

Joint Planning Commission / Town Board Meeting Minutes December 3, 2019

The Empire Township Planning Commission meeting was called to order by Jared Sachs and the continuation of the Town Board Meeting was called to order by Terry Holmes at 7:00 PM.

Present from the Planning Commission were Jared Sachs, Chris Williamson, Bob Bjerke, Charles Seipel, Jane Kansier. Tom Kaldunski and Trent Larson arrived during the meeting. Present from the Town Board were Terry Holmes, Ed Gerten (Planning Commission liaison) and Denise Williamson.

Mark Krebsbach, Transportation Director/ County Engineer for Dakota County and Scott Peters, Transportation Planner for Dakota County presented information on the Dakota County 2040 Transportation Plan.

Some key points that were discussed in the transportation plan update included; proposed construction of new county roads in the future and where they will align; the turnback of some county roads; maintenance of existing roads; traffic flow projections and highway capacity needs; and areas of concern. Mark Kresbach noted that because of a number of factors, including slower population growth, traffic counts in 2040 are expected to be similar to counts that were projected to take place in 2030. He also noted that intercounty transit options are not in great demand compared to suburban to city transit. The expanding park and ride on Cedar Ave. in Apple Valley was noted.

In Empire Township, there are still plans to turn Biscayne Ave. into a County State Aid Highway in addition to a realignment of County Road 81. Another change in Empire Township will be the widening of CSAH 46 from two lanes to four lanes between Highway 3 and Highway 52. This will help address increased traffic counts, truck traffic, and safety concerns along that stretch of road. Highway 3 is also a top safety concern.

Some concerns that the Planning Commission and Town Board had regarding future transportation was the Intersection of Highway 3 and County Road 66 in Farmington and the need to straighten out the alignment of proposed new county roads in the Township. The Planning Commission disused the need to develop a plan for collector streets in the Township that will accommodate future growth. The UMore and DNR owned land in the center of the Township poses a challenge when forming east to west connections.

It is anticipated that the 2040 Transportation Plan will be adopted in the first quarter of 2020.

The need to clarify language in the zoning ordinance pertaining to communication towers and the requirement that setbacks meet or exceed the height of the tower was discussed.

Discussion was held on future development in Empire Township. There is a need for more space for businesses in the Township. Residential development provides a good tax base for the Township. Because of traffic on Highway 3, it is likely that business development will take place closer to Highway 52, but that area would need water and sewer. Terry Holmes said that future water and sewer connections need to be studied, and part of that will occur with the study related to the new Farmington water tower. The Township has great recreational amenities that attract residents, but also needs to be thinking of amenities for the Townships growing retired population. Tom Kaldunski recommended that the Township work with Jane Kansier to develop a plan for the northwest quadrant of the Township, where most future growth is expected to occur. This winter would be a good time to do it. Jane Kansier is going to work on searching for zoning ordinance language that could possibly expand options for the property at 1625 Chippendale.

The Joint Planning Commission and Town Board Meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Terry Holmes, Chairman Town Board

Charles Seipel, Clerk - Treasurer