A meeting of the Spring Lake Township Planning Commission was held at Barber School, 102 W Exchange St, Spring Lake MI 49456.

A. Call to Order
Latsch called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

B. Approval of Agenda
Ketchum made a motion, support by Tiles to approve the agenda as written. The motion was approved unanimously.

C. Approval of Minutes
Latsch made a motion, support by Clark to adopt the Planning Commission July 20, 2022 regular meeting minutes as presented. The motion was approved unanimously.

D. Public Comments
A time for public comment was provided. Several comments related to the Arcadia PUD were presented. Comments were opened at 7:05pm.

Chase Kloka expressed concern about the fence in the play area. He would also like the Township to look at the five-year requirement for sidewalk installation.

Al Kochenowski stated they were told there was a survey error that resulted in the playground equipment being placed incorrectly. In his 40 years as an architect there was never a survey error.

Trevor Casad stated that survey errors of 30 feet don’t happen. The lot line was obvious. There is a snow fence between the park and Lot 40.

Jason Eden sent a presentation with photos to Hill, who showed the photos. The dock in the pond had to be moved 15 feet to remove it from Lot 40. The developer’s marketing materials mention beaches, green space and a natural trail. The beach has been cut in half. The play set needs to be reconfigured.

Shey Howard stated he is not sure that the playground is meeting safety distances. Any structure higher than 30 inches needs a nine-foot safety area, and the play set is five feet from the property line.

Hill stated that staff is working with the HOA, the developer and the builder to bring the PUD into conformance.
Motion by Ketchum, support by Latsch to close the comment period at 7:25pm. The motion was approved unanimously.

E. The Gatehouses at Wildwood Springs – Architectural Review

David Bos presented the proposed change in the look of the houses in the Gatehouses section of Wildwood Springs. The original PUD approval included stone façades, and buyers are not choosing to use the stone.

Hill stated that this is a very minor aspect of the PUD, but he would like consensus from the Planning Commission that the change will not harm the intent of the original approval. The Planning Commission is not usually involved in such detail on façades, but Bos provided the information with the original PUD application.

After discussion, the consensus of the Commissioners was that this is a minor PUD change, but they would prefer the original design for the façades.

F. MOBEX – Site Plan and Special Land Use Review

Joe Bourdon from Randers presented the request for a 300x75 foot addition to the facility to expand the heat treat operations. The process will duplicate the existing heat treat operation, and will add 50 jobs. The main concerns mentioned at the July Planning Commission meeting were noise levels and lights. A response packet has been provided to address these issues.

Doug Forbes, MOBEX, stated there is time pressure due to increased orders from Ford for the MOBEX products. They need to get the line up and running quickly.

Rabideau stated that the Planning Commission typically has more time for review of a site plan. Forbes stated that they generally plan on three years for an addition, but there is pressure to go faster at this time.

Bourdon reviewed their response packet, addressing concerns from the July meeting.

Bourdon stated they are working with the county on the process for the storm water permit. They submitted their application in June and received the first comments on August 16. Hill stated part of the storm water concern is whether the previous storm water system was installed properly, and also that the new system will be installed correctly. An engineering certification for the previous storm water system has not been received yet.

Bourdon presented specifications and data sheets for the lighting that will be used for the addition. Hill stated the parking lot lighting has been changed to dark sky compliant lighting. The lights on the south side of the building should be shielded to limit the light pollution to the adjacent residential area.

Bourdon stated there was feedback from the public related to noise. They hired a consultant to determine what the noise levels are. Readings were taken in three areas, and the data shows MOBEX is in compliance with the Township ordinance, but there are transient spikes in noise. A response letter from Alan Hicks, General Manager of MOBEX, highlighted areas of noise and corrective actions that would be taken. Contractor services which generate noise will have schedules
changed to only operate between 7am and 5pm Monday through Friday, with a target date of August 2022 for the change. Squealing belts will be inspected daily and will be converted to quieter belts, with a target date of September 2022. The building addition will block compressor room noise, and additional ventilation will be added so overhead doors will be kept closed. The target date for that change is May 2023.

Additional noise buffering can be provided by berms or walls. There is enough space to use natural berms to reduce sound. This will also block lights from equipment such as fork lifts.

Hill stated the berm is good in concept, and asked if it was illustrated on the site plan. Bourdon stated the berm will be installed on the south end of the property. The consultant is designing the height and location. The number of trees removed will be minimized.

Latsch asked when the berm design will be available, including the location, size and landscaping. Bruce Bourdon, from Randers, stated that they are close to completing the design, and want to keep everything as natural as possible. Joe Bourdon stated they should be able to resubmit the site plan in a couple of weeks.

Bourdon stated the company is in compliance with the ordinance, and they are going above and beyond to address the noise. They would like approval contingent on the berm design.

Rabideau asked if the proposed addition was large enough for anticipated business, so another addition will not be needed soon. Forbes stated it should be of sufficient size.

Rabideau asked if the existing facility is meeting the company’s needs, or if they will be moving production out of the Township. Forbes stated they are intending to stay at the existing facility.

Rabideau asked if they would meet or exceed the requirements of the Hill memo dated July 13. Forbes stated they would, like they did with the noise issue.

Ketchum stated that items being stored in the emergency lanes needs to be addressed. Latsch stated that storage in the emergency lanes is a long-term issue.

Hill discussed conditions for approval of the site plan. Latsch stated that lighting visible to residents should be dark sky compliant.

Motion by Rabideau, support by Latsch, to approve the MOBEX site plan and special land use dated 06-06-22 and packet dated 8-17-2022 for a 22,500 square foot addition as it is compliant with Section 1005, Site Plan Review Criteria, Section 326, General Review Criteria, and Section 928, Special Land Use Criteria of the Zoning Ordinance, based on the Community Development Director memo dated August 10, 2022, with the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall obtain an Ottawa County Storm Water Permit and record a storm water maintenance agreement with the Ottawa County Register of Deeds in accordance with the Township Storm Water Ordinance prior to issuance of any permits. Certificate of Occupancy is contingent upon completion and approval of the stormwater system as approved by the Ottawa County Water Resources Department.
2. Any new lighting and lighting on the south side of the facility visible to adjacent residents shall comply with the Zoning Ordinance (dark sky requirements) and be approved administratively prior to installation.

3. Noise reducing infrastructure to be installed per the sound engineer and approved by staff and/or Planning Commission. Plantings on the berm shall be approved administratively.

4. The 24-foot access drive shall remain open at all times to allow adequate emergency access. No outside storage is permitted on the access drive. All outdoor storage areas are to be illustrated on the site plan.

5. Any utility modifications shall be reviewed and approved by Spring Lake Township and EGLE, as necessary.

6. The site remains otherwise compliant with all federal, state and local laws; and

7. The applicant complies with all written and verbal representations.

8. Parking lot striping be completed as per the approved site plan. The applicant shall also provide information to illustrate that there is adequate parking to accommodate the new employees associated with the addition.

A roll call vote was taken. The motion was approved unanimously.

G. Rezoning Request – Consideration near 148th Ave and Leonard Rd

Hill stated that the Planning Commission has looked at this item before. The initial request was to rezone one parcel. The Board returned the request to the Planning Commission, directing them to consider a larger region for rezoning. Staff proposed a larger area supported by the Master Plan. There are some larger parcels included that could be developed in the future, and sewer is available. The Board reviewed the proposed area at a work session and was not concerned. The area near the Minnie Skwarek Nature Preserve has been split by simple land divisions and fits in an R-2 zoning.

The public hearing was opened at 8:39pm. There were no comments. Motion by Latsch, support by Ketchum, to close the public hearing at 8:40. The motion was approved unanimously.

Motion by Ketchum, support by Tiles, to recommend approval of the rezoning by the Township Board, and to direct the Township attorney to prepare an ordinance supporting the change. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was approved unanimously.

H. Master Plan – Public Hearing on Draft

Hill presented the draft Master Plan. The plan has been sent to adjacent municipalities for review. The Township partnered with Ottawa County for the Community Profile and Demographic Update. Ottawa County is the fastest growing county in the state, and the Township is seeing growth. A community survey was conducted, and the comments were considered by the Planning Commission. The zoning plan describes what the zoning map would look like if the Master Plan is adopted. A sewer review was conducted, especially along West Spring Lake Rd. There is capacity in the system for more development in that area. If the infiltration that was discovered is alleviated, there will be a larger capacity for development. The Future Land Use Map has the proposed major changes on the west side of Spring Lake. The changes are based on the sewer review and current land uses. An action plan has been developed to guide the Township going forward.

Commissioners discussed the changes related to the Poel farm property. The current zoning is AG. The Master Plan is currently RR. It is proposed to move R2 zoning closer to West Spring
Lake Rd, which has sewer available. The western portion of the property would be left as RR, recognizing that sewer along 168th Ave is not going to be feasible in the near future.

Latsch stated that the proposal is good for long-term economic viability of the Township because it efficiently utilizes existing infrastructure.

Hill stated that it is proposed to change the area between Taft Rd and Hickory Rd from R2 to RR, because there is no sewer in the area. Overall, the Township would see a net gain in RR designations in the Master Plan. The Township has interest in some acquisitions near Little Black Lake and at Herm’s Marina.

Hill discussed the difference between the AG and RR zoning districts. In the RR district, intense livestock operations are not allowed, while they are allowed in the AG district. Otherwise, there are no real differences.

Rabideau asked about the difference between R2 and RR, especially as related to septic systems. Hill stated RR has larger property requirements due to sewer not being available, and noted that development of a PUD requires sewer service.

Latsch asked how street expansion is handled. Hill stated the Ottawa County Road Commission reviews development requests. The Planning Commission can also ask a developer for a traffic study if they believe it is necessary.

The public hearing was opened at 9:07pm.

Ruth Frein, 19113 Palm Dr, stated she is concerned about changes to the designations in the northwest corner of the Township. The families have been there for generations and do not want change, especially away from the AG designation. She is concerned that if the property is designated in the Master Plan as RR, their way of life will be negatively impacted.

Michael Kuras, 18246 Lost Creek Ln, stated that everyone has done a great job on the draft Master Plan.

Three emails were received.

Lucy and Montgomery Welch, 18168 Lovell Rd, expressed concerns about development on the Poel farm property. They are concerned about too much traffic on Van Wagoner.

Angel Ouwinga, 16490 Spring Tree Dr, wants to preserve green space in the area. She is concerned about traffic, water and sewer capacity, the quality of the homes that would be built, and the capacity of the school system to accept more students.

John Pearn, 18532 West Spring Lake Rd, stated that the survey indicates people want to maintain open spaces. Rezoning from AG to R2 is contrary to open space preservation.

Motion by Ketchum, support by Latsch, to close the public hearing at 9:38pm.
Latsch would like to look at differences in the AG, RR and R2 zoning districts. This information could be shared with residents in a newsletter.

Latsch noted that whatever designation is chosen, the landowner decides how the property is used.

Latsch suggested renaming RR to somehow include AG in the designation, to make clearer what is allowed.

Tiles stated that, as a farm owner, what people are really wanting to preserve is the rural residential look, not a true operating agricultural farm.

Rabideau expressed appreciation for the public input. He indicated that additional thought should be directed toward the northwest corner of the Township.

Motion by Rabideau, support by Ketchum, to table the Master Plan to allow Hill to continue to work on the draft, focusing especially on the northwest corner of the Township and on the AG and RR zoning designations. A roll call vote was taken. With Tiles as the only dissenting vote, the motion carried.

I. Commissioner Comments

1. Township Board: The Township Board passed the single waste hauler ordinance. They approved the amended agreement with the Villas at Spring Lake Country Club. The bike path on Taft Rd will be rebuilt.

2. ZBA: In July, the Resolution of Determination for a waterfront setback determination was accepted, and a waterfront setback determination was approved. There is no August meeting.

3. Community Development Director: The Township has partnered with Land Information Access Association for a coastal resilience plan. They will consider the zoning ordinance, master plan, aerial photos, contours and water levels and deliver a report on how the Township can be more resilient for extreme water events on Lake Michigan, the Grand River and Spring Lake.

J. Adjournment

Ketchum moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:48pm. Latsch seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Ketchum, Secretary
Planning Commission