



Fresh Coast Planning

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MEMORANDUM

To: Robinson Township Planning Commission
From: Gregory L. Ransford, MPA 
Date: February 26, 2024
Re: Robinson Township Master Plan Comment Period Expiration

As you are aware, the 63-day comment period for the draft Robinson Township Master Plan (RTMP) has expired. The Township received only one comment from Mark Sloothaak, which is attached.

Comment Summary

As you will note within the attached comment letter from Mr. Sloothaak, he has expressed concern regarding his property designation as the Medium Density Residential (MDR) Classification related to future development and the requirement of connection to public water and sanitary sewer. The MDR Classification is the zoning equivalent of the Residential One-Family (R-1) Zoning District.

As aforementioned, a Recommendation within the MDR language of the RTMP is to “require” connection to public utilities (page 12). Further, a Strategy provides that rezonings to the R-1 Zoning District “should not” occur without public utilities present (page 13). Given this language, the Recommendation is very strong when considering an application for residential development and would likely discourage anyone from applying. While the Strategy language is more permissive, it certainly allows the Planning Commission to deny applications for rezoning without public utilities present at the property. This could also discourage an application from submitting an application to rezone to the R-1 Zoning District prior to the availability of public utilities.

In response to Mr. Sloothaak, we recommend that the Planning Commission review this language and determine if it is appropriate to remain as written.

Planning Commission Considerations and Next Steps

As you know, the Planning Commission shall review all comments received during the 63-day period and make revisions to the RTMP, if deemed appropriate. Following, the Planning Commission shall hold a public hearing on the draft Plan and transmit the draft Plan to the Board of Trustees for consideration of adoption.

As you further know, the RTMP draft and comments are scheduled for your March 14, 2024 special meeting. No public hearing has been scheduled for this meeting. If you have any questions, please let us know.

GLR
Planner

Attachment

February 15, 2024

To: Robinson Township Board Members

From: Mark Sloothaak, S&M Gravel, Inc.

RE: Master Plan Draft Comments

Dear Robinson Township Board Members,

I would like to express my appreciation of the Robinson Township Planning Commission (PC) on the years spent drafting this proposed Master Plan (MP). I recognize it is difficult for all municipalities to manage the desires of residents while also protecting land use rights of landowners. As stated in the draft MP it is a guide for directing future growth into desirable patterns. It is unfortunate less than 7% of the residents of Robinson Twp. responded to the survey to help guide the direction of the MP.

I want to thank the PC for the time and consideration I received when I had questions about the MP and the proposed rezoning of our 108th Ave operations from its current MP, R-1 zoning to the proposed MP, R-R zoning. After discussion on this matter with the PC, I believe they appropriately decided the current MP R-1 zoning should continue rather than rezone to R-R as proposed in the draft MP at that time. This was decided in part based on our current R-1 MP zoning and related R-1 standards used in determining the design/extent of mining operations, cell unit configuration, upland lake creation design, and ultimately preparation of an R-1 end use plan as required during the rezoning and expansion of our 108th Ave operations.

Unfortunately the proposed MP now requires every commercial, industrial, R-1, R-2, PUD, Site Condo, Plat developments to have municipal water and sewer. This requirement will now prevent the planned R-1 end use of our 108th Ave. site from occurring. I do not believe it was the intent of the MP for this to occur to our 108th Ave site, rather is a result of using the water and sewer requirement as a means to control future development in the Township with primary goal to retain and preserve the Township's rural, agricultural character.

As mentioned above the same water and sewer requirement apply to PUD's. Unfortunately this requirement, especially for end use planning for mine sites where large lakes and associated aquatic resources are created and remaining developable upland area is limited, will limit creative conservation design (clustering, open space preservation, etc.) that otherwise could be achieved through a PUD.

For instance, our 108th Ave mine site is currently MP and proposed MP for R-1 use. This site could be approved as R-1 or a PUD without required sewer and water at densities no greater than the underlying R-1 zoning the end use plan was designed for. Similarly, our Clark Farm site, MP zoned as RR, could be developed as a PUD with greater flexibility in design (clustering, conservation design, open space preservation, wetland protection, etc.) with densities no greater than the underlying R-R zoning if PUD's were not expressly required to have municipal sewer and water.

Based on the limited amount of upland that may remain after lake creation on these sites, specifically mine sites where aquatic resources were created where none previously existed, greater flexibility in

design should be allowed with densities equivalent to R-1 allowed on private water and sewer systems if County standards for on-site water quality, quantity and on-site septic systems can be met.

None of our sites are near or in the aquifer recharge area, water use would be no greater than if the property was cut up into R-R lots, and the benefits of the created lakes, ponds, wetlands and related aquatic resources are significant. Without this flexibility, the land divisions will continue, private roads will continue to be built and a large percentage of the Township will be divided into two acre parcels. This is the "development" the residents have noticed, and will continue to be what they notice. There will not be clustered developments, there will not be protected open space, and the desired environmental protections will not be promoted as long as developments will be restricted and the land in the Township will continue to be built on using land divisions.

I ask the Township to consider revising the MP so as not to specifically require municipal water and sewer on the redevelopment of mine sites for the reasons stated above. I'd like to further discuss these changes to the draft MP with the Twp prior to the MP finalization. I appreciate the opportunity to comment and look forward to discussing these changes with you. Thank you.

Sincerely,

S&M Gravel, Inc.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Sloothaak', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark Sloothaak, President