

**Van Buren County Planning Commission**  
**February 27, 2008**  
**219 Paw Paw St. Paw Paw**

**Minutes- Continued**

Public Comments: NOT IN ORDER OF MEETING

**VBCPC Members:**

Connie Selles:

- Questioned the order of things with the Twp. updating their Zoning Ordinance before the Master Plan.
- Wondered if Citizen Group was part of process and meetings during the creation of the document presented by the Twp.
- Looked over VBC Comprehensive Plan and also Columbia Twp. Master Plan and found incompatibility with the goals set forth in the Twp. Master Plan and the Class II Businesses section.
- Columbia Township is in a good position with a good core group, a concerned citizen group willing to provide input. They are moving forward with updating their Zoning Ordinance as well as having their Master Plan reviewed. Their Zoning Ordinance does a great job of preserving the natural resources, namely the water resources.

Kurt Doroh:

- Felt there were some terms which could be better defined in Ordinance

Scott Cedarquist:

- Commented on the Home Based Businesses, questioned some of the specified allowed businesses.
- Also commented that the Ordinance was in line with other township ordinances we have reviewed in the past with loosening some restrictions along lake property as most have small lots with difficult restrictions to overcome.

Pam Stermer:

- Agreed with Connie about following the goals of the Master Plan
- Felt it important to review the Twp's document and respond with concerns we may have.

Rich Corwin:

- Questioned Section 4.13 P #10 under Special Use Conditions wondered if there was a typo or if this read as desired. Allowed Hazardous Materials to be stored etc..

Jim Ray:

- Made motion to not concur with decision of Columbia Twp. Planning Commission to recommend to Board of Trustees to adopt the Zoning Ordinance as written due to sections not complying with Master Plan.

Jeff Radtke:

- Stated he had attended training at the Michigan Assoc. of Planning Conference this past fall and sat in training regarding Home Based Businesses. Indicated there was a push from the State Level to initiate new businesses, and also to create walkable communities with services close to residential.

Ted Thar:

- Responded to question of amount of time to review and respond as 30 days
- Indicated to VBCPC its role in matter is to review document as written and to concur with decision of Twp. Planning Commission to recommend to Board of Trustees to adopt Zoning Ordinance as written or to Not Concur and make recommendations.

## **Citizen Township Property Tax Payers Association**

Roger Flammang:

- Wife is a property owner in Columbia Twp.
- Acted as spokesman for Citizen Township Property Tax Payers Association.
- Said he/and group was part of the process but felt their comments may not have been listened to.
- Asked when Van Buren County Planning Commission had received Ordinance for review, and amount of time for which to review and respond.
- Crystallized the “issues” to (4) four major concerns.
  - Are “Home Businesses compliant with the Columbia Twp. Master Plan
  - Is the new RO (Residential- Old Plats) necessary, justified, and fair?
    - Felt the RO district could present conflicts with other townships by allowing loosened restrictions on lakes which share boundaries with Bloomingdale, Waverly, and Arlington Twps
    - Felt RO / R2 district will cause problems with people in similar land uses due to loosened restrictions for those in RO district.
  - Can a zoning administrator be a member of the Board of Trustees and appointed by the Township Supervisor?
  - Was the RO rezoning properly “noticed”

Ken Speicher:

- Life Long resident of Columbia Twp.
- Indicated the review of the Zoning Ordinance came after the final copy was completed
- Asked if there was a conflict if the Zoning Administrator also serves on Board of Trustees.
- Showed copy of the Notice of Public Hearing on February 18, and felt it was not very descriptive of what would be discussed.
- Said there were comments made by Columbia Twp. Planning Commission regarding the Zoning Ordinance which were not in an open meeting.
- Said the ZBA referred to an unapproved Zoning Ordinance for reason of approval for recent Zoning Amendments.
- Infrastructure can become an issue if more density is allowed

Linda Miller:

- Current resident of Columbia Twp.
- Has attended most meetings held at Columbia Twp. for several years
- Feels Class II should not be in AG/Res districts
- Acknowledged Citizen group’s comments were heard but not addressed or included
- Felt New Ordinance goes against the goal of keeping rural character set forth in Master Plan
- Questioned variances allowed for accessory structures

## Columbia Twp Representatives

### M. Brian Knotek

- Noted the reason for the Township updating the Zoning Ordinance prior to working on the Master Plan is due to Public Act 110
- Stated that the Citizen Group has been heard throughout the process.
- Conflicts arising due to neighbors being separated by different districts are inevitable. Zoning districts must end somewhere.
- Notice of Public Hearing held on February 18, 2008 was done by the law and can be disputed via the proper channels.

### John Lemmers

- Stated that the Township has spent 16 to 20 months in this revision process.
- Indicated that Southwest Michigan Planning Commission awarded them a grant through the Black River Watershed funding to review the Master Plan.
- Acknowledged that the Class II was a difficult section
- Thanked the VBCPC for review and looked forward to our comments

### Dale Bradford

- Stated they had worked on the Zoning Amendment because the PA 110, and reiterated that they were having the Master Plan reviewed and will see what comes from the review