/9/2023**

**Email Communication – Forward from Supervisor Sikkenga**

"Dear Karen,

I appreciate all the hard work on the MP by the PC, BOT, and by our Planning Consultant. My concern is that I do not see the B2B Trail as a benefit to the to the Peach Mountain / Stinchfield Woods natural ecosystem. I see it as a negative to biodiversity, good land-use planning, and sustainability. (a tenet of the MP).

Biodiversity: I was the first Chair of FSW (Friends of Stinchfield Woods). We sponsored a plethora of environmental events for the community. Thus, I am very familiar with its biodiversity resources. Our "Night Walk on Peach Mountain" was featured the next day on front page of the Ann Arbor News as about 500 people attended.

**i**

*initiative*

As Chair, I told the folks: “We sponsor these environmental events to heighten human awareness, understanding and appreciation of the natural world, and thus encourage good land-use planning.”

The proposed B2B route intrudes on a Bioreserve (Biodiversity Preserve) natural area (parcel 04-11-400-003 et al, as designated by HRWC in current MP) and the steady stream of traffic may be disruptive to nesting boreal songbirds. (Especially Endangered Species) The residents of Stinchfield Woods enjoy the soothing sounds of a diverse & uncommon boreal songbird population. They would not enjoy the cacophony of peddling bikes, noisy conversations & screaming children.

*i*

*initiative*

Significant human traffic may be disruptive to wildlife including the nesting of the Prairie Warbler, a Michigan Endangered Species. (It was State Threatened). As well as other rare & uncommon boreal songbird species like the black throated green warbler. The residents of Stinchfield Woods want to hear these diverse songbirds not the noise/cacophony of peddling bikes, or the clatter of conversation.

Note: It is the policy of the Sierra Club to limit Human Intrusion into Natural Areas: “within natural ecosystems, the Sierra Club believes natural diversity and abundance of wildlife and native plants should be ensured by means that involve a minimum of overt human interference.” Additionally, the trail may generate an increase in clutter & roadside debris (that FSW have cleaned up on a yearly basis).

Another issue includes the safety of walkers during deer hunting season. A large 67-acre parcel (04-11-400-003) of (rural residential) private property would have to be closed to deer hunting, thus increasing the over-abundant deer herd. This would increase car/deer accidents & decrease biodiversity.

Environmental groups like The Nature Conservancy (TNC) et al. agree that large deer herds must be carefully managed to preserve plant biodiversity. If deer hunting on the 67-acre parcel is prevented the unmanaged large deer population will eat and permanently eliminate the rare Lady Slipper Orchids et al found-on Peach Mountain. The Sierra Club also believes that regulated hunting in a Natural Ecosystem is acceptable management to protect biodiversity.

Sustainable Good land-use planning that considers Ecosystems: The EPA in a past Relative Risk Analysis stated: “The absence of land-use planning that fails to consider resources and the integrity of ecosystems is our greatest Environmental Threat.” Thus, to protect the water quality of Little Portage Lake requires that we decrease impervious surfaces and manage erosion on the steep slopes of Peach Mountain ecosystem.



Peach Mountain contains the highly erodible Boyer & Oshtemo soils and when combined with steep slopes this creates SEVERE erosion potential. (Per Washtenaw County Soil Survey) The B2B trail will encourage biking on Peach Mountain's highly erodible slopes because the 10-foot wide paved, impervious path is adjacent to the entrance of these Peach Mountain steep slope trails at the Stinchfield Woods Rd. Gate where parking is allowed.

U of M's SNRE (School of Natural Resources & Environment) & now SEAS (School for Environment & Sustainability) has for DECADES had the policy: "No Bicycles (motorized or non-motorized) are permitted on the property." Thus, to prevent the soil erosion of Peach Mountain's steep slopes. (Also, probably to decrease liability from potential falls traversing these steep slopes on a bike). According to SEAS: Peach Mountain "Topography: The variable elevation creates slopes which average 30 degrees for a 200-foot run." This is a recipe for serious falls and soil erosion!

Thus, SEAS recommends recreational activities such as hiking and bird watching & acknowledges the contributions of FSW (Friends of Stinchfield Woods). NOTE: A better alternative & shorter route would be west on N. Territorial, then North on Toma. There is NO PARKING at the Gate to Peach Mtn. at N Territorial & there are no Peach Mtn. trail access points on Toma.

I heard from a credible source that there are future plans for a Parking Lot to be located on Stinchfield Woods Road. This would not be good land-use planning. It would denigrate the Peach Mountain / Stinchfield Woods natural area & increase stormwater runoff.

The B2B ten-foot-wide paved path will also generate a tremendous amount of polluted stormwater that can impact the water quality of Little Portage Lake. Stinchfield Woods Road already has a SWM problem. It often floods over in the spring due to all the runoff coming off the steep slopes of Peach Mountain.

B2B trail's Negative Land-use Planning Impacts on Bioreserve parcel 04-11-400-003:

Note: Bioreserve R/R parcel 04-11-400-003 could be developed via simple land divisions or via Conservation Design / Open Space Community. The latter is the preferred choice.

Land Divisions: The B2B trail will force a series of homes to have significant & excessive front yard setbacks with LONG impervious driveways to ensure a measure of privacy from the steady stream B2B traffic. This will degrade the water quality of Little Portage Lake.

Conservation Design / Open Space Community: Forest Fragmentation threatens biodiversity. Some of the uncommon bird species, including ovenbird warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Barred Owl require a large unbroken tract of land for survival. Thus, with a Conservation Design / Open Space Community, the open space should be contiguous & combine with the 777 acres of Stinchfield Woods to further ENHANCE this large 777-acre unbroken tract of land

& protect biodiversity. This will be much more difficult because the B2B trail will force & push this OSC further up the Mountain on to the steep slopes of Peach Mountain.

Peach Mountain always seems to be an easy target. We just defeated a 310-foot-high communication tower on the side of Peach Mountain that would have negatively impacted our songbird biodiversity resources. And the past battles to protect Peach Mountain & its calcareous fen wetland have been costly, both monetarily and from a health perspective.

Sincerely,  
Bill Gajewski"



*initiative*

*The Master Plan states the following on the boarder-to-border trail (pages 50 – 51): “Non-motorized use has gained in popularity regionally and WATS has been an advocate for trail development. The Border-to-Border (B2B) Trail is a 35-mile, 10 foot wide, ADA accessible, paved pathway consisting of 8 trail corridors connecting cities, parks, and destinations throughout Washtenaw County. A portion of the B2B traverses through the Hudson Mills Metropark on the east side of Dexter-Pinckney Road. The WATS 2018 Non-Motorized Trail Plan calls for the continuation of the (B2B) Trail through the County and the proposed Northwest Connector envisions a trail connecting Hudson Mills Metropark to the Mike Levine Lakelands Trail State Park. Given that 78% of survey respondents either strongly encouraged or encouraged the utilization of biking, hiking and walking trails, the township should internally advance nonmotorized infrastructure development to connect to the existing and proposed B2B trail. The Township could prepare a non-motorized plan that incorporates regional trail plan segments and determines potential shared roadways, design considerations for paved shoulders, bike lane infrastructure along major corridors, and sidewalk access across neighborhoods.”*

*I, Rowan Brady, do not believe that expanding the B2B trail, contrary to Mr. Gajewski’s statement, is against the objectives and vision of the Dexter Township Master Plan. As shown by the community engagement results, there is strong support for the expansion of non-motorized trails. Additionally, contrary to Mr. Gajewski’s statement, the expansion of non-motorized trails is good and sustainable land-use planning. Non-motorized routes offer transportation alternatives, reducing vehicular traffic and vehicular emissions.*

*Much of Mr. Gajewski’s statement is more applicable to the specific design of the trail route, which is outside the scope of this Master Plan. However, the Master Plan supports the expansion of non-motorized trails.*

Thank you,  
Rowan Brady, AICP

September 21, 2023

Regarding: Sylvan Township Master Plan

To whom it may concern:

This letter is to provide notification to your office that Sylvan Township will begin the process of amending the community Master Plan pursuant to Public Act 33 of 2008, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act.



*initiative*

Once a draft plan is approved for distribution, you will be provided a link to an electronic copy for your organization's review and comment. Please feel free to contact me about any land use or community development issues pertinent to your organization, or to the participating community, which should be reviewed during the preparation of the plan.

Regards,

Sara Kopriva, AICP  
skopriva@bria2.com

Enclosure: List of organizations and entities receiving this notification

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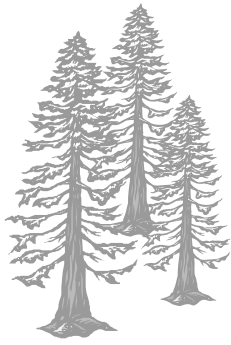
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# DEXTER TOWNSHIP

## PLANNING COMMISSION

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**SECRETARY**  
MARIS METZ  
**EX-OFFICIO TWP. Bd.**  
CHANDRA HURD  
CHRISTINA MAIER  
ALICIA ABBOTT  
**COMMISSIONERS**

JANIS MILLER  
**RECORDING SECRETARY**

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### REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

#### Tuesday, September 26, 2023

Present: Marty Straub, Chairperson; Tom Lewis, Secretary; Chandra Hurd, Christina Maier, Alicia Abbott, and Maris Metz. Absent: Vice Chair Bob Nester.

Also present: Janis Miller, Recording Secretary.

1. **Call to Order:** Chairperson Straub called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance:** Recited by all.
3. **Conflict of Interest:** No conflicts of interest.
4. **Approval of Agenda:**  
*With no additions or corrections, the Chair deemed the Agenda approved as presented.*
5. **Public Comment:** (non-agenda items) Opened 6:01 PM. No public present.
6. **Action Items:** No actionable items tonight.
7. **Discussion Items:**
  - A. Discussion to clarify ZBA decision criteria – “Reasonable” vs. “Minimum” in Section 29.06(C)(4) of the Zoning Ordinance:  
The ZBA has been struggling with this as the new 2020 Zoning Ordinance decision criteria #4 says “minimum” (amount necessary to mitigate the practical difficulty) whereas previously the ZO stated “reasonable”. “Minimum” is tighter language and leaves less to interpretation. The ZBA would like some direction/guidance from the Planning Commission as to what the interpretation should be and how it is implemented. Section 29.01 Intent and Purpose (B) states “Provide reasonable flexibility...”, although it was left out of the matrix sentence. Staff provided language from other jurisdictions in the PC packet. With staff in the Planning and Zoning department in transition, a new Planning Consultant, Megan Masson-Minock, AICP, from Carlisle Wortman has been hired and she will attend the next Planning Commission meeting to answer questions and help develop a plan to address this concern. No formal action from the Planning Commission tonight although PC Chair Straub will email ZBA Chair Smith of tonight’s discussion.



B. Discussion to correct inconsistency regarding the height of residential accessory buildings (Including small storage sheds) in Section 16.11(B) and 16.11(F) of the Zoning Ordinance: Chair Straub stated that there wasn't anything for the PC to do tonight but pointed out that Planning Staff has laid out the technicality of it and where there are conflicts in the Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Commission remands this to the new Planning Consultant.

C. Discussion of Master Plan public comment received to date:  
Master Plan Consultant Rowan Brady, Beckett&Raeder, will be at the October 24, 2023 Planning Commission meeting to explain comments and issues. The biggest issue is with the Zoning Map. There is public confusion on the "land use" designation and the actual Zoning designation. The consensus was that Rowan did a great job answering the public who submitted comments but there needs to be more citizen involvement in the Master Plan process.

**8. Approval of Planning Commission Minutes:**

*Moved by Metz, seconded by Lewis, to approve the meeting minutes of June 27, 2023 as presented.*  
*Motion carried 6-0.* (Nester absent)

**9. Township Board of Trustees Update:**

Handout summary of BOT September 19<sup>th</sup> meeting, read by BOT Rep. Maris Metz.

**10. Concerns of Commission Members, Director of Planning and Zoning, Supervisor, and Recording Secretary: None.**

**11. Public Comment:** Opened 7:20 PM. No Public present.

**13. Future Agenda Items:** None currently.

**14. Adjournment:**

Motion by Metz, seconded by Maier, to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 7:22 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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Tom Lewis, Secretary

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Janis Miller, Recording Secretary