Frankfort Planning Commission
Regular Meeting
January 8, 2008

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Doug Rath

Roll Call: Ed Duncan, Joe Hommel, Robert Johnson, Michele Larson, Bruce Ogilvie, Doug Rath. Also present: City Superintendent Josh Mills, Suz McLaughlin, Tom Richmond, Bonnie Warren, Myra Elias, Patricia Storrer, Larry & Julie Clingman. Excused: Akihiko Machida, Nancy Marshall. There is one vacancy on the Planning Commission at this time.

Approval of minutes:
Motion by Johnson, seconded by Ogilvie to approve the November 13, 2007 and December 11, 2007 minutes as presented. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Approval of agenda:
Motion by Hommel, seconded by Ogilvie to approve the agenda as presented. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Public Input:
Suz McLaughlin – Questioned the Master Plan meeting schedule. Stated Section 1 (section around the bay) is a contentious area and it is scheduled for a regular meeting. There had been discussion that area would take a lot of time. Noticed Section 4 and 5, which Planning Commission members stated would have little change because the areas are already built up, had two sessions scheduled for those sections. McLaughlin also questioned if she could get a copy of the map illustrating the different sections because she is going door to door in her area to information her neighbors of the meetings. Questioned if outline Planning Commission developed to tell vision of different areas was in writing so people could see what has been worked on prior to meetings.

Mills and Rath stated more copies of the map would be made available and the outline is general ideas but felt stating Planning Commission ideas and then asking for public's input would be more beneficial. It's up to the public to state what changes they would like to see and then the Planning Commission to help with formulating possible revisions and reasoning behind those revisions.

Johnson clarified that meetings in the winter tend to not have much on the agenda, thus leaving adequate time to discuss Section 1 during a regular meeting. Also stated that even though the Planning Commission set dates for meetings, they may change.

McLaughlin – Questioned how public will be notified if dates change. It was stated the public will be notified through the paper and notices will be posted on the bulletin board outside of city hall.

Myra Elias – Questioned the lag in getting minutes completed. Surprised a board with 9 members does not have a board member as secretary. Rath stated in the 4 years he has been on the Commission, a board member has not taken minutes but it could be addressed. Rath stated it is difficult to take minutes and participate at the same time. Possibly could be discussed during election of officers in March.

Bonnie Warren – Stated she has the same concerns as Suz McLaughlin regarding Section 1 and time allowed for the meeting because there is no guarantee there won't be more agenda items at that time.

Rath – Referring to previous minutes, the Planning Commission was not under the impression they would be able to set a schedule and stay exactly to it. Any meeting date that there is a regular meeting and a discussion of a section, if Planning Commission has a large amount of business on the regular agenda extra time will be built in for the discussion of that section. Section 1 has one particular piece which everyone is interested in and Rath stated he didn't feel anything could be done with that piece of property with the current lawsuits going on. If the Planning Commission gets stuck on a particular section, the schedule will be altered.

Old Business:
1. Master Plan Revisions
Mills wanted to give the public a chance to run the meeting. Asked public to tell the Planning Commission the vision they have for some areas of the City or the City as a whole. "What do people think about clustered neighborhoods vs your traditional cookie cutter lots?"

McLaughlin – Stated in her personal opinion and when talking to people she's encouraging to attend meetings, what seems to be the question is, "what comes first, the vision of being able to include more people in the city limits and/or for what purpose are they coming from." In clustered neighborhoods it is more of a family neighborhood. The city is going to look at including a bunch of these clustered neighborhoods in areas like mine (McLaughlin's), the issue is, where are these people going to work? What is it we are expecting to bring them here? The other issue is during hard economic times, this is when developers typically take advantage of buying tracts of land. If the city opens up a window for a developer to do something like this without knowing that citizens have the ability within their community to be able to support that kind of development. The concept of the clustered neighborhood, in these hard economic times, could be more like vacation homes instead of year-around residents. Are we going to continue with this concept of short-term homes where we (city) has died out in the winter because we don't have the ability to include ways for people to be here and have gainful employment.

Ogilvie – Said nothing that the Planning Commission members have read has said clustered neighborhoods are family directed. They don't tend to be child developed. They tend to be more adult community-type organizations. There are fewer children being born, fewer people coming to an area like this and we don't have the economic and employment opportunities. Used Harbor Springs as example stating their newest clustered developments are focused on single level or limited 2-level developments for adults and creating environments in which adults can live more comfortably in traditional housing environment. We have not come to grips with the economic issue of finding new jobs because we have not had a big influx of new business at this point but if the Planning Commission builds into its plan, the types of places where adults can live, they may move here earlier and bring their businesses with them and those types of businesses are not going to be manufacturing and industrial. They are going to be in the service economy, consulting businesses, remote activity type of environment. We are not seeing clusters in each section of town, possible Section 2 and 6 as the typography is not abused in those areas by new development.

Duncan – Asked if there were individuals who owned large tracts of land in the north section of town and should the Planning Commission talk to them more directly. Mills stated he has had contact with some landowners in those areas.

Planning Commission continued discussion regarding contacting property owners.

Ogilvie – Stated outside organizations which have reviewed the Master Plan and zoning ordinances have found the City has the opportunity to increase its population to 3,300-3,400 people within its current zoning pattern for those areas (Section 2, 3 and 6). That would put the City right at the edge of maintaining its whole infrastructure.

McLaughlin – Are we jumping the gun by making plans for an influx as opposed to waiting until we need to do next Master Plan revision and then having hopefully a better economic outlook for the state and Benzie County to see if we really need to do these kind of changes.

Johnson – These changes are new. Stated other communities are talking about making changes now, the City is actually behind in making these plan. These should have been made back a few years ago.

There was discussion regarding how to inform community of potential changes and increasing community involvement, help community understand the revision process.

Motion by Duncan, seconded by Ogilvie to pursue expertise and funding from the Michigan Land Use Institute to aid in the creation of a new Master Plan. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Motion carried.

There was discussion regarding certain homes being cleaned up in town and what can be done about it, possibly volunteers or school kids needing credit for community service to help improve blight within the City. Commission also discussed the possibility of instituting programs to aid individuals who are unable to afford to make improvements. Mills stated dangerous building ordinances have been enforced; however, it's not possible to force homeowners to paint homes just because someone else feels the home is an eyesore. Citizens have to be responsible to their community.

New Business
None

Public Input
Tom Richmond – Stated he's leaving the meeting with the understanding that clustered housing does not mean apartment complexes. Feels it's very important to get description to citizens so they can completely understand what is being discussed. Is encouraging people to attended meetings to get educated as to what is going on regarding the Master Plan revisions.

Pat Storrer – Willing to volunteer her time.

Motion by Johnson, seconded by Ogilvie to adjourn at 8:15 p.m. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Joshua J. Mills
Recording Secretary

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Douglas Rath, Chair Akihiko Machida, Secretary