

# Village of Bellaire

## MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE

**Dan Bennett, Georgia Jean Burns, Tani Carl, Butch Dewey, William Drollinger, Fred Harris, Brad Kik, Don Seman and Margie-Thomas Boyd**

Master Plan Committee Meeting Minutes

September 12, 2018

5:00 p.m.

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.
2. **Roll Call Attendance:** Committee members introduced themselves.
  - Present:** Dan Bennett, Georgia Jean Burns, Butch Dewey, Brad Kik, and Margie Thomas-Boyd
  - Absent:** Bill Drollinger, Fred Harris and Don Seman
  - Staff Present:** Lori Lockett, Zoning Administrator
  - Also Present:** John Sych, Networks Northwest; Violet Zimmerman; Barbara Bradford, Antrim County Planning Commission; Matthew Cooke, Antrim County Deputy Administrator; Jenn Wright, Executive Director Grass River Natural Area; Jim Fisher, Friends of Glacial Hills Board Member; and Bob Ferguson, Friends of Glacial Hills Board Member
3. **Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the July 11, 2018 Master Plan Committee were approved as presented.

**Motion by Margie Thomas-Boyd, seconded by Brad Kik, to approve the minutes of the July 11, 2018 meeting as presented. Motion carried by voice vote.**

4. **Unfinished Business:**

**a) Master Plan Focus Group - Intergovernmental Coordination** – John Sych provided an update and explanation of the master plan process and purpose for members of the public. He explained that a master plan survey had been developed. The survey was in print form and on line. The survey deadline is September 14. So far, there have been 116 responses on line. Data from the hard copies will be added. Mr. Sych explained that focus groups had been identified at a previous committee meeting and invitations had been sent out. Each discussion session was allotted 50 minutes. Members of the committee and public were asked to introduce themselves. Mr. Sych identified the three questions presented to the invitees in advance of the meeting. 1. What do you believe are the Village of Bellaire's strengths related to intergovernmental coordination? 2. What do you believe are the challenges facing the Village related to intergovernmental coordination? What are your recommendations for the Village going forward regarding intergovernmental coordination?

Barbara Bradford opened the discussion with a comment regarding the role of the county planning commission. She described the County Master Plan as non-committal because there are townships within the County that are not zoned. They only make recommendations to zoned communities in reviewing their interaction and compatibility with surrounding communities. Mrs. Bradford wondered if the Village's strength was dependent upon surrounding partners. She suggested that the Village might want to collaborate with the surrounding townships in providing services for mutually beneficial development. She cited the industrial area across from the airport as a development site. The problem is the lack of utilities. She encouraged members to identify spaces, even outside of the Village, where zoned communities could work collaboratively to bring jobs or development to the area.

Mr. Sych suggested that it could be a recommendation for the committee. There could be economic development for the community.

Mrs. Bradford encouraged collaboration.

Matthew Cooke noted that the Village and surrounding townships clearly understand the importance of tourism. He identified the extension and connection of the Glacial Hills trail to the Village for intergovernmental cooperation.

Mr. Sych asked the issues faced by the County. Mrs. Bradford spoke of relocating the County facilities. She identified the dog pound area as a “water trap” but agreed that the jail did not need to be where it is. Mrs. Bradford proposed an additional site. It was noted that as the county seat, the county jail was statutorily required to be within the Village of Bellaire.

There were comments about the lack of parking and the need for more jobs. There was a discussion about the Village boundaries and location of other county-owned properties. Mr. Cooke provided a brief recap of county facilities proposals. He explained that Janet Koch had attended the county administration meeting and would going to be making a presentation of the Village’s vision to the full commission at the October 11 meeting. Georgia-Jean Burns said that she had attended a meeting where the County explained their proposal. They need parking for 125 vehicles. If the bank was torn down, it could help with parking. Margie Thomas-Boyd explained that parking is a problem for county employees. They are not supposed to park on the streets.

Barbara Bradford asked about the golf course property on M-88 highway and identified it for potential growth. Where does the Village go for future development?

The location of a new law enforcement center was discussed. John Sych noted that law enforcement officials generally prefer to have their offices, central dispatch, and jail together in one facility. The County facilities do draw visitors to the community. They help to stimulate the economy. Barbara Bradford suggested that there needed to be a square footage consideration that would be available for other uses. Does the jail have to be next to the current office? She suggested that a substation could be located on the other side of Torch Lake for residents on that side of the County to conduct their business. She asked the committee to evaluate the square footage needed for desired development compared to what is available.

There was discussion about how the County and Village could work together to identify areas for growth and develop policies that could be put into the respective plans. Even though she lives outside of the Village, Barbara Bradford considers Bellaire her hometown too. She is wondering about the Village’s plans for growth. Where does the Village want to grow?

Butch Dewey suggested that there would be small changes in the various districts; there is not enough space for significant change.

Brad Kik asked about the Village’s efforts to become a redevelopment ready community. John Sych briefly described the MEDC program as a way to look at the Village and maximizing the best use of the properties.

It was suggested there could be more outreach from the county commissioners. Perhaps meetings could be televised and made more accessible. Mr. Sych suggested that joint meetings between the village council and county board of commissioners would be very helpful. The elected bodies could meet annually or biannually to address certain matters. The County could foster intergovernmental cooperation through meetings and educational and training opportunities. Mr. Sych explained the planning workshops he coordinated when he worked for Grand Traverse County.

Barbara Bradford expressed her appreciation for being invited to the meeting and a reminder to remember the dark skies when considering lighting options. The Village is beautiful at night, especially at Christmas.

At the conclusion of this session, the committee thanked Mrs. Bradford for her input.

**b) Master Plan Focus Group – Natural Areas** – John Sych and committee members introduced themselves to the focus group invitees. Mr. Sych explained that the Village was conducting a survey to learn information about the Village. This was an outreach effort to hear from other groups with an interest in the Village. The focus group discussion was a way to influence the policies contained in the master plan. What would the Village like in the future? Invitees were asked to identify the Village strengths pertaining to the natural resources. The water and water quality were identified as number one. Jenn Wright was struck by the number of natural areas in the community. She sees that there is cooperation but wonders about duplication. Are resources being shared? Are communities and groups talking and doing things together? Is there coordination of effort? There are enormous assets around here. The general feeling is to protect the water quality. Jim Fisher noted that there are many volunteers in the community. There was discussion about Paddle Antrim and the benefits it brings to the community. Glacial Hills and Grass River were also identified. Ms. Wright asked about access to walking trails. The Bellaire Walking Path and Cedar River Trails were identified. There was a discussion about educational events being offered at different locations. Trail connections between Glacial Hills and the Village were briefly discussed.

Challenges for the community included improving signage for visitors and developing a way-finding system to help with foot and bicycle traffic. Sidewalks were identified as a problem. Developing a synergy between the various organizations to work together was suggested.

John Sych wondered whether areas were being over-used. Ms. Wright identified reaching local residents as a goal to make sure they know the various resources exist. Specific recommendations for the plan were solicited. Water quality and a discussion with Three Lakes Association and Torch Lake Protection were suggested. Paying for use of the trail resources was raised. Fees versus donations were discussed with an eye towards the Friends of Glacial Hills being able to maintain the trails. Mr. Sych thought the program could be analogous to the license plate tabs supporting state parks. It was explained that the Friends do have a website that allows people to make donations to support the trails. There was discussion about access to maps for the trail system. Bob Ferguson said that work is being done to improve the maps. Jenn Wright identified funding as an issue. Board development is also being working on. Coordinating educational opportunities for the community including the high school students being exposed to service on boards were mentioned. Ms. Wright agreed that a training program could be developed and board slots reserved. Perhaps government and civics classes would help promote service on local boards.

The committee members thanked Ms. Wright, Mr. Fisher, and Mr. Ferguson for attending.

**5. New Business:** None presented.

**6. Correspondence/Reports:** Zoning Administrator Lockett informed the committee members about a law enforcement center survey available on the Village website September 13. She encouraged members to review, take the survey, and let others know about it. The purpose is to get feedback from those inside and outside of the community in preparation for the October 11 meeting.

Margie Thomas-Boyd reminded committee members that regardless of what the County does with its facilities plan, the Village still has to complete its master plan. The committee needs to stay focused on its purpose.

The next committee meeting is October 10. Deanna Jerdee from Paddle Antrim could not attend the September meeting and would like to attend the meeting in October. Mr. Sych will contact Deane

Jerdee, Torch Lakes Protection and Three Lakes Association to see if they would like to have input or provide written information to the committee.

**7. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 7:17 p.m.**

Minutes compiled by:  
Lori Lockett, Zoning Administrator & Recording Secretary

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_