

Colfax Township, Weldon Township and Village of Thompsonville
Community Joint Planning Commission
14731 Thompson Avenue, Thompsonville, MI 48683
Public Hearing Minutes – September 20, 2012

The meeting was called to order at 7:05PM by Sue Meredith followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present at roll call: Jack Richter, Shelley Greene, Peggy Minster, Steve Heller, Sue Meredith, Bryan Matthews, Don Suchocki, Debra Franke, Pat Workman and Craig Meredith. Absent: Eugene Allen (unexcused). Guests: Ron Evitts, Marian Mayer and Charles Mayer.

Public Hearing. Sue welcomed the public to the hearing on the master plan saying the required review time has been met and that a copy of the plan has been at the library and online. She asked for a five-minute limit on comments and to state name and address for the record. Sue stated the goal of the public hearing is to get the public's input on the master plan so we can move on to the zoning ordinance. She then introduced each JPC member.

Mr. Mayer asked to play a 20-minute DVD on Agenda 21. He felt it would give the JPC more information to make an informed decision on whether we should progress. Sue stated she did not feel this was the proper avenue for it, that this was a public hearing and not a meeting. Peggy asked if the video was specific to the master plan. Mr. Mayer believed it was and she asked what specific topics it would address. Mrs. Mayer said we used a company out of Traverse City that subscribes to Agenda 21 and it's all through Michigan. She said it infringes on private property rights, wants to push people from rural areas into cities and limits commercial development. She said the plan restricts wide swaths of land along the river from development and prevents people from being allowed to use their land. Mrs. Mayer pointed out the plan mentions wind and solar but not natural gas which is less expensive. She said we may not be the ones implementing the plan, that things could change and talked about potential restrictions on land use along the river; said she's not suggesting our plan will do it but it's a possibility. Mrs. Mayer said they have lived in communities that have been destroyed, doesn't want to see that happen here and wants a program to encourage people to come here.

Sue said at this point she was not going to allow playing of the DVD but offered time at the October 4 meeting. Sue was not aware of a request being received (from the Mayers) for more time on the agenda; Mrs. Mayer said it was "earlier." Craig said he has the DVD if anyone wanted to borrow it.

Mr. Evitts, Colfax Twp. supervisor, said people on the JPC board live in this area and comparing them to those from Traverse City is like comparing apples to oranges. Concerning natural gas, he said work has been ongoing for two years trying to get it to Crystal Mountain and nothing has materialized. As far as development, he said better than half the land in the area is state owned which limits potential. Mr. Evitts said a resident in Colfax Township owns property with about the same footprint as Crystal Mountain and doesn't expect it will be developed.

Shelley read emails received from Rick and Shirley Damore addressing a nonexistent uncoded road on their property, Ron Hitesman commenting on a nonexistent uncoded nonexistent road that is actually a logging road and not a passable roadway and Charles and Marian Mayer listing their concerns: our plan may be a vision but someone else may use it as a road map to restrict property rights, the Natural Rivers Act restricting land use, natural gas was overlooked and restriction on commercial development. Sue asked that they be made part of the minutes.

Mr. Evitts added on natural gas that the cost can not be blended statewide for development as in the 1970/80s so each group or area stands on their own resulting in higher cost. On Natural Rivers, it is a 400 foot zone on each side for new construction, zoning administrator can grant permits to 200 feet and requests less than that must go before the review board. He pointed out that Thornhill has been undeveloped for years.

Adjournment. Peggy moved to adjourn, seconded by Shelley at 7:23PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Shelley Greene
Secretary

Minutes are proposed until approved at the next meeting.