

Solon Township Planning Commission

Solon Township Hall
9191 S. Kasson St.,
Cedar, MI 49621

AGENDA

Regular Meeting Agenda
Tuesday, June 4, 2024,
6:00 P.M

MEMBERS

Steve Morgan – Chairman – Term expires 12/31/24
Todd Yeomans – Vice Chair / ZBA Rep 12/31/24
Steve Yoder – Member / Twp Board Rep 11/17/24
Meg Paxton – Member 12/31/25
Samantha Vandervlucht – Member 12/31/25

1. Call Meeting to Order by Chairman Morgan at 6:00 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call: Present – Morgan, Yoder, Yeomans, Paxton and Vandervlucht.
4. Approval of Agenda: Moved by Paxton to removed Item A under Old Business, and approve as amended, seconded by Yeomans.
Motion approved 5-0.
5. Approval of Meeting Minutes; May 7, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes
Moved by Yoder to approve the May 7, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes as presented, seconded by Paxton.
Motion approved 5-0.
6. Conflicts of Interest: None
7. Public Comment; (Limited to three minutes per person unless extended by Chairman).
Alexander Adams: Was reviewing the proposed Master Plan with the proposed Land Use Developments and was concerned with how much property is proposed to be rezoned as the Censes survey shows that the township has only grown by 70 residences over the past ten years. The new planed zoning change would be adding just in the south part of Cedar an additional 700 new residences. There are only 450 residences in the township so all these new PUD zones would add up to several thousand possible new residences. The concern is that this is not servicing the people of Solon Township. The goal is to preserve the rural character of the township, questioning the goal of the planned use developments. Why are we trying to zone around planning to bring in 2,000 new residences into the township and what does this do for the township? We do not have commerce, so we do not have a need to have jobs filled. We live here because no one lives here, and all these new houses would not be for the people of Solon rather for people of other places. Looking at the goals in the Master Plan the Planning Commission needs to take into consideration what benefits the current residences and not the future residents. We also need to look at the infrastructure as there is only a single road here, why are we adding zoning for an additional 700 houses along a single road? Worried that

this will open predatory development and allow for clearcutting of properties as the landscaping ordinance is not descriptive enough to prevent this.

Tom Holton: Lives behind Alex Adams, the Master Plan will rezone his property for development and would like to understand this a little better and where is the infrastructure for this type of development. Where is the water and sewer as you will not be able to put in wells and septic systems for an additional 800 homes. What are the overall thoughts on what is going on in the future?

Nicole McHugh: Would like to add to the other comments made. Does not feel that businesses like Buntings could handle this type of increased population. We would need bigger grocery stores and transportation, feels this area would need to be developed differently.

Mike McHugh: Would like to know who this rezoning is for and who is going to do the decimation, and what it is for, as it is obviously not for the residents. Feels this is for certain individuals, as in the rich get richer. You are not building it for the people that live here as stated previously and of course the why, why would you allow this for our peninsula? This is not preservation you are either trying to preserve the rural character or you are not. If you follow through with this then you are obviously not trying to preserve the character. The objectives need to be resigned.

Morgan: The future land use maps and the Master Plan that the PC has been working on for several years will go to the Township Board for their review and to accept public input. So, this is the first time that the public is becoming aware of this, and we are expecting feedback on what is being proposed. Once public comment is received then it could come back to the PC for modifications, changes and opinions and things like that. We are trying to allow for some housing growth, while maintaining the rural character. We know everyone is concerned for the Solon Township rural character. We have taken what we thought was an approach of keeping proposed Planned Unit Development in areas along the main corridor of M-72 and a little bit toward Cedar.

Adams: Is there a reason to need this many more people in the township?

Paxton: When we did the survey the Censes was that we need more housing. We need more affordable housing. Homes on 40-acre parcels will not be more affordable but they are on a smaller lot. No one is coming onto your land saying that you need to split this up, and you need to put more housing here. It is an opportunity for the next 20 years of possibility.

Adams: We have grown by 75 residents in 10 years, and we only have 450 households, why are we planning for over 2,000?

Paxton: I don't think anyone is planning for it.

Adams: Why are we turning agricultural conservation land into developments.

Holton: How are we going to deal with 800 new houses when the main road is not built for that so they will have to put in another lane or a turn lane or widen the road?

Adams: By zoning ½ acre parcels, developers will buy that land and they will certainly develop it.

Yoder: The input that you are giving us is exactly what we want. The process that we have been going through over the past three or four years has been not necessarily been for public review. We have been going off the survey and modifying the Master Plan, and

now this is going out for public review and the feedback is exactly what we are looking for because we can change things based on the feedback we receive.

Adams: We appreciate the PC and the process.

Yoder: What you see out there is simply a discussion starter. It is a proposal it is a draft. Once this is sent to the board then it will go out for public input. This is far from being adopted. This is simply the beginning stages of public input.

Morgan: Encourages the members of the audience to give public input at the township board meetings regarding the proposed changes.

Yeomans: Asked Adams how much land he currently has and stated that if it were all trees, he could clear cut the land. It does not matter who owns the property. All the trees can be legally cut down without any opposition. Thinks there have been more than 70 people move into the township recently.

Adams: That is what the Censes states.

Morgan: Like Steve stated, this is exactly what we are looking for and what the township board will need to hear as well.

Adams: Do you have plans as to what will happen if that many residents move in and infiltrate that road?

Yoder: What you are seeing on the maps there is proposed, and if they were approved as they are now, and a developer came in they would still have to go through almost a year long process in order to rezone that. That is simply a map stating that we would possibly allow that.

Yeomans: Corey had to go through hoops just to get this development approved and thankfully it turned out well for our sake as we approved it and helped pushed it through and they are selling so tell me people aren't buying houses here.

Adams: They will buy houses here, which is the problem.

Yeomans: You and I share the same thought because I was born and raised in this area. It has changed a little bit since I was a kid.

Adams: I believe that if we build 2,000 houses, they will all be purchased. That is the worry. We have a small grocery store, additional business would be needed to support this growth,

Yeomans: A grocery store and additional shopping is not our problem.

McHugh: It will be our kids' problem.

Yeomans: We live in the best and worst place to live. It is a blessing that it is so beautiful and a curse that it's so beautiful.

Morgan: Follow the process and give your input and we will work through it.

Yoder: Right now, the best thing that you can do is go to the township board and voice your opinion, but it might not be on the board agenda for a couple more months as we are working on collecting all the minutes from the past few years which shows how we came to this decision. So once this is all condensed then it will go out the board and they will send it out to all the neighboring counties, townships and governmental agencies for their input as well. Once this is done it will come back to the PC where we can make changes based on the public input received. If a developer comes through and request these changes, there is no guarantee that this will even happen as it is a planning stage, and the property will still have to be rezoned and go through all the different regulations to make this happen. Come with those arguments and points to the Township Board.

Holton: Just because a developer will have to do a certain amount of infrastructure to do any of these projects does not mean that we aren't going to be able to have to pay for it. Look at Old Mission Peninsula when they couldn't deal with the sewage system, they ran lines down and the people on each side of the new lines had to pony up a pretty good chunk of change in their tax assessments to cover the cost of this sewer line. This wasn't for a developer put apparently for the residents on that stretch of road but its not like it won't happen here where people would be required to tap into a sewer and water system. Could live somewhere else with more population density if that was what I wanted.

Morgan: Encourages people to come forward like they have tonight. Please show up and give your comments to the Township Board so they are not blindsided by the end product that you had no input in.

Adams: Thanked the PC and stated that he appreciates the work that they have done and wants them to know it's not about placing blame.

Yeomans: There is a difference between controlled growth, and non-controlled growth, so, this PUD is controlled growth. It doesn't change 1,000 acres of landscape it changes 50 acres.

8. Correspondence: **None**

9. Reports

1. Township Board Representative

Yoder: At the last Township Board meeting the representative of the Road Commission was present and gave a report on the road behind Buntings and what the predicament is and Railroad Ave., which is behind the depot. Right now, the Road Commission has no ability to repave the road behind Buntings, they have looked at the deeds and found that they do not have enough property there to build a road. Buntings owns too much of the land which means that the Road Commission would have to encroach on their property to meet any road standards. There may need to be a resolution signed by the Township Board to deed the property to Buntings stating it is their road and their responsibility as there is no legal right to build a road there. The Township Board is just in the beginning stages of figuring out how to make this ligament. Railroad Ave is close to the Fire Department, the Road Commission is looking at vacating this completely as the road goes straight to the Fire Department and there is a stop sign right in front of the Fire Department. During the summer people stop there all the time and it is a hinderance to the Fire Department and trucks being able to get out. The Road Commission is considering either making this an alley way with removing the stop sign and then no longer plowing this portion of the street. The properties around this own the road and part of the hardware store is on the road so this limits what the Road Commission can do there. Perrins Landing was also mentioned. The DNR/DEQ has stated that the Township has a right to go in there and put in a new dock. The DEQ told the Road Commission that they can't do anything at Perrins Landing, but the Township can. The Township was told in the past they couldn't do anything on this property so there is some confusion here that needs to be resolved. They also gave us an update on some roads that will be repaired. All of 651 will be chipped and sealed. The Township Board also approved \$3,000.00 expenditure on a new pressure tank and a screen for the well as they found sand in the toilets. The townhall repairs were also discussed and

as of right now it appears that the township will hire Leelanau Construction as they came in with the cheapest bid at \$112,000.00, the plans were reworked a little, so this came down to \$89,000.00. The Township Board also approved a gate at Vlacks Park so this will become a walking path along for only foot traffic through the area with a parking area wide enough for a turnaround for Road Commission vehicles. Kasson Township is officially pursuing a Fire Station of their own. The Township Board also hired Christina as the permanent ZA at \$35,000.00 yearly. We also had a meeting on May 29th, with the Chamber which went well. The Chamber formed a subcommittee referred to as the Cedar Polka Fest Committee, which is a 501C3, this is how they get their liquor licensing. The Chamber was unable to do this any longer, so this allows them to obtain the licensing. The Chamber would like someone from the Township Board to join the Chamber to be able to report back so that there is some sort of communication. The Township Board is also looking at lease agreements for the Chamber to be able to use the ball parks and tennis courts. The Township is hoping to establish a fee for the use of these and will need to agree to a fee amount which then would apply to all users of the park. Years ago, the Chamber used to contribute around \$50,000.00 to the parks but in more recent years they have backed out of contributing any monies to the parks. The fee will be discussed at the next Township Board meeting.

Morgan: Stated he was at this meeting but left early. Questioned Yoder on the Landscape Ordinance as it was brought up and if any discussion was done on this. A board member stated that the PC needed to get this updated.

Yoder: This has been said multiple times. The Township Board needs to give the PC input on this as to what they want to see, as of now they have not done this.

Morgan: Can we ask again? It was stated at the last meeting that they want this so what would they like us to do?

Yoder: I will bring it up again at the next meeting and how do they want this process to look.

ZBA Representative

Yeomans: Nothing to report as there was not a ZBA meeting in May.

Morgan: Asked for a Zoning Administrator report and would like this added to next agenda as an agenda item.

Zoning Administrator Report

Deeren: Reported that she has been busy working with people on land divisions and waiting for information so that she can process a complete application. Nine land use permits to date have been issued for pole buildings, a pool and residential buildings. There are a lot of people interested in moving into the area and building. There have also been a couple of complaints. One was regarding some survey staking which is a new land division and private road. The complainant wanted to know if they could stop the property from being divided and were told that this falls under a state statute and if the property owner complies with the rules of that statute, they are legally allowed to divide the property. There have been several calls on building types and allowable uses on various properties.

Yoder: Asked about a sign on Harry's Road that Whiteford has put up and inquired what is occurring on that parcel.

Deeren: It is being developed as a single-family residence. People are not over building their properties they are building homes that are compliant.

Yoder: Asked about the text amendment and whether this was forwarded onto the County Planner for review?

Deeren: Stated that it was.

Yoder: This was not brought up at the last meeting and by law it is required. Questioned if it was sent to the correct department.

Deeren: Will investigate this and make sure it was sent to the correct person.

10. Old Business;

~~A. Master Plan Review of Requested word change on page 48 and deletion of page 25.~~

11. New Business;

1. Planning Commission goals for 2024.

Morgan: Besides continuing to work through the Master Plan and the Future Land Use Maps we know people wanted to start on the Accessory Dwelling Units is there anything else anyone would like to discuss moving forward?

Yoder: Main thing is ADU's.

Morgan: If we get positive feedback on the Landscape Ordinance then we will jump back on that.

Deeren: Stated that she may have some definitions that she would like to have more clarity on as some of them are confusing and vague. One of the main definitions is on animals and how many animals can a property owner have in a residentially zoned district.

Morgan: Looking forward we will continue to work on the Master Plan, Future Land Use Maps, Accessory Dwelling Units, Definitions and a possible Landscape Plan.

Planning Commission discussed short term rentals as this is not currently an allowable use. Would like to see Accessory Dwelling Units with limitations added to the ordinance to help with the affordable housing issues in Leelanau County. These should be long-term rentals if allowed and not short term. The Township Board would not allow for a short-term rental ordinance so any changes allowing for new accessory dwelling units will need to have stipulations. The ordinance does allow for short term rentals through the Bed and Breakfast ordinance which is owner occupied. Zoning controls growth. The PC requested for the Zoning Administrator to provide some new ordinance language for the PC to consider at the next meeting.

2. Review Accessory Dwelling Units

Discussed above.

12. Other Business;

- 1.
- 2.

13. ZA / Planning Commission Comments: **None**
14. Public Comments; (Limited to three minutes per person unless extended by Chairman).
Karen Smith: Listening to the discussions as we came in and the discussions on the ADU's I would hope that you would take into consideration enforcement. We have absolutely no enforcement. We need to seriously consider some form of enforcement.
Alex Adams: This was very informative and appreciates the work that the PC has been doing. Will make sure to attend the Township meetings to express his concerns. Believes that with the land divisions that could increase the population which does allow for growth and possibly more residences and that the extra areas added for future PUD's is not necessary.
Deeren: Encouraged the public to watch the agenda for the Master Plan and Future Land Use Maps to be added as an item.
Yeomans: More people need to show up and voice their concerns.
Morgan: Would like more public input on these issues.
15. Adjournment:
Morgan moved to adjourn at 7:05p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Christina Deeren, Recording Secretary