

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF FLUSHING
6524 N. SEYMOUR ROAD
SPECIAL JOINT PLANNING COMMISSION
CHARTER TWP OF FLUSHING/CITY OF FLUSHING
DATE: APRIL 16, 2007 TIME: 7:00 P.M.
PHONE: 810-659-0800 FAX 810-659-4212
WEB PAGE: <http://www.flushingtowship.com>**

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF FLUSHING

Mark Newman, Chair	Richard Buell
Jerome Doyle, Vice Chair	Ronald Flowers
Eric Swanson, Secretary	David Gibbs
Barry Pratt, Board of Trustees Representative	

Jerald W. Fitch, Building Inspector
Julia A. Morford, Recording Secretary

CITY OF FLUSHING

Robert Matsko, Chair	C. Neil Blackmore
Kevin Keane, Vice Chair	Dan Borgerding
Marlene Stone, Secretary	Dennis Bow
	Dennis Bueche
	Ron Johnson
	John Olson
	Jack Owens

John Gault, City Council Representative

Gerald Hall, Building Inspector
Marlene Stone, Recording Secretary

**ROLL CALL: CITY OF FLUSHING: Matsko, Blackmore, Borgerding, Bow, Olson, Owens,
and Gault**

ABSENT: Keane, Bueche, Johnson,

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF FLUSHING: Newman, Doyle, Swanson, Buell,
Flowers, and Gibbs,**

ABSENT: Pratt

OTHERS PRESENT: 6 interested individuals

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER at 7:00 p.m. by Planning Commission Chair **MARK NEWMAN** with Roll Call and the Pledge to the American Flag.

II. ADOPTION OF AGENDA: FLOWERS MOVED, seconded by Buell to adopt the Agenda as presented. MOTION CARRIED.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Discussion of Future Joint Projects/Events

NEWMAN welcomed the City of Flushing Planning Commission Members and stated that since the City of Flushing (City) and the Charter Township of Flushing (Township) share a lot of joint events/projects, the Township Planning Commission felt it would be appropriate to hold a joint meeting to discuss some of the building/zoning projects taking place in the City that might be of influence to the Township.

ROBERT MATSKO (MATSKO), City of Flushing Planning Chairperson, stated **DENNIS BOW (BOW)**, Flushing City Manager, had some ideas.

DISCUSSION/COMMENTS/OPINIONS OF FUTURE JOINT PROJECTS:

- **MATSKO:** what future plans did the Township have for development along the Northern borders of the City, the Elms Road Corridor, or any of the other areas that might tie in with the City.
- **NEWMAN:** after taking a poll of the Township Planning Commission, the area with the most concern was the corner of Seymour Road and Main Street. The particular area is an entry point for Flushing Township residents coming in and out of town to work, etc. The corner could be a large project similar to Crystal Creek which would be constructed in both the Township and City.
- **MATSKO:** as far as he knew, nothing was in the works on the particular corner (Seymour Road and Main Street).

A - BIKE PATHS:

- **FLOWERS:** what is the status of the next phase of the Flushing Bike Path.? **FLOWERS** stated the Metro Alliance is still pushing forward with plans to connect the bike trails.
- **BOW:** several years ago a group got together and tentatively put a Master Plan in place that would eventually on the North Side, connect the Bike Path to Montrose and on the South side, extend the path toward Swartz Creek.
 - a. **Phase I** - the current path which goes through the City to the Genesee County Flushing Park.
 - b. **Phase II** – the path would wrap along Cole Creek going under the railroad tracks (or over as the City does have the easement to go over but hoping to go under) across Seymour Road on the North along Cole Creek and eventually under the railroad tracks again under Seymour Road. Eventually the trail would terminate at Seymour School where there is a running track South of Seymour School.
 - c. **Plan A (Paper Only)** – starting at Potter Road the path would extend South on Seymour Road to Swartz Creek.

- d. **Plan B (Paper Only)** -wrap the path in a circular motion around the City starting with a park on the South side of the City to the East and bring it around to an area by River Road continuing to make a circle around the City without having to go over and over the railroad tracks. Currently, the City owns most of the easements to do the entire project, although there are a few links that haven't been secured but the City is working on the matter. Money is available to do the project from the Federal Highway Transportation funds plus there are grants. The hardest part is getting the project put together and purchasing the easements.
- **BUELL:** are there plans to take the trail along the Flint River toward Montrose. **FLOWERS** stated the trail would eventually connect to Montrose and Montrose would connect to the Clio bike trails. Linden and Fenton also have become involved with establishing their own bike trails.
 - **MATSKO:** where would the bike path go from the County Park? At this time, per **FLOWERS**, no one knew where the path would be extended to. **FLOWERS** stated that Seymour Road had a bike path extended along the extra paved shoulder which had been built with non-motorized transportation funds. When Mt. Morris Road was repaved, the plans had been for the trail to go along Mt. Morris Road and continue on McKinley Road so an individual could ride from the City along Seymour Road around the river and back on McKinley Road to the City. **FLOWERS** stated M-13 (Sheridan Road) has also been designated for bike traffic.

B - PRIVATE DRIVES/DRAINAGE:

- **BUELL:** from the Planning Commissions' standpoint, what is the biggest pain the City is facing, or does the City have problems with private drives and drainage?
- **OLSEN:** private drives have been an issue.
- **BOW:** a study was done on E. Pierson Road to determine how to reduce the number of driveways; there are only a couple of private roads in the City and they are not a problem. The City is in pretty good shape.

C - STATE FUNDING:

- **BOW:** the biggest problem the City deals with is state funding. Due to term limits, everything is pretty new in Lansing. **BOW** stated most things look pretty good but next year a water line has to be repaired.
- **OLSEN:** there is also a problem with Police and School funding.
- **DOYLE:** are there any developments in or around the City?
- **BOW:** there will be re-development as there is only a couple remaining areas for new development. Some new development areas are: 1) the South side of the City South of River Road and 2) a field on the Northeast corner of the City which has a lot of wet area and would have to be developed around some ponds.
- **DOYLE:** heard rumors there was someone interested in developing Seymour Road into a West Seymour.
- **BUELL:** inquired about a conversation about a zoning change on Seymour Road. **BOW** stated the zoning change had been completed. Would the rezoning lead to fast food

restaurants? **BOW** stated fast food restaurants had been contemplated but that was not implemented.

D - HISTORY OF CITY DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT STUDY:

BOW stated four (4) years ago, a Downtown Development Study had been done and a firm was hired to review all the zoning in the downtown area along Seymour Road and along the corridor along Lynn Street; a number of recommendations were made. The Central Business District was expanded to the railroad tracks which included the area where Bueches is located. Changes were made on the other side of Main Street with zoning changes along Lynn Street and along Seymour Road. Prior to the study Seymour Road used to be industrial but has been changed to accommodate the current uses such as plumbers, heating, electricians, stone yard businesses, etc. the business/industrial district along Seymour Road. North and South of Main Street stayed the same.

- **BUELL:** was the S & M Lumber property involved in the zoning change?
- **BOW:** the S & M Lumber Property would now be considered a Central Business District Property. The Flint River is now considered a central focus with a lot of central business districts extending from the railroad tracks on the West to Rossell's Funeral Home at McKinley Road on the East.
- **BUELL:** does the Central Business District zoning apply to the types of businesses currently downtown?
- **BOW:** the Central Business District zoning consists of very light commercial rather than the industrial or heavy commercial uses in the district.
- **BUELL:** would a drive-through restaurant not be considered part of the Central Business District at the particular time? **BOW** stated the drive-through restaurant would not be considered at this time. **BUELL** felt the drive-through restaurants tended to spur a development in the immediate vicinity faster than anything around outside of shopping malls.
- **BUELL:** if there was a change in the "wind", the Township Planning Commission would appreciate having some warning or knowledge of the issue in advance because it would require the Township to take some steps to be prepared to deal with the issue; not opposed or in support of drive-in restaurants, but it could be because of traffic count and other things, but some consideration on allowances.
- **BOW:** there were pros and cons raised as to traffic issues; the width of Seymour Road; character of the Community with the big box stores, etc. Other issues involved included the increase to the tax base; spur of development; or to maintain the community the same as it was and not deal with change.

E - FUTURE DEVELOPMENT FOR FLUSHING:

- **BUELL:** how would the City Planning Commission characterize themselves on pro-development or would they (Planning Commission) be hold the line development?
- **BORGERDING:** for fifteen (15) years, everyone stated "don't go to Flushing because you can't develop there"; the attitude has done a complete flip flap. The main problem is due to there being only eight (8%) percent of vacant land remaining. A lot of the decisions to construct are based on the land. There were a lot of unique recommendations presented to

the City Planning Commission on how to get development into the City without completely changing the character of the town. The City is running out of land which means eventually the City is running out of a tax base. Where will the City be in twenty (20) years when the City won't have the ability to add scale tax base? In the business community with Proposal A, the City is not encouraging new business.

- **MATSKO:** another problem – not many businesses want to build next to a railroad track.
- **BUELL:** the area along Seymour Road is a very narrow of property.
- **DOYLE:** there needed to be both residential and commercial in order to sustain them; if there is too much of one district and not enough of the other there would be a big development of homes and no commercial area for stores. Flushing needs to build but not loose its character.
- **BOW:** one item in the zoning changes was the approval of business districts; residential is also allowed in the business district. Prior to the rezoning, the property was non-conforming and people were having trouble getting financing. Everything changed in the Downtown Business District; now there can be one (1) or two (2) family housing units.
- **BORGERDING:** what was the Township's plan for commercial?
- **DOYLE:** there already is spot zoning on Mt. Morris Road. The Township's interest would be to understand what the City's intent was so the Township could consider the zoning district as far as where the Township placed their commercial areas. Sometimes it is hard to decide where to put items. When items are requested, the Planning Commission acted on the matter at that particular time; everything should flow together. Twenty (20) years ago, the Planning Commission thought there would be a lot more residents living in the area.
- **GAULT:** plans change as society changes. Does the City and Township want quality development or does the City/Township want re-development? A city in New Jersey is landlocked with no place to go but up or down. All the old factories are gone so a lot of brownfielding has taken place. The jobs are there to take care of the matter. The Planning Commission needed to look at what people wanted and needed. There use to be a men's clothing store in downtown Flushing; it no longer is there. Things change! **GAULT** liked the idea of having joint meetings with the Township.
- **OWENS:** there is a shortage of entry level housing in the City so hard for the younger people to purchase homes.
- **BUELL:** One of the great attractions to Flushing Township is an exceeding attractive little town of Flushing. Is the Planning Commission attempting to protect the architectural and the picturesque nature of our little town?
- **GAULT:** in some cases it may be a historical building historically, but structurally it is junk.
- **MATSCO:** several of the huge older homes near the area of Pierson Road and Main Street are being repaired.
- **BOW:** a lot of people are going back to the "old look" even constructing "new" homes with the "old" home character.
- **BUELL:** in New England, there are architectural committees who approve the architectural appropriateness of plans before homes are renovated, remodeled, or torn down to be replaced. Has the City of Flushing become that protective of their architecture yet?

- **OWENS:** the ordinances have had to be modified in order to rebuild if there should be a fire because some of the older, smaller lots are non-conforming. If the Planning Commission didn't modify, the individual could not rebuild.
- **OLSEN:** there are a lot of ordinances in affect where there are actually historical districts and historical commissions, such as Birmingham and Rochester. Flushing City does not have a historical district.
- **BORGERDING:** the district is actually there but doesn't mean anything as far as a historical district.
- **MATSKO:** when an individual comes to Flushing, he/she is on the way to no particular place.
- **BORGERDING:** everything was changed when the bridge at Elms Road and Mt. Morris Road was completed. You ended up in Flushing because you got lost, you were on your way to Gracies from Flint, or people were trying to get across the Flint River. Prior to the bridge, you had your choice of Mill Road and downtown Flushing or go all the way to Montrose. A lot of business has been pulled from the Elms Road Bridge area and still is considered the Flushing Community School District. There are four (4) municipalities that come together at the particular area: 1) Flushing Township, 2) Flushing City, 3) Mt. Morris Township, and 4) Clayton Township. Clio received a lot of the development because of the proximity to the I-75 Expressway.
- **DOYLE:** there has to be a "destination" to get businesses in the area.
- **BORGERDING:** there was a committee formed in the early 1980's which was to let everyone know that "Flushing" was actually on the map. He sold a lot of houses to GM Employees in Grand Blanc who lived there two (2) years and then moved to Flushing. A lot of the realtors promoted the Flushing area.

F - COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR:

- **BOW:** wanted to know if there was a corridor or area where Flushing Township was promoting commercial area.
- **FLOWERS:** the commercial areas are Mt. Morris Road and Elms Road, Coldwater Road and Elms Road, and M-13 (Sheridan).
- **NEWMAN:** the township has spot zoning consisting of areas on M-13 and Mt. Morris Road.
- **MATSKO:** concerned about future development for Mt. Morris Road, and Elms and Pierson Roads; he would like to see some nice restaurants in the area.
- **NEWMAN:** due to the distance, a lot of people will not go across Linden Road on Pierson Road; they will in turn go to Owosso which is closer for Flushing.
- **FLOWERS:** due to the easy access of getting to the store, a lot of the seniors prefer to go to the Wal-Mart in Clio instead of the store on Corunna Road.
- **MATSKO:** would be great to meet with the other adjoining jurisdictions such as Mt. Morris Township, etc.
- **FLOWERS:** attended a Planning Commission Meeting at another municipality, with a fellow Flushing Township Planning Commission member, and observed the difference between the two (2) municipalities.

- **MATSKO:** inquired from **BOW** as to the status on the development located behind Rite Aid at the corner of Pierson and Elms Road. **BOW** stated he has been contacted by the owner of the development every so many months as to certain stores going into the development.
- **NEWMAN:** it will always be the “Hamady Brothers” building.
- **MATSKO:** the front of the building, located behind the Rite Aid, would be taken back to the front of the Emergency Clinic and there would be seven (7) stores in the development. It was a nice plan and would be similar to the Bueches Plaza.
- **NEWMAN:** realizes there are a lot of hard economic times but wanted the City to know the Township is willing to work with the City. By working together, it would benefit both the City and Township.

G - FLUSHING RECREATIONAL PLANS:

- **OLSEN:** understands the Legislation has changed which allows for a recreational authority that could be assembled that could be put up across different governmental authorities. Flushing Schools crosses a number of townships/cities. With the economic situation, it would be a way to provide the citizens with recreational facilities because we have control within our own region if the Schools, Township, and Cities decided to do so. Unless there are some major changes at the State level in the way they are doing funding, a lot of the things which the school provides will be hurting and the ability to provide will get tighter. **OLSEN** recommended the Planning Commission check out the Recreational Facility that Lapeer has assembled which includes a recreational complex that every age level could use. **OLSEN** felt the joint venture between the municipalities should be kept on the burner.
- **OLSEN:** would like to keep the Trail System idea going for the future. The usage of the current Flushing Riverview Trail has been great. An area of woods located in back of the Flushing Middle School is being developed and if a trail could be placed there, it would be great to have a trail system there. **OLSEN** stated one of the big difference between what is done with the State and bike trails and what can be done with the Federal Government – the Feds requirement on what is done with the trails is much more significant that what can be done with State money. More and more people are looking at things such as the trails, recreational facilities, etc. as they purchase property.
- **DOYLE:** there should be a map that describes all the facilities which the City and Township has to offer.
- **GAULT:** at first some people don’t like for trails behind their homes, but once the trail has been completed, everyone loves the trails. Should capitalize on the resources which people want and what the area has to offer. **GAULT** would like to see a trail on both sides of the river. When there are trails, it raises property value of homes. The nation is becoming a more and more physically active society. If Flushing doesn’t build, the people will go to an adjoining municipality – why not have Flushing be first.

H - LIBRARY ISSUES:

- **OLSEN:** the library is a service that is used by everyone in the township and other townships as well. The library facility needs to be upgraded. The general public doesn’t understand how the library millage works and that the library buildings is not owned by

the library but by the municipalities or townships in which they are located and only the service itself is paid for. There has to be some type of joint agreement, if possible, on how to appropriately house a library for the Flushing region; it cannot be avoided.

- **FLOWERS:** he is very interested to see the outcome of the May 8, 2007 library millage and what is going to happen with the votes. The passage would depend upon the people pushing the issue or otherwise the people that don't want the issue would be there voting on the issue.
- **NEWMAN:** if the turnout is low even if it does pass, if there isn't a substantial margin of victory, those people would indicate where the people's minds are with the library issue.
- **OLSEN:** wanted to know if the library could be located next to the Flushing Middle School or across the street next to the City border?
- **BUELL:** (stressed that he had been an educator) felt that libraries were struggling with the relevance question anymore. Library usership is down within the last ten (10) years since everyone has a laptop and "google". Never thought he would ever state this but it makes him wonder how relevant a library is anymore except for the small segment of the population that doesn't use the computer. If in the computer world today, how many services does the library provide that one cannot provide on the computer. Even strong supporters of education and learning, knowledge, and learning, more and more people are struggling with the idea.
- **NEWMAN:** felt there was a misconception about how many people do have reliable internet access.
- **BUELL:** wouldn't wireless internet service for Flushing City and Township perhaps be more significant and relevant to the population than an addition to the library.
- **NEWMAN:** didn't realize there was a library in Genesee Valley but works close to the Valley.
- **OLSEN:** felt all the data was not available.
- **GAULT:** the library usage is actually up. There has to be a place where all the Great Books have to be kept. Libraries belong where people can see and use them and understand their importance in a community and society. As time progresses, everyone should know their past and history; enough is not done to educate the youth to really understand where they came from.
- **BUELL:** as TV use to be in its infancy, his family had a set of Encyclopedia Americanas and as his parents heard something on the TV that they were curious about, they would look up the information in the encyclopedia. Now BUELL sits down with the laptop on his lap watching TV and if he hears something that he would like to hear more about, he just "google" it. Instant Success!
- **GAULT:** libraries are a great sense of place; there would be access to the libraries for such things as computer classes,
- **OLSEN:** different communities have different uses for libraries such as culture center for the entire community, art shows, regular group meetings, etc. With the Genesee County System, there is the ability to operate a library, but the question was the housing issue. The issue is not one to go away.
- **BUELL:** (referring back to the question about having the library next to the Flushing Middle School) when he was employed by the Kearsley School District, there wasn't a

“community”, only a school district. Since there wasn’t a “community”, the high school library was opened to the community which made the high school library the “community” library. The idea worked great as it was being funded by the taxpayers.

- **FLOWERS:** there are a lot of alternatives for funding of the library. Money has been available from the Genesee County Metro Alliance for sidewalks. **FLOWERS** has been trying to get a new sidewalk from the Flushing Middle School to the High School and would like to see the sidewalks poured as soon as possible. **OLSEN** stated the sidewalks were desperately needed as the students have actually approached the Board of Education to have sidewalks poured.
- **GAULT:** whether post offices, city buildings, or libraries, they are all corner stones of the community.
- **NEWMAN:** always loved to go to the libraries to study or just quiet time; a library is definitely needed. It is a history point in the community. **NEWMAN** also uses his computer for many other things.
- **MATSKO:** thinks most people are waiting to see the outcome of the May 8, 2007 Special Election.

NEWMAN THANKED THE CITY OF FLUSHING FOR THEIR ATTENDANCE AT THE JOINT PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

8:18 P.M. – OPENED TO THE PUBLIC FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

1. **Ida Reed, Flushing Township Trustee** – “Flushing Township and Flushing City purchased the Duramold Building for \$265,000. It was decided at that particular time that only half of the building would be used for the library. The other half of the building was going to be used for a Community Room because the extra room was not needed for the library. The area became the Senior Annex. Fifteen (15) years later, with an increased population of 2,000 people, why does there need to be three (3) times the space. **Solution:** have the Seniors move into another building, and expand the Library into the Senior Annex which would give twice the space. The Duramold Building is a low maintenance Building.”
2. **Ann Fotenakes, Flushing Township Trustee** – “not against the library, but with the economic times, there needed to be some research done. Don’t feel paying \$1.8 million dollars on the former City Hall was worth it on the township level. The township has to do our job and look out for the residents.”
3. **Elva Cook, Flushing Road, Flushing** – “don’t care what they do with the old building but get a legitimate estimate, not a “guestimate”; in the estimate four (4) or five (5) years ago the architect stated there needed to be two (2) elevators to reach both levels of the former City Hall; the proposed renovation design, of the former City Hall, as shown on the pictures, were great. You don’t go into a project with a “guestimate”.

8:24 P.M. – CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

VII. BOARD COMMENTS:

1. **GAULT:** Flushing is a great place to live.
2. **MATSKO** – is there a historical society requirement that stated if the City wanted to tear the former City Hall down, that it could not be done.
3. **SWANSON** – first, the structure would have to be declared historical.
4. **BORGERDING** – personally thought the library should remain downtown; created the traffic flow and the ambience that some people look forward to when they want to read a good book; the structure benefited everyone by being downtown Flushing.
BORGERDING felt the more the communities could do together, the better. Bueches has turned out to be one of the nicest strip malls around and one of the best investments on the West side of the Flint River. The City and Township needed to continue to work as a whole because what would be good for one municipality would also be good for the other. Both municipalities (City of Flushing and Flushing Township) needed to be sitting in the same room when decisions were made because if more housing was needed, it would have to come from the Township; if there should be more commercial, chances are, it would take place in downtown Flushing. There would never be a Wal-Mart in downtown Flushing.
5. **FLOWERS:** per the Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Alliance - Long Range Transportation Plan - the project from Elms Road and Corunna Road was to push North through Flushing to Mt. Morris Road during the next few years providing there was funding. When completed, there would be four (4) lanes with a turning lane, similar to Linden Road.
6. **BORGERDING:** he had the opportunity to view the State's Transportation Plan when the State was doing Vienna Road. The Master Plan was to have Linden Road be a four (4) lane road all the way to Birch Run.
7. **MATSKO:** how did the Planning Commission Members feel about having an annual Joint Planning Commission Meeting because a lot of good discussions had come out of the meeting. **MATSKO** would definitely be interested in having an annual Joint Planning Commission meeting between Flushing City and Flushing Township.
8. **SWANSON:** the Joint Meeting was initiated because, during the past year, the Township has been dealing with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (MZEA) which has brought the Township in compliance with the law. Part of the Act recommended the adjoining municipalities meet to discuss common zoning issues. Flushing Township Planning Commission thought it would be a great idea and the matter was sent to the Flushing Township Board of Trustees for their input. **SWANSON** has listened to all the recommendations and has been quite impressed and would agree to either continue as a full board or, as the State recommended as Committees, the current size would work great. **SWANSON** would like to continue the meetings.

There are rumors as to what goes on in both the City and the Township. Rumors aren't good for anyone so if the meetings were held, it would get rid of the rumors.

VIII. MEETING SCHEDULE:

REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING – MONDAY, MAY 14, 2007 AT 7:00 P.M.
PROPOSED SPECIAL MEETING – SINCE THE FOURTH MONDAY IS MEMORIAL DAY AND THE OFFICE WOULD BE CLOSED, THE NEXT MEETING DATE WOULD BE DETERMINED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION.
REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING – MONDAY, JUNE 11, 2007 AT 7:00 P.M.
PROPOSED SPECIAL MEETING – MONDAY, JUNE 25, 2007 AT 7:00 P.M.

IX. ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, **CHAIR MARK NEWMAN** adjourned the meeting at 8:34 p.m.

MARK J. NEWMAN, Chair

JULIA A. MORFORD, Recording Secretary

ERIC SWANSON, Secretary

Date of Approval