

**ALPINE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION SUB-GROUP
SPECIAL MASTER PLAN REVIEW MEETING
Wednesday, June 22, 2005**

An informal meeting of Alpine Township's Planning Commission sub-group for Master Plan Review mapping accuracy was held on Wednesday, June 22, 2005, at 12:00 PM, at 5255 Alpine Ave., NW, Comstock Park, MI 49321, with John Iacoangeli of Beckett & Raeder. Present were PC Chair Jason Rosenzweig, Vice-Chair Dick Sedlecky, and member Jason Clauser. Also in attendance were Township Planning Director Brendie Vega-Mkhwanazi, and Recording Secretary Patricia Kolkman.

Iacoangeli provided a new set of Township maps for commissioner review. "Scenario 3", a suggested Future Land Use Plan map, combined what he understood were the participants' acceptable and/or desired designations from Scenarios 1 and 2 presented at the June 9, 2005 Special Planning Commission meeting. Zoning was updated and the errors identified at that meeting had been corrected. A second map, "Development Phasing Areas" supported the newly mapped development areas and provided the sequencing of development (phasing) that both the commission and audience had said they desired.

"Area 1" is the most densely developed area, generally covering the water and sewer areas in the Township. It represents that portion of the Township generally fully built out.

"Area 2" indicates developable areas, adjacent to Area 1, showing those parts of the Township that **could** be developed in response to pressures from Walker.

"Area 3" identifies the buffer area between Area 2 and the Agricultural Preservation area, where large lot residential developments without water and sewer services may be developed. The Agricultural Preservation areas would not allow development on any level.

Commissioners and Planner Vega clarified that west of Alpine Avenue while the overall utilities district is along 4 Mile Rd. to Fruit Ridge, just public water follows that route. Public Sewer was installed to serve Kenowa Hills High School and Alpine Meadows Mobile Home Park, but sewer there is provided from the City of Walker to Grand Rapids and allows no new connections while a part of the Grand Rapids Sewer system. The possibility of including this area in Alpine Township's sewer district *could* be revisited if and when the North Kent Sewer Authority constructs its own sewage treatment facility. Public sewer already constructed west of M-37 is also at Baumhoff Ave. and Alpine Church at Alpine Elementary School and was installed over open land from M-37 to the west. The sewer district west of M-37 also serves a small portion of 4 Mile Rd. to approximately Cordes Ave., serving the Berry Grove Estates subdivision.

Color coding used on the Scenario 3 map was also reviewed. As an example, the orange used for the Berry Grove Estates subdivision at approximately Cordes Ave. and 4 Mile Rd. defined the area as "High Density Residential" with 5-9 units per acre, when it is actually "Moderate Density" or 3-4 units per acre. The existing small residential development at 5 Mile Rd. and Fruit Ridge was incorrectly designated as Agricultural

and is actually a moderate density residential development. Corrections to the parcels identified by Wahlfield at an earlier meeting (M-37 just south of 8 Mile Rd.) were also made to Commercial zoning. Other corrections were also identified and will be made.

Those present also discussed the possibility of using a Mixed Use PUD designation in commercial development areas on 4 Mile Rd. and on the west side of M-37 at Lamoreaux Dr. Mixed-Use PUD was described as developing a single parcel (or adjacent parcels) as a self-contained area with multiple development types and having a road design linking them all. A commercial “node” might be at the center with adjacent multi-family or town house style buildings in an adjacent surrounding area and residential development of a single family type would typically occur at its outermost boundary. The road system designed would allow movement within the PUD without residents using public roads outside of it or having to drive through other neighborhoods. This development would give the Township’s Planning Commission a chance to be creative with design and maintain control throughout the phasing.

Iacoangeli said “Scenario 3” Future Land Use map is less ambitious than those previously presented but could still carry the township through the next 25 years.

Those present were interested in how the township could best preserve existing farmland. Discussion of using either PDR (Purchase of Development Rights) or a TDR (Transfer of Development Rights) program was introduced. Iacoangeli said under a PDR program public monies are used to pay farmers the difference between its current value and what the land *would* be worth if developed. Qualified farmers would be paid to provide permanent easements to remove their land from any future development scenarios. He added that in the Traverse City area, people are so committed to saving cherry farms that the **Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy** was able to lobby voters for an extended Purchase of Development Rights millage (with a 60% “yes” vote) and Peninsula Township chose PDR to permanently preserve a large (3,200 acre) cherry farm on the Old Mission Peninsula. (Note: from a press release found at *From the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy web page: www.gtrlc.org* “At stake was over \$22.5 million in tax dollars, millions more in potential matching grants, and the potential to save an additional 3,200 acres of some of the world’s best farmland for fruits such as the red tart cherry.”)

TDR is another tool adopted by some communities requiring developers to acquire some of the community’s development rights from some farmers. A community determines which farmland can participate and assigns each participating farm a certain number of development rights. These are determined based on equivalent residential “units” available for development in the utility areas. There may be a requirement for a farm to be a minimum acreage, with the number of rights assigned tied to the number of farmed acres. These rights can be transferred from the “sending zone” (the farm) to the “receiving zone” (the utilities area) via a transaction recorded by the municipality from the developer to the farmer who must place permanent restrictions on the farm prohibiting future development. Alpine Township has explored this concept, but not yet adopted it.

Commissioners asked Iacoangeli to explain how a phased development master plan might be implemented. He explained that a community may decide to only allow development to progress beyond a “development acceptance zone” and into a

“development reserve zone” when land in the “acceptance zone” and the “core community” zones had been developed. The development reserve zone acts as a buffer between areas designated for development and areas designated for preservation.

Rosenzweig requested that designations used on maps be more descriptive of the use of the land, e.g., “Rural” changed to “Estate” for large lot residential. He has had difficulty completing appraisals for land described as “rural”, when it is in fact large lot residential.

Members present confirmed that the next special Planning Commission meeting for master plan review will be on July 14, 2005, at 7 PM. Iacoangeli said he will be sending revised maps to Vega by Monday, June 27, 2005.