

April 9th, 2002
Rockford Township
Public Hearing
On The Township's
Land Use Plan

The Public Hearing for the Rockford Township Land Use Plan held at the Rockford Town Hall. The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Vice Chair Wetter, and the Pledge to the Flag was recited. Board members present were Wetter, McDougall, Kelley, and Walker. Beise was excused.

Wetter explained to the audience what the Land Use Committee was, and why it was formed. He then explained what recommendations the Committee had suggested, and in what areas of the Township the Committee was looking to possibly change the zoning. The Committee was looking to possibly change some areas along Highway 55 to commercial, and some other areas close to the cities to discourage annexation. Wetter explained that the Township needs to look at increasing its tax base, and some of the possible changes could be a way to accomplish that. Wetter then opened the floor for discussion from the audience.

Gary Anderson – 3372 37th Street SE Delano: Requested the Board to reconsider the zoning on the Sohns/Gronke property, which is approximately 79 acres, from Agriculture to Residential. Mr. Anderson was at a prior Town meeting requesting the Board to change the zoning, and was turned down due to how the property was zoned in the Land Use Plan. Mr. Anderson passed out an outline of reasons for changing the zoning. (Outline attached to minutes.)

Duane Rolstad – 1855 20th Street SE Buffalo: Informed the Board he was a partner with Mr. Anderson. Mr. Rolstad told the Board that the change was a good idea for the Township because of the tax base on about 12-15 lots at \$300,000. Another reason was a small development could be a deterrent for annexation. Mr. Rolstad knows the roads need to be to Township standards, and let the Board know that the plan is dependant upon the changing of the Land Use Plan.

Supervisor McDougall: Conveyed to Mr. Anderson and Mr. Rolstad that the County has the final say in any proposed changes to the Land Use Plan. McDougall inquired about their (Anderson/Rolstad) proposed plan and informed them that there is a County Ordinance regarding dead end roads and to check with Planning & Zoning. McDougall asked if Mr. Anderson and Mr. Rolstad would consider a compromise by the Land Committee, if agreed, to possibly rezone for 10-acre parcels to preserve the Ag land. McDougall inquired if there would be a developer or would they be selling lots.

Mr. Rolstad and Mr. Anderson both thought that 10-acre lots would be a waste, when there can be an ideal sewer system with more lots. Mr. Anderson informed McDougall that he is a builder and 1-site would be for him.

Supervisor Walker: Agreed with the proposal, which would also take away the noxious weed problem, but did not know what other options there may be, and what the County will do as far as passing the zoning.

Supervisor Wetter: Informed Mr. Anderson and Mr. Rolstad that the Board probably would have a hard time convincing the county. He thought it was a good idea because of the increasing

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budget, and that the Township needs the tax base. Wetter suggested that the Board decide at the next meeting about the proposed changes, and then proceed to the county level.

Duane Rolstad: Informed the Board he had went to a Highway 55 Corridor meeting and there would not be any work plans until the year 2012.

Supervisor Wetter: Disagreed with holding back any zoning for development along Highway 55 until the corridor went through. Wetter felt private property owners could be waiting a long time while the State makes up its mind about the project.

Supervisor McDougall: Commented that the Highway 55 Corridor “mapping” ~~would~~ could be done earlier this year. She explained that there was a pilot bill in the House/Senate Committee asking for \$500,000 so MNDOT can do ~~an official~~ the initial mapping. The Highway 55 Corridor Committee will know at the end of May if the funding is available.

Jim Stromberg – Hanover: Requested from the Board to consider rezoning of his property from AG to Commercial or Light Industrial. Mr. Stromberg was before the Board at a prior meeting seeking information from the Board about pursuing a mini-storage business on his property, which is by Westmetro car dealership. Mr. Stromberg felt that the Township was keeping the value of his land down by not rezoning it to commercial.

Supervisor Pam Kelley: Inquired from Mr. Stromberg if he felt Commercial was better than Large Lot residential for zoning. Mr. Stromberg informed Supervisor Kelley, that the mini-storage would make a good buffer between the commercial and residential areas. Mr. Stromberg also informed Supervisor Kelley that he had previously talked with the neighbors in the area about his plans, and had good support.

Supervisor McDougall: Suggested that when the Board talks with the County, they (the Board) could reserve the right to amend the plan after the mapping of Highway 55 Corridor takes place. In doing that, it does not cut out adding more commercial to the Township. McDougall informed Mr. Stromberg that the Board is charged with zoning for the safety and benefit of the Township as a whole, and should not zone for individual resident’s personal gain, also known as “spot zoning”.

Duane Rolstad: Inquired from the Board their thoughts on the Township hiring a City Planner to help the Township look gain insight on how to increase the tax base, and handle annexation issues.

Supervisor Wetter: Asked the audience if they were in favor some type of a Planner for the Township. The audience showed about 2/3 in favor.

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John Heins: Asked the Board if there were any changes recommended for his area, which is north of Rockford. There were none in that area as of yet.

Bill Daluge – 2466 Gabler Ave. SE Buffalo: Felt a City Planner was important because whatever the Board decides affects the whole Township.

Mary Wetter – 197 Ibarra Ave. SE Buffalo: Felt the land plan should be looked at every 2 years verses every 6 years.

Supervisor Wetter: Brought up selling “building entitlements”, and how selling them would give the farmer who doesn’t have a chance for development get a piece of the pie.

Jim Stromberg: Agreed with selling building entitlements, felt it could help maintain a rural feeling in the Township.

Supervisor Wetter: Asked for any more input regarding the Land Use Plan, then informed the audience that these requests along with recommendations from the Land Use Committee will be voted on at the April 23rd regular meeting.

The Public Hearing regarding the Land Use Plan for Rockford Township was then adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Chair

Clerk