

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF VAN BUREN, CITY OF BELLEVILLE & SUMPTER TOWNSHIP  
JOINT PLANNING COMMISSION  
December 6, 2023  
MINUTES**

Director Power called the meeting to order at 5:06 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:**

**City of Belleville Planning Commission:**

**Present:** Chair, Michael Hawkins, Matthew Wagner, John Juriga, Mike Renaud, Randy Priest, Becky Hasen, Julie Kissel, Mark Kowalski and James O'Keefe.

**Excused:** None.

**Elected Officials:** Ken Voigt and Julie Kissel.

**Staff:** Steve Jones.

**Van Buren Township Planning Commission:**

**Present:** Jeff Jahr, Sharry Budd, Medina Atchinson, Jackson Pahle, Peter Creal and Chair, Brian Cullin.

**Excused:** Bernard Grant.

**Staff:** Director Akers, Director Power, Director Coburn, Communications staff Michael Japowicz and Elena Manalp and Secretary Harman.

**Elected Officials:** Kevin McNamara, Sharry Budd, Donald Boynton and Bryon Kelley.

**Planning Representatives:** Vidya Krishnan of McKenna Associates.

**Sumpter Township Planning Commission:**

**Present:** Jane Stalmack, Richard Pokerwinski, Daniel Watson, Vincent Warren and John Honey.

**Excused:** None.

**Elected Officials:** None.

**Staff:** None.

**APPOINTMENT OF A CHAIRPERSON:**

**Motion** Hawkins, Creal second to nominate Commissioner Cullin as chairperson. **Motion Carried.**

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

**Motion** Juriga, Kissel second to approve the agenda of December 6, 2023 as presented. **Motion Carried.**

**GENERAL DISCUSSION:**

**ITEM #1: THE VAN BUREN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION INVITES THE PLANNING COMMISSIONS OF THE CITY OF BELLEVILLE AND SUMPTER TOWNSHIP TO DISCUSS PLANNING TOPICS OF INTEREST AND FUTURE PLANNING COORDINATION.**

**COMMISSIONERS DISCUSSED THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:**

**A. MASTER PLAN EFFORTS:**

Commissioners discussed Master Plan efforts in each of their communities. Van Buren Township had a complete Master Plan update in 2020 and would like to see if there are any additional updates that need to be made. There are now different types of mixed-use concepts in the Sumpter Road Corridor and the Township is curious to see how this affects their neighboring communities. The rural character of the Corridor has been maintained with a mixture of commercial and residential development and the Township would like to maintain partnerships with the City of Belleville and Sumpter Township. Sumpter Township also updated their Master Plan in 2018 and is currently revisiting the plan to look at expanding their green spaces. The City of Belleville is due for a Master Plan evaluation and staff has already had discussion on updating the Plan.

**B. SUMPTER ROAD CORRIDOR AND BELLEVILLE ROAD CORRIDOR:**

Commissioners discussed the Sumpter Road Corridor and Belleville Road Corridor. Van Buren Township inquired if there is something that the City of Belleville and Sumpter Township would like to see to make it more cohesive. Sumpter Township is currently looking at part of Willis Road becoming part of the Corridor, they also have the south side of Bemis Road that could be developed both ways. Commissioners discussed slip streets and rail streets in the Sumpter Road Corridor, for these to happen there has to be some sort of consideration with the City of Belleville. The City had one (1) property owner that had to change their development plan as it wouldn't work with the slip street or rail street. The project would have been larger to include a lot in Van Buren Township. Commissioners like the mixed-use concepts in the Sumpter Road Corridor and like what has been done along the Belleville Road Corridor in terms of walkability, Harris Park and the DDA. Van Buren Township is in the process of coordinating events with the DDA and Parks and Recreation.

**C. DOWNTOWN BELLEVILLE:**

Commissioners discussed the downtown Belleville area and ways to support it. Commissioners told the City of Belleville to keep up the good work and they also discussed the possibility of additional parking. There have been conversations for a while to expand parking, but the City is pretty built out. There is limited square footage in the City and there was discussion of shuttling people in from Van Buren Township, possibly from a big box parking lot such as Menards, Meijer or Walmart or a location in the Sumpter Road Corridor. There is also property behind Frosty Boy, if a few properties were purchased access could be gained to turn it into a parking lot. Parking may be something that the City of Belleville and Van Buren Township look into together. Commissioners also discussed the possibility of putting in a roundabout at the 5-points and a grocery store. The response from community engagements is always a grocery store and coffee shop, the city now has two (2) coffee shops and the Butcher Shop with limited groceries. There needs to be something on the south side of town, a lot of residents do not want to go through town and drive over the freeway to get groceries.

**D. RESIDENTIAL CORRIDORS:**

Commissioners discussed the residential corridors in previous topics and they have been identified based on density. Sumpter Township residents want their land and horses.

**E. BELLEVILLE LAKE:**

Commissioners discussed current and future projects for Belleville Lake, noting it draws people into the tri-community area. The City of Belleville finished Horizon Park thirteen years ago with a grant from Wayne County, there are now day slips and a kayak launch. Now that plaza with the Bait Shop is complete, the City is looking at Doane's Landing. There is currently a grant that was written to put in docks at Doanes Landing. The City also has Paddle Belleville, where residents can rent boats and kayaks. The City is working to enhance lake amenities as much as they can. Van Buren Township has the U of M Boathouse with the U of M women's rowing team and a swimming area at Van Buren Park Beach. French Landing Park now has a kayak launch with a kayak vending machine and there is a path for residents to access the water. The Township also has two (2) boat launches, the Belleville Yacht Club (BYC) and all other shores are residential. Commissioners would like to see both sides of the Belleville bridge more walkable and hope for the development of a park at the north side of the bridge. The preliminary plan for the Denton Road bridge has already been approved by Wayne County, it is walkable with 4-feet on both sides, will have decorative brick on the pathways and the bridge height is one (1) inch taller than the Belleville Road bridge. The City of Belleville is working on opening up the view of the lake from every point they can, starting with High Street. They would also like to upgrade the boardwalk and possibly extend it to the bridge.

**F. PARKS, RECREATION AND NON-MOTORIZED (TRAIL, SIDEWALK AND PATH) FEATURES:**

Director Power inquired if the City of Belleville and Sumpter Township have done a Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The City of Belleville has not, it is in their plans and they are actively looking into it. Sumpter Township is also actively looking into a Parks and Recreation Master Plan, they currently need more people involved. Sumpter would like to see a park for handicapped children.

**G. SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS:**

Director Power displayed Van Buren Township's interactive development and planning portal which displays the status of development projects in Van Buren Township. The next Planning Commission meeting on 12-13-23 will summarize some of the significant developments in Van Buren Township including the 128-unit senior apartment complex named Willows of Van Buren, Hampton Manor senior assisted living and memory care and the addition to the Van Buren Township Community Center. The City of Belleville has a 45-unit single story apartment complex going in on Sumpter Road. The property has been cleared and the City is in the process of working with Wayne County. CVS holds a 5-year lease on the vacant store on Main Street, owned by an investment company in California. The City of Belleville is working to see if it can be sublet to the City for a business incubator space. The City of Belleville is also actively trying to market the now vacant Pro Hardware store on Main Street. Sumpter Township has no major new development projects at this time.

**H. KEY ZONING TOPICS:**

Director Power briefly discussed some of the zoning topics that the Van Buren Township Planning Commission is working on including: renewable energy, childcare, housing and agritourism. The Township formed subcommittees to work on these zoning topics. Sumpter Township Planning Commission informed they are in the final stages of solar farm rezoning.

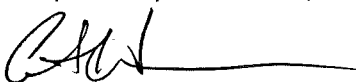
**I. FUTURE CROSS-COORDINATION:**

Commissioners agreed to schedule a joint Planning Commission meeting every six (6) months. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 1<sup>st</sup> of 2024 and will be held at the Belleville Area District Library. Commissioners requested to have a circular or square layout at the meeting, along with a microphone and speaker.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Motion Juriga, Creal second to adjourn the meeting at 7:03 p.m. Motion Carried.**

Respectfully submitted,



Christina Harman

Recording Secretary