

**EATON COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION
SPECIAL MASTER PLAN MEETING
April 23, 2024**

Call to Order: Brian Ross, Chair of the Eaton County Planning Commission, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Board of Commissioners Room, Eaton County Courthouse, 1045 Independence Blvd., Charlotte, MI.

Pledge: The Pledge of Allegiance was given by all.

Roll Call: Scott Hansen, Ben Tirrell, Lisa Lawitzke, Ray Whitaker, Ed Kemp, Tim Catron, Frank Holmes, Zachary Dillinger, and Brian Ross

Staff Present: Brandy Miller, Tammy Alger, and Chris Garrison.

Agenda Approval: A motion was made by **Commissioner Tirrell** to approve the agenda for the April 23, 2024 meeting. **Commissioner Holmes** supported. Motion carried.

Staff Report: Ms. Miller presented the memorandum and attached packets. Ms. Miller read 4 written public comments into record.

Public Comments: Mr. Rick Dykstra, 2980 S. Cochran Rd., stated a new industrial park would not be beneficial, and that there are existing industrial parks already with space for expansion. Mr. Dykstra stated he lived in a rural area to be away from things such as an industrial park, and that an industrial park could ruin property values.

Mr. Eric DeYoung, representative of Naderveld and the property owner of a vacant 235 acre parcel of land on Cochran Rd, north of I-69, stated that the future land use of the vacant parcel should be future planned as Industrial. Mr. De Young stated an Industrial designation would be better suited than General Business for the vacant parcel in that area of Eaton County. He stated there would be less traffic and urban sprawl with an industrial park, making a better neighbor to the agricultural farms in the area. Mr. DeYoung stated he has had conversations with the City of Charlotte, and they are willing to cooperate on water and sewer needs whether the property is planned for commercial or industrial. Mr. DeYoung stated no resident would be forced to use public water and sewer. He stated an industrial use for the property would encourage positive community growth and employment opportunities. Mr. DeYoung stated that any future planned industrial park would need to go through all of the appropriate avenues before being approved, so the potential park would be built to all local government standards.

Mr. Drew Marks, Sunfield Township, stated that page 12.12 of the proposed master plan is incorrect. He stated the map was small and hard to read. Mr. Marks stated the map should reflect clearly which properties are dual zoned and what the zoning is.

Mr. Greg Shaver, 933 W. Broadway Hwy., stated he was concerned with where water from a new industrial park would go, specifically brown water and how that will drain. Mr. Shaver stated there is all kinds of water in the back of the vacant 235 acre property, as well as diverse flora and fauna. He stated he is concerned with the different environmental pollutions that come with an industrial park, but mostly concerned with where the water is going to drain. He stated there is already problems with flooding in that area.

Mr. Mark Emmert, 911 W. Broadway Hwy., stated that an Industrial park would not be in harmony with the goals of the Master Plan. Mr. Emmert stated it would not be a preservation of agricultural land. Mr. Emmert stated the people who lived in the area took a survey and they all agreed that living away from the city and any commercial or industrial activity made their lives excellent, and they would not want to change that.

Mr. Ben LeBlanc, 68 W Broadway, stated that he and his wife had had numerous drainage issues with their property, and all attempts to rectify it have not worked. He stated the clay soil in the area is not ideal, and that whatever Naderveld planned would also have drainage issues that will not be addressed. Mr. LeBlanc stated to change the future land use on short notice would be unfair to the citizens of Eaton County.

Ms. Theresa Briseno, 101 W. Broadway Hwy., stated she moved to her property for the benefits of rural living, but the peacefulness of her neighborhood will be ruined with any commercial project, but especially with an industrial park. She stated a good industrial neighbor would not be choosing a piece of land that was not polluted and that there are existing industrial parks for them to build in. Ms. Briseno stated she is concerned that there may be an increase of crime with an industrial park. She stated that if the industrial land use is approved, it be approved with specific stipulations on what sort of business can be allowed there and what the repercussions will be for deviating from that stipulation.

Public Comment Closed: 6:30 p.m.

Commissioner Ross stated the meeting is to strictly discuss the future land use map, which is not the same as zoning. He stated nothing is being re-zoned. **Commissioner Ross** stated the future land use will let developers know what is available for future planning. He stated there are many steps to approving any sort of commercial or industrial project, which involve many different offices, such as the Eaton Barry County Health Department, Drain Commissioner, Planning and Zoning, etc. **Commissioner Ross** stated that whatever was built would have to be approved and it would be better, rather than worse, due to the approvals necessary.

Commissioner Hansen stated is against any proposal for the 235 acre property to be changed to Industrial in the future land use map. **Commissioner Hansen** stated he lives less than a mile from the vacant parcel in question and that all water comes onto his property due to failed drainage systems. He stated property value could potentially decrease with an industrial park nearby. **Commissioner Hansen** stated there are other areas better suited to an industrial park, such as properties closer to Lansing that already have industrial businesses.

Commissioner Tirrell stated that the discussion was for proposed land use, not a re-zoning. He stated the property in question has been in the master plan as General Business for decades now. **Commissioner Tirrell** stated that constituents who are concerned about the industrial land use review Eaton County's Zoning Ordinance and see what is required for any commercial business that wants to develop within the county. He stated this meeting is about thinking how the community is going to plan for the future and what that growth looks like.

Ms. Miller stated that Mr. Marks was correct in his public statement, the Sunfield Township zoning map is incorrect. She stated that whatever motion is made today include the correction of the Sunfield Township zoning map.

Commissioner Holmes asked how long the property has been zoned commercial. Ms. Miller stated the property is currently dual zoned as General Business and Limited Agricultural, but is

master planned as General Business since 2011. **Commissioner Holmes** stated by making the vacant parcel industrial, it's also making it easier for developers to come in.

Commissioner Cattron stated he was present at both Eaton Township and Carmel Township Meetings and Carmel Township was in favor of changing the future land use to Industrial. He stated Carmel Township would rather have Industrial as it would create less traffic for the area and less disruption for agriculture. **Commissioner Cattron** stated the residents along the path to the vacant parcel would not be required to hook up to public services from the City of Charlotte.

Commissioner Ross stated one of Eaton Township's main concerns was the water and septic for the residents between The City of Charlotte and the vacant parcel. He stated the City of Charlotte would not require those residents to do so, as it would take up more capacity on their systems. **Commissioner Holmes** asked if bringing in a commercial or industrial business would also increase that capacity. **Commissioner Ross** stated the City of Charlotte did have some additional capacity depending on what sort of development was brought in and if it was heavy versus light water and sewer use. He stated once building plans were submitted for review, the City of Charlotte would know if they had the capacity to provide water and sewer. **Commissioner Cattron** stated whether the proposed development is commercial or industrial, the water and sewer needs would be addressed appropriately, whether through the City of Charlotte or by an on site system.

Commissioner Holmes stated that either way, it seems like an interruption of the farm land community.

Commissioner Hansen stated the City of Charlotte has water capacity, but sewage capacity was fuller and would require increased infrastructure. He stated the City of Charlotte could potentially annex the residents in that area to recover some of their tax revenue to pay for an increased infrastructure. **Commissioner Hansen** stated the residents would then be tax payers to the City of Charlotte and not Carmel Township. **Commissioner Ross** stated the Planning Commission's discussion was not in regard to taxes, but strictly in regard to planning and zoning, specifically land use. He stated the City of Charlotte did discuss annexing some of the residential properties, but that was not a discussion pertinent to this meeting. He stated if it is a conflict of interest then **Commissioner Hansen** could be exempt from the vote. **Commissioner Hansen** stated he would accept being exempt if that was what was determined as best.

Commissioner Tirrell stated the planning process for the proposed future land use map has been thorough with involvement from all Townships. He stated that it was late in the stage of the future land use map planning to propose a change now. **Commissioner Tirrell** stated the goal of the meeting is strictly planning and zoning, and to change the plan now creates technical issues. He stated he would prefer retaining the maps proposed at all of the previous township meetings.

Commissioner Lawitzke stated that whether the 235 acre property is proposed General Business or Industrial, it has the potential to be covered in asphalt and create the commercial space. She stated the area does lend itself better for industrial use based on the description of Industrial versus General Business.

Commissioner Cattron stated he agrees that it is too last minute to change the proposed future land use maps now. **Commissioner Holmes** stated he would not be in favor of changing the proposed future land use maps either. **Commissioner Ross** stated that Carmel Township did recommend changing the vacant parcel to Industrial land use. **Commissioner Tirrell** stated if

that recommendation had been made early in this process, it would be something to consider more seriously, but to change it now would be unfair.

Commissioner Cattron moved to approve the Master Plan document as it is written, with the following corrections:

1. All grammatical mistakes in the Master Plan document be corrected.
2. Correct the Sunfield Township Zoning Map.

Commissioner Tirrell supported the motion. A roll call vote was taken with seven (7) voting aye and two (2) voting nay. Motion carried.

Public hearing closed: 7:05 p.m.

Public Comment: Mr. Drew Marks stated that what this is doing is affecting people who live in the outer areas, but it's going to be sent to the commissioners, ten of whom do not live near these areas but are going to vote. He stated it doesn't seem fair.

Mr. Mark Emmert read master plan part 1.2. He stated that although zoning is not being changed, wouldn't this be opening the door anyway. He stated it would be difficult if the future plan stated designation as industrial but then tell a property owner the zoning couldn't be changed to industrial. He stated it seemed it would cause difficulties to change zoning. **Commissioner Ross** stated public comment is not a back and forth, but that Eaton County is trying to prevent their land from being a back and forth of home, business, home, and business. He stated that the county as a whole, including the townships, have directed the future land use map to have either commercial or industrial in certain areas. **Commissioner Ross** stated ideally there will not be a business next to a residence.

Mr. Rick Dykstra stated he just found out about the proposal for industrial on the vacant 235 acre parcel two weeks ago. He stated he did not get any sort of communication regarding it.

Mr. Thomas Jones, 3155 S. Cochran Ave., stated he had a question for Mr. DeYoung. He asked what the future projection time line is for any development on the vacant parcel. **Commissioner Ross** stated that question could be asked after the meeting.

The Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.