

## **RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS**

*Minutes of*      **Greenfield Township Trustees**      *Special Meeting*

February 12, 2024 - *Held 2:00 PM*

The Greenfield Township Trustees met for a Special Meeting at the Township Administrative Office. The purpose of the meeting is to speak with attorney Rick Ricketts about zoning, and to discuss a comprehensive plan for Greenfield Township, and issues around that. Trustee Searle stated they would forego the Pledge of Allegiance since it was a small group seated around the conference table. Dave Cotner, Kent Searle and Lonnie Kosch were present, per roll call taken.

Trustee Cotner expressed his hope that the city of Lancaster and the county would work with the township on their plans, and make things work well for everyone. Trustee Kosch asked how things would work with speaking with developers and those interested in coming into the township.

Mr. Ricketts stated these items were all part of his presentation. He also stated by reaching an agreement with the county, some of the issues can be eliminated or minimized. He also stated changes in legislation has given townships more power to do more things, if they wish to do so. His presentation included information about sweeping people away from the township, as well as inviting and including them. It also included information about the land which has the potential to be annexed, by way of contiguity.

He went on to explain that 60% of the taxes in the township went to the school district and Fairfield Career Center; 21% to the township; 19% to the county. Income tax is currently from the city and schools, but this provides opportunity for the township. He explained the use of NCA's - "New Community Authority" and CDA's "Community Development Authority"; these terms are used interchangeably, but NCA is the correct usage. With an NCA, sales tax, real estate tax and income tax can be charged; this will be discussed further. In terms of the types of development, there is residential development - single family homes; multi-family homes - commercial (for purposes of Ohio law); multi-family can be good for the township in terms of the taxes. He stated New Albany and (and ultimately Violet Township) had used NCA's in order to have schools, fire stations, roads and land paid for by developers, and said he's explain in more detail how that works for a township. He also noted the taxes would only be on the newly developed areas; not the older already existing areas.

Common entitlement programs are TIF's - Tax Increment Financing; and JEDD's - Joint Economic Development District. TIF's can be done by a city or a township. CEDAs and JEDD's are for a city and a township. City, township, or county can do a CEDA on their own. Trustee Searle noted there is currently a TIF on all commercial property in the township as of approximately one year ago. It's a 10 year, 75% TIF; it has not been enacted yet; the township is waiting for development to start. Mr. Ricketts noted this was a good thing; the ten year clock starts once the TIF is enacted. He explained a TIF that was recently put into place in Reynoldsburg and how that worked in that area. Trustee Kosch asked if it puts things behind to wait to enact the TIF until the

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development is almost done. Mr. Ricketts stated it does not; it is basically a fee as opposed to a tax. He explained in further detail how the TIF - commercial vs. residential - works for the local school system in bringing in more money, based on negotiation and agreements. He noted the various tools to be used need to be considered for all parties involved and the future, and not just in terms of the immediate future. Trustee Searle went on to explain how the Board understood the current TIF. The baseline tax still goes to the schools and the county; the TIF is enacted on the new development. The timing of enacting the TIF is very important.

Mr. Ricketts went on to explain how the TIF's work with the school district. The current TIF cannot be changed without the school district's consent, unless it is a non-school TIF. He explained by the school district and the township working together, a longer TIF can benefit both parties. He explained a project he had worked on recently in Commercial Point (a 500 acre mixed-use project) and how the difference between a ten-year, 75% TIF vs. a 30-year TIF was approximately \$20 million dollars.

He noted that Greenfield Township is in a good position to take advantage of the various programs due to their location to Route 33, and having the water and sewer utilities in place (in most areas). He also noted various road improvements that will need to be done in order to move people around and through the township as the growth happens. A TIF will allow this tax base to grow over a period of years. Discussion continued regarding new road growth that will need to happen as development happens. He noted the Gender Road area and what it had once been, and what happened over time.

Mr. Ricketts also touched on the improvement being done on Basil Western Road as part of a TID - Transportation Improvement District - a collaborative agreement between Violet Township, Fairfield County, and Canal Winchester (but primarily Fairfield County and Fairfield County Engineer).

Discussion moved on to NCA's, which the township can do on its own. The difference between a TIF and an NCA is that it is an additional charge. A developer must be involved in who comes in and is willing to pay additional taxes for the benefit of what they are getting, which is widened roads, better road signs, more traffic lights, all of the aesthetics. He explained the NCA that was done in New Albany, and how it worked, as well as the NCA he worked on in Violet Township. It was done as a residential NCA, where the income tax is being paid to Violet Township on houses being built in the city of Pickerington. Trustee Cotner asked about the Metro Development group who wants to build a multi-family unit behind Waffle House. It was noted this land is in the Lancaster City School District. Mr. Ricketts explained his feeling that governmental entities should work together for the best interest of the community. He also stated the cities grant the CRA's (tax abatements) to developers in order to gain the real estate tax dollars, which primarily benefit the schools. Discussion continued with him explaining the project in Violet Township and how it benefited the school district, and what the benefits are in working together on the TIF's and NCA's. By looking at these items in a

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long-term status, it benefits all parties. New projects can be added on to NCA's or there can be multiple NCA's at the same time. Mr. Ricketts also pointed out how key landowners in the township can have an impact on the future development:

1. They can block a city from annexing; 2. They can allow you to develop a block or a buffer; 3. They can simply tell the developer no; "I'm community-based and this doesn't work".

Discussion continued as to which tools would be used and how it would impact the township. If a JEDD is entered into, the land would be annexed into the city. Also, a point to be negotiated would be whether or not the city can annex without the township's consent. Mr. Ricketts went on to point out that Greenfield Township is unique in their proximity to Carroll and Lancaster. He also noted the first thing a developer will look at is who is providing the utilities. He went on to explain how the utilities factor into the future development, and how it could potentially affect annexation. He reviewed the issue of sanitary plants and where they could potentially be developed or be the issue.

Mr. Ricketts went on to discuss multi-family housing and the advantages, and what types of multi-family housing are desirable. He gave the example of a current project he is working on in Violet Township, which are brownstones similar to what is already in New Albany or Grandview. Zoning requirements can be put into place in order to have the type of multi-family housing the township wants to see. By using NCA's and TIF's, the township can get the best advantages for themselves, and gain the income tax dollars. He recommended an NCA to give the best negotiating advantage.

The group discussed the meeting with the Board and the mayor of Lancaster on Tuesday, February 13, 2024 at 2:30 p.m., and Mr. Ricketts noted he was unsure whether he would be able to attend. He very much supports open communication with the city, but he stated he felt the township was not in a position to discuss details at this meeting. He reiterated that the comprehensive plan needs to be well thought through as it is developed.

Discussion continued concerning the utilities that were already available in the township, as well as developing those further as part of the growth of the township. Mr. Ricketts encouraged the continued communication with Tony Vogel, Fairfield County Utilities, and his request for a township plan for their water and sewer expansion, especially along old 33, Election House and Coonpath Roads.

The group discussed the comprehensive plan submitted to the county by Liberty Township, and Trustee Searle noted the Board would be meeting with the person who wrote the plan to decide if Greenfield Township wanted to use his services. Mr. Ricketts stated he did not know the person and had not read Liberty's plan, but would be happy to look at it. He noted one of the main starting points of a well-done plan is to look at infrastructure and utilities, and build around that. It was also mentioned that the plan shouldn't be planned out too far into the future; that it can be changed and updated as

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needed. A five year plan is probably a good timeframe to consider. Mr. Ricketts pointed out that road improvements are also a main concern in the plan. The future roads are going to have much different usage than the current roads. He also noted the utilities and location in relation to the road structure needs to be taken into consideration for future planning, as well.

It was reiterated that all parties - city, county, school district - need to be kept informed and communicated with in order to plan; open communication and collaboration is key. Mr. Ricketts stated he would be willing to continue to participate in future meetings.

Trustee Cotner made a motion to adjourn; Trustee Searle seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL: Cotner: Yes   Kosch: Yes   Searle: Yes   Motion Passed 3-0

Meeting adjourned at 3:58 p.m.