

**SUPERIOR CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
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1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Gardner called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

The following members were present: Brennan, Dabish-Yahkind, Findley, Gardner, McGill, Sanii-Yahyai, and Steele.

Also present were Benjamin Carlisle, Carlisle Wortman; Claire Martin, OHM; and Laura Bennett, Planning & Zoning Administrator.

3. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

A quorum was present.

4. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Findley and supported by Commissioner Brennan to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion carried.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Minutes of the September 27, 2023 Regular Meeting

A motion was made by Commissioner Brennan and supported by Commissioner Sanii-Yahyai to approve the minutes as amended. The motion carried.

6. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

None.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

None.

8. PUBLIC HEARINGS, DELIBERATIONS AND ACTIONS

A. STPC 23-06 Plymouth-Ann Arbor & Napier Road Rezoning
Parcel ID J-10-01-100-022

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Benjamin Carlisle, Carlisle Wortman, reviewed the Planner's Report dated October 20, 2023

Motion by Commissioner Brennan, supported by Commissioner McGill to open the public hearing. The motion carried.

Vern Woodard, 4891 Napier Court, discussed the soil on the corner property, noting that the soil made for an unsuitable park. Additionally, the resident shared concerns with lighting at the proposed storage facility.

Mary Beth Hausman, 4485 Napier Road, shared concerns about the signage at the site, landscaping, and the distance the proposed facility would be from the roadway.

Stephen Duane, 4797 Napier Court, noted Napier Road has many speeders, has heavy traffic, and is often in need of grading from Washtenaw County Road Commission. Mr. Duane shared concerns of increased traffic at the intersection. Additionally, he feels that industrial lighting from the proposed facility would contradict the Natural Beauty Road designation of Napier Road.

A resident at 3540 Napier Road does not believe the use of self-storage fits with the area. She does not see how this use fits with natural resource preservation.

Juan Bradford, Director of Parks and Recreation, noted that the Parks and Recreation Department does not endorse nor condemn the plan.

Mary Emmett, owner of Gateway Farms and Plymouth Orchards, shared that the proposed self-storage facility is out of keeping with the area.

Jennifer Durocher, 10350 Plymouth-Ann Arbor Road, agrees with Ms. Emmett. She noted that there are self-storage facilities in the area. She added that as far as parks are concerned, Staebler Farm should be sufficient for the area. She also noted concerns with lights and runoff.

The resident at 4550 Napier Road also agrees with Ms. Emmett. The proposed facility is out of keeping with the area and has concerns about how the surrounding property values would be affected.

Jack Smiley, 10325 Cherry Hill Road, spoke in opposition to the proposed self-storage facility. He added it is inappropriate at this location, as it is the gateway to the community. He feels the rezoning would be spot zoning.

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Joann Shay, 4899 Napier Road, stated more information is needed on the proposed facility.

Shelley Crawford, 4675 Napier Court, feels a self-storage facility would be jarring to the area. Napier Road and Napier Court are one of the few places where you can see the night sky. This proposed facility would remove that.

Chris Branstock, builder for the applicant, stated all the complaints are addressed in the local codes. There would be minimal light pollution with downspot lighting, and all aisles would run adjacent to the neighboring homes, so no headlights would shine through. Additionally, regarding the run-off, no water would leave the site.

Michael Shay, 4899 Napier Road, supports keeping the property zoned R-1.

Mr. Branstock feels a self-storage facility is a better neighbor than a housing development. There is no strain on local services and no children being added to the school system.

Commissioner Brennan asked if access to the proposed facility could be limited to certain hours.

Mr. Branstock explained the entrance would be on Plymouth-Ann Arbor Road and could have a kiosk system with limited hours.

Commissioner Findley noted that she did not have time to review the letter from the applicant, since it was provided right before the meeting. Additionally, she believes the public should have the opportunity to see the letter, too.

She noted that the applicant's development plan is designed to restrict urban sprawl. She asked the applicant to define urban sprawl.

The applicant, Justin Pingston, replied urban sprawl is the spread of urbanization, or more businesses coming into the area. He noted the property to the east of the intersection, in Canton Township, is zoned light industrial.

Commissioner Findley asked, if she lived in Sycamore Meadows, could she rent one of the self-storage units.

The applicant replied that anyone could rent a unit.

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Commissioner Sanii-Yahyai asked if any traffic studies have been done in the area.

Mr. Branstock responded that data can be provided for self-storage facilities. He has data to show the proposed facility would generate approximately two to four cars per hour.

Commissioner Dabish Yahkind stated it is important to listen to the residents. She noted natural features need to be preserved and believes this is an example of urban sprawl. She thanked the neighbors for showing up to the public hearing.

Commissioner Findley commented that the area is beautiful, and the proposed facility would be a detriment.

Commissioner McGill stated there are many large parcels in that area. He questioned what happens when the Township receives other requests for rezoning to commercial. He asked how it benefits the Township to own a portion of the property that might not be usable.

Commissioner Brennan stated it is hard for him to envision a self-storage facility at the corner of Plymouth-Ann Arbor and Napier Roads, versus at a location closer to the highway.

Mr. Pingston explained he bought the property with the intent to develop it. He added that self-storage facilities thrive, and it will not become abandoned. He believes it is a good fit for the property.

Commissioner Gardner reviewed the standards set forth in Section 18.06 of the Superior Township Zoning Ordinance, Findings of Fact Required. They are as follows:

1. Whether or not the requested zoning change is justified by a change in conditions since the original Ordinance was adopted, or by an error in the original Ordinance.
2. The precedents, and the possible effects of such precedents, that might result from approval or denial of the petition.
3. The capacity of Superior Township or other government agencies to provide any services, facilities, and/or programs that might be required if the petition were approved.

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4. Effect of approval of the petition on the condition and/or value of property in Superior Township or in adjacent municipalities.

5. Relation of the petition to the Township's adopted Growth Management Plan, and of other government units where applicable.

Commissioner Gardner noted that Mr. Carlisle addressed the standards in Section 18.06 of the Superior Township Zoning Ordinance. Commissioner Gardner noted the fifth Finding of Fact was a sticking point for him, as it is the most important. He looks at adjacent properties and wonders if a self-storage facility fits in the area. He added there is very little commercial in the surrounding areas.

Commissioner Gardner went on to state he does not believe the first and second Findings of Fact were met. He does not feel there has been a change in conditions since the original Ordinance was adopted that would justify a rezoning. He also questions the precedent that could be set by this rezoning.

Mr. Pingston stated he has spoken with Schostack, who owns the property to the north, in Salem Township. He explained approximately 1,500 homes are planned to be built through Salem Springs in Salem Township, as well as businesses along Napier. He believes this proposed self-storage facility would complement that development.

Mr. Branstock believes the Planning Commission has a choice. A low-impact commercial venture, or the same sprawl that has occurred in Canton Township.

Commissioner Gardner replied he is not sure 25 homes would fit on the site due to the features. Additionally, with the current R-1 zoning, this would not be considered urban sprawl.

Mr. Pingston believes with the current R-1 zoning, he would not need a permit to take out every tree at the site. He asked what was stopping him from selling the land and someone bulldozing the entire site.

Mr. Carlisle replied that Superior Township has a Woodland Ordinance and a Wetlands Ordinance. He added that most of those trees are in protected areas, so the site couldn't just be clear cut. Therefore, he would not use that as a justification for why the existing zoning is not suitable for the site.

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Commissioner Findley added, Salem Township is not the Charter Township of Superior. Superior Charter Township preserves our land because they choose to.

Mr. Pingston agrees with that and stated that is a big reason behind the idea of the park. This would permanently protect about 12 acres as the entrance to Superior Township. He added that the traffic is going to increase when the homes in Salem Township are built.

Commissioner Steele stated in the drawing a 40' setback is shown, but on the letter submitted by the applicant, a setback of 150' is indicated, with 75% of the site undisturbed. He asked if increasing the setback would change the number of buildings proposed or push them close to the front.

Mr. Branstock stated it would likely change the number of buildings or make the buildings smaller to accommodate the larger setback.

Commissioner McGill asked the total acreage of the site.

Mr. Pingston replied that the total size of the site is 25.06 acres.

Commissioner McGill asked how much of that was wetlands.

Mr. Pingston replied that he had a wetland delineation, and he believes the entire wetland is approximately five acres.

Mr. Pingston showed Commissioners where the land would be split, separating the proposed self-storage facility and the park.

Commissioner Gardner reiterated that the proposed park land would be the entire northeast corner of the property.

Commissioner Steele stated that one option is to donate the land and development rights to the Township and do nothing with it. He wondered if the park would be a negative benefit to surrounding homeowners.

Commissioner Dabish Yahkind indicated she does not feel many community members or visitors would want to go to a park that backs up to a self-storage facility.

Mr. Pingston stated the proposed park and self-storage facility would be separated by the creek and heavily screened.

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Commissioner Gardner feels this proposed self-storage facility is inconsistent with the Master Plan, which is a standard in the Zoning Ordinance.

Commissioner Steele stated he would like to see a rendering of the development with a 150' buffer, because 150' versus 40' is a dramatic difference to the neighbors in every way, especially if 75% of the site isn't being developed.

Commissioner Gardner stated that no matter the buffer size, the issue is still the compatibility with the Master Plan.

Motion by Commissioner Findley, supported by Commissioner Brennan to direct staff to draft a Resolution of Denial for STPC 23-06 Plymouth-Ann Arbor & Napier Road Rezoning.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Brennan, Dabish-Yahkind, Findley, Gardner, McGill, Sanii-Yahyai.
No: Steele.
Abstain: None.
Absent: None.

The motion carried.

9. REPORTS

A. Building Department Report

A motion was made by Commissioner Brennan and supported by Commissioner Sanii-Yahyai to receive the report. The motion carried.

B. Ordinance Officer Report

A motion was made by Commissioner Brennan and supported by Commissioner Sanii-Yahyai to receive the report. The motion carried.

10. OLD BUSINESS

A. Master Plan Revision Discussion

Planning Commissioners met jointly with the Master Plan Steering Committee prior to the Planning Commission meeting. Commissioners

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were satisfied with the changes that had been made since their last joint meeting.

Motion by Commissioner Findley, supported by Commissioner Brennan to recommend that the Township Board of Trustees release the Draft 2023 Comprehensive Master Plan for the required 63-day public review period.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Brennan, Dabish-Yahkind, Findley, Gardner, McGill, Sani-Yahyai, Steele.
No: None.
Abstain: None.
Absent: None.

The motion carried.

11. NEW BUSINESS

None.

12. POLICY DISCUSSION

Commissioner Dabish Yahkind explained there has been an increase in pedestrian traffic on Plymouth-Ann Arbor Road through Dixboro and noted pedestrian safety concerns.

Given the current speed limit, she feels that if a speed study were conducted by Michigan State Police, they would find the speed limit should be lowered.

After discussion, the Planning Commission made the following motion:

Motion by Commissioner Dabish Yahkind, supported by Commissioner Brennan, to request the Board of Trustees ask the Michigan State Police in coordination with the Washtenaw County Road Commission to conduct a speed study in Dixboro Village area along Plymouth-Ann Arbor Road between Dixboro Road and Ford Road.

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Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Brennan, Dabish-Yahkind, Findley, Gardner, McGill, Sanii-Yahyai,
Steele.
No: None.
Abstain: None.
Absent: None.

The motion carried.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Brennan, supported by Commissioner Findley to adjourn.

Motion Carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Thomas Brennan III, Planning Commission Secretary

Laura Bennett, Recording Secretary
Superior Charter Township
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