

NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP
Township Board
Minutes of Special Meeting
January 7, 2019 2020

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Supervisor Chockley at 8350 Main Street.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE

Beliger provided a brief invocation and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Marlene Chockley, Supervisor	Present
Kathleen Manley, Clerk	Present
Lenore Zelenock, Treasurer	Present
Tawn Beliger, Trustee	Present
Janet Chick, Trustee	Present
Wayne Dockett, Trustee	Present
Jacki Otto, Trustee	Present

Also present:

Township Manager Steven Aynes
Planning Consultant Paul Lippens, McKenna
Members of the community

ADOPT AGENDA

- **Motion:** Chockley moved, Chick seconded, that the agenda be adopted as presented.

Dockett said the sale of property should not be considered without a Township attorney present.

Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.

FIRST CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Mary Tummonds, Margaret Riddell, 65141 W. Eight Mile, David Gordon, Hellner Road, Jim Nelson, 7777 Sutton, and Julia Henshaw, 4681 Six Mile, spoke in favor of keeping all of the North Village property for park and/or for asking residents for their input. Mary Tummonds also commented on marijuana sales in the Township.

BOARD MEMBER RESPONSE

Regarding sale of the North Village property, Board member comments included that the issue should be put to a vote of residents, asked why there is not similar interest in the park property near the Township hall, some residents want part of the property developed residentially to add population downtown to support business people want and to keep park maintenance costs down, and the five acre park being proposed will include the waterfront and have the amenities people want, the ratings for the two proposals are too low to be considered acceptable, and representative government calls for the Board to make decisions on behalf of the residents.

CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

On January 14th at 6:00 P.M. the Board will hold question and answer period with the public.

AGENDA ITEM

1.
Receive Evaluation from the North Village Committee and Consider Development Offers for the North Village

Township planner Paul Lippens explained that the purpose of this meeting is for the Board to consider purchase offers for a portion of the North Village site from Livonia Builders and A.R. Brouwer based on the Township's Request for Proposals (RFQs). He noted that in 2019 the synthesis plan (a combination of development and park) for the property was adopted as part of the Master Plan in 2019 and the Township Board passed a resolution last month to retain at least five acres of the site for public park. He referred to his letter summarizing the scoring of the proposals by the subcommittee formed by the Board, and he noted that all documents from the committee are included in the packet.

Lippens noted that both offers include some changes to the basic template, so another attorney review is needed either before or after responses from the developers to any proposals made to them by the Board. He said the committee found that the Livonia Builders proposal was most in line with the goals of the Township, but that their proposed purchased price was low and recommended a counteroffer of \$1 million (with the park and outlots excluded). He said they also recommend that elements of concept plan be reworked to include a non-motorized path and access to Barker Road.

Lippens said the committee was also impressed with the A.R. Brouwer proposal and is not rejecting it, recommending it be retained as a backup should Livonia Builders drop out.

He displayed:

- a copy of the synthesis plan which showed more park land, which was possible because the housing envisioned in it was taller, higher-density residential.
- the Livonia Builders proposal, which shows less park, with many of the townhomes clustered on the south with the rest of the residential in single-family lots.
- the A.R. Brouwer proposal showing taller, multi-family residential with duplexes on the south side.

Lippens said the committee felt the housing proposed by Livonia Builders is of the high-quality type the Township was looking for to support downtown development. He said the committee did not like the public space being split in the A.R. Brouwer proposal and many people felt the proposed apartments were not what they want for the

**Northfield Township Board Meeting
Minutes of Special Meeting
Public Safety Building; 8350 Main Street
January 7, 2020**

site. He noted both proposals include public beach, performance areas, gathering spaces, and a perimeter path.

Regarding his contact with Washtenaw County Parks as directed by the Board, Lippens said Director Coy Vaughn indicated the most likely point of participation by the County would be for development of a path because they have funding for feasibility studies, engineering, and construction. Lippens added there is the potential for expanding the lake front park through acquisitions for which there is likely public funding available, and other County departments have also been helpful in providing guidance about development of the park.

Lippens noted both proposals are before the Board, A.R. Brouwer also submitted a late letter increasing their offer, the Board can counteroffer, and the Board can set a time limit for responses.

- ▶ **Motion:** Beliger moved, Chockley seconded, to entertain negotiations with Livonia Builders regarding the North Village site with a counteroffer of \$1.1 million.

Comments from the Board, Aynes, and Lippens included:

- The Township currently does not have legal representation to prepare a development agreement, put the committee and engineers for both parties have work to do before the agreement is developed.
- The motion should include specifics about changes it wants to the site plan, how much of the land is to be sold, etc.
- The sale price for the 18.5 acres to be sold should be at least \$1.75 million.
- The site for future commercial development seems to be included in the land to be sold.
- The Township can negotiate the purchase of property in closed session, but sale of property must be done in open session.
- The \$1.1 million figure came from an informal estimate by an appraiser and that was for the entire 23 acres, but there are not many useful comparable sales to determine a price. However, Brouwer offered \$1.1 million.
- In the Livonia Builders proposal all of the park land is contiguous except where bisected by the road.
- Action needed by the Board now is to provide guidance to the two developers as to whether the Township intends to proceed with one or the other, what changes the Board would like to plans proposed, and any proposal for a different purchase price.

- ▶ **Motion to Amend:** Zelenock moved, Dockett seconded, to remove the price of \$1.1 million from the motion. **Motion to amend carried 5—2 on a roll call vote, Dockett and Beliger opposed.**
- ▶ **Amended motion:** Beliger moved, Chockley seconded, to entertain negotiations with Livonia Builders regarding the North Village site. **Amended motion carried 5—2 on a roll call vote, Zelenock and Dockett opposed.**

- The Livonia Builders proposal does not follow the synthesis plan developed by the Township; there is less open space and less residential density.

- ▶ **Motion:** Beliger moved to counter the Livonia Builders proposed purchase price with a price of \$1.1 million. **Motion died for lack of second.**

The Board listed changes it wants to see to the site plan:

- Access to Barker Road.
- Non-motorized trail along the railroad that connects to Jennings Park under the freeway.
- More public parking.
- Remove the Main Street parcels.
- Reduce the size of the parcel to be sold to 18 acres to retain area for commercial development.
- An agreement about access for the private road.
- Some kind of delineation between the park and the residential development.

Additional comments included:

- The County must authorize curb cuts for the roads, a proposed entrance from Main Street would cross the park land, so an easement from the Township and a maintenance agreement would be required.
- Concern that enough land is being left for commercial development to serve the residents of this development and provide the amenities current residents have indicated they want.
- Objection that the requirement that half of the sale price be retained for development of the park is essentially the developer demanding that the Township build a park for their development. The Township's attorney removed that requirement, and the developer has inserted it again. But those funds can be used for matching funds required for park grants, and it is an appropriate use for the funds.

- ▶ **Motion:** Chockley moved, Chick seconded, that the following changes be incorporated into the Livonia Builders proposal:

- Access to Barker Road.
- Non-motorized trail along the railroad that connects to Jennings Park under the freeway.
- Remove the Main Street parcels.
- Reduce the size of the parcel to be sold to 18 acres to retain area for commercial development.
- An agreement about access for the private road.
- Some kind of delineation between the park and the residential development.

Motion carried 5—2 on a roll call vote, Dockett and Zelenock opposed.

- ▶ **Motion:** Beliger moved, Chick seconded, to reject the current purchase price offered by Livonia Builders for the North Village site and to request a new proposed purchase price. **Motion carried 5—2 on a roll call vote, Zelenock and Dockett opposed.**

- ▶ **Motion:** Beliger moved, Otto seconded, that Livonia Builders provide a response to the Board by Friday, February 17, 2020. **Motion carried 5—2 on a voice vote, Zelenock and Dockett opposed.**

**Northfield Township Board Meeting
Minutes of Special Meeting
Public Safety Building; 8350 Main Street
January 7, 2020**

Manley said the issue of whether it is legal for an agreement with the developer to require that part of the sale price be designated for park development. It was agreed that is a question for the new legal counsel.

SECOND CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Margaret Riddell, 65141 W. Eight Mile, Gina Coloske, 9157 Walnut Drive, David Gordon, Hellner Road, and Jim Nelson, 7777 Sutton Road, made comments about the North Village development proposal. John Gura, 7659 Edmonds, commented on the issue of marijuana businesses in the Township.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Comments included:

- Aynes was asked to update the Board via email about the process for selecting new Township legal counsel.
- Thanks to the public for their input and to the North Village committee for their work.
- A better proposal with greater density, more open space, and more commercial space is needed for the

North Village site. The voters should be allowed to vote on the issue, and if the people want that option they can petition for that.

- The current approach to the use of the 23 acre North Village site is appropriate because it will reinvest in the community and the schools through the tax revenue generated along with having a park.
- The Township has owned the North Village site for several years and it is available for use by the public, but it is not used, and what the Township has tried in the past has not produced the desired downtown revitalization.
- Sale of most of the North Village property will provide the funding necessary to create the desired park amenities.

ADJOURNMENT

- **Motion:** Chockley moved, Beliger seconded, that the meeting be adjourned.
Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 9:22 P.M.

Submitted by Lisa Lemble.

Corrections to the originally issued minutes are indicated as follows:
Wording removed is ~~stricken through~~;
Wording added is underlined.

Approved by the Township Board on January 28, 2020.

Kathleen Manley, Clerk

Official minutes of all meetings are available on the Township's website at http://www.twp-northfield.org/government/township_board_of_trustees/