

**LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING
ON FARMLAND PRESERVATION
November 12, 2007**

PRESENT: Blough, Batchelor, Simmonds, Clements and Sanford

TOWNSHIP PLANNER: Tim Johnson

CITIZENS IN ATTENDANCE: 24

The public information meeting on farmland preservation by the Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission was called to order by Chairperson Simmonds at 5:03 pm.

Chairperson Simmonds summarized the meeting procedures, then turned the meeting over to Tim Johnson to present the survey results and options for the Ag-1 District. That information is summarized in Tim Johnson's undated written report to the Planning Commission entitled "AG-1 Zone Questionnaire Results, Lowell Charter Township".

PUBLIC COMMENT:

The meeting was opened to public comment at 5:23 pm.

Walter Vom Steeg asked about the effects of re-zoning from Ag-1 to Ag-2, and inquired into the procedure for requesting such a change.

Joan VanderZiel thought the survey had been confusing.

Gary Blough felt lot sizes in Ag-1 should be kept small to allow some houses in without taking up a lot of agricultural land.

Bert Bleke inquired on behalf of Betty Yeater about converting two parcels from Ag-1 to Ag-2.

Fred Roodvoets asked when the Master Plan might be completed, and was told the goal was to have it completed in 2 to 3 months.

William Sterzick asked how long the State had been requiring a review of the Master Plan every five years, and was told since 1992.

Jon Francis asked about changes currently planned, and expressed a preference for preserving Ag-1 lands and not re-zoning.

Loren Kaeb had no comment.

Bill Hedlund discussed his land, which is Ag-1 surrounded by Ag-2.

Chris Clark indicated he owns land near Cascade and Hilton (near Betty Yeater) and would prefer Ag-2 zoning or more flexibility in the Ag-1 district.

Bill Wieland indicated Kent County does not distinguish between Ag-1 and Ag-2 for tax purposes, and his desire to sell some land for development.

Henry VanderZiel favored more houses in a smart manner, leaving 80 acres as farm parcels. He would like to see more flexibility in the current rules.

Tom Burger did not like Option 3 in the survey (Agricultural PUD).

James Francis had no comment.

Ben Kaeb does not want too many small parcels complicating farmer's work on adjoining property.

Walt Vom Steeg suggested developers should pay for water and sewer in new developments.

Public comment closed at 5:47 pm.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Tim Johnson asked about for Planning Commission comments on changes to the current Master Plan. Chairperson Simmonds indicated a preference for changing the Ag-1 rules rather than moving the Ag-1 and Ag-2 district lines.

Loren Kaeb suggested re-naming the Ag-2 district to Rural Residential. Mr. Clements expressed concern about making a name change which might mislead people into thinking of the Ag-2 district as typical residential not including currently allowed agricultural activities.

Mr. Sanford discussed the challenge of balancing farming and non-farming needs.

Mr. Blough asked about road frontage requirements and the option of placing lots further back on large parcels. He also suggested other activities on Ag-1 property to keep it rural, such as allowing storage in empty buildings.

.ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:54 pm.

Submitted _____ Secretary
Timothy Clements

Approved _____