

**PRAIRIE TOWNSHIP ZONING COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 22, 2006 SPECIAL MEETING**

**Members Present:** Bruce Whyte, Howard Balzer, Bill Rowe, Judy Stalter, Christopher Finn, Glen Hymer

**Members Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Connie Swisher, Zoning Inspector, Dana Scott, Zoning Clerk, Molly Mooney, Zoning Field Inspector, Tracy Hatmaker, Township Administrator, Tim Richardson, Don Brosius, Lee Brown and Ben Weiner, Franklin County Planners

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Howard Balzer, Chairman, at 5:00 p.m.

**Meeting Minutes:**

Mr. Bruce Whyte moved to approve the July 25, 2006 Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes. Mr. Glen Hymer seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved, roll call as follows:

Bruce Whyte: Aye  
Howard Balzer: Aye  
Bill Rowe: late arrival  
Christopher Finn: Aye  
Judy Stalter: Aye

**Old Business:** The Big Darby Accord

**New Business:** Continued discussion on the Big Darby Accord

Mr. Tracy Hatmaker, Prairie Township Administrator was present to give a summary of the Darby Accord Master Plan and answer any questions from the Board. Don Brosius, Tim Richardson, Lee Brown and Ben Weiner (from Franklin County Economic Development & Planning) were also present to answer any questions.

Mr. Hatmaker gave summary on the previous meeting regarding the Big Darby Accord. Today's meeting was at the request of the Zoning Commission Board, to follow up on questions and address issues in an informal setting. Don Brosius and Tim Richardson have reviewed the Darby Accord on behalf of the townships, Lee Brown and Ben Weiner are representatives from Franklin County and all can answer questions regarding the Accord.

Mr. Hatmaker reviewed the Darby Accord land use map and described the areas to the Board. The map includes protected areas, low, medium and high density areas, including the Town Center. The Town Center will be in Prairie Township and particularly in Brown Township.

Mr. Hatmaker explained that the protected areas not already owned by Metro Parks will need to be bought or the development rights taken off the land. This will be done

through revenue generation. The Town Center will provide the highest density of units and have water and sewer provided. A minimum of 5000 new units in Prairie and Brown Townships will have utilities per the City of Columbus with possibility of more units in the future.

Mr. Hatmaker explained revenue will be produced through the new units. The Hilliard expansion area will have 2000 units (in addition to the 5000 units) with one unit per acre with 50% cluster open space (1/2 acre lots). The Columbus development area will have three units per acre and use a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) model for the development design. Prairie Township's area will be off Galloway Road and Alkire Road, and will be services with central water and sewer. Rural conservation development areas will have one unit per acre or acre and a half, with an alternative, hybrid, waste water system not located on site to ensure water quality.

Mr. Whyte asked Mr. Hatmaker to show on the map where the boundary for the South-Western City School district and Hilliard City School district were located within the Darby Accord plan.

As Mr. Hatmaker pointed to the map, he explained that most of the area in the Town Center falls into the Hilliard City School district. The area located on West Broad Street may have a higher density and north of W. Broad have a lower density.

Mr. Whyte asked if the Darby Accord will affect the West Jefferson schools, and Mr. Hatmaker said no.

Mr. Hatmaker explained that overall, revenue will come from development fees, the Community Authority (millage) and TIFS (Tax Increment Financing).

Mr. Whyte asked if some communities would operate their own water treatment facilities, and Mr. Hatmaker explained the Community Authority would do so with cooperation from the Franklin County Sanitary Engineer.

Mr. Whyte asked if the residents in the high density areas would pay their water and sewer fees to Columbus, Mr. Hatmaker explained that Columbus would contract with the Franklin County Sanitary Engineer, whom the resident would pay.

Mr. Whyte asked if a resident owned an acre of land, would they be allowed to drill their own well. Mr. Hatmaker explained there is nothing in the plan that would restrict property owners from drilling their own well as long as they meet the current requirements.

Mr. Whyte asked when Columbus would be ready to begin construction of the water and sewer expansion. Mr. Hatmaker said Columbus will be ready to start immediately once the planning is complete. The next step is for adoption of the Darby Accord, which Columbus has already done. The other jurisdictions are now in the process of adoption. Then working on the standards of the alternatives for wastewater treatment, and proceeding with the plan for the Town Center and extension of the facilities around it.

Mr. Whyte asked, assuming it was 2025, how many people would be dependant on Columbus for sewer and water? With conservative numbers, Mr. Hatmaker explained, he would estimate around 9500-10,000 units between Columbus & Hilliard contracts,

and Columbus & Franklin County contracts.

Ms. Stalter asked if the Town Center water and sewer would be strictly be through Franklin County, and Mr. Hatmaker said it would be run and operated by the Franklin County Sanitary Engineer's Office (Tom Shockley). Developers will have a role in the construction process.

Mr. Whyte asked, as development progresses, is there a way to monitor the water quality in the Darby? Mr. Hatmaker said yes, the main principle of the Darby Accord is adaptive management through the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA), which includes on going monitoring. Development plans can be pulled back or changed if the effect on water quality is an issue. The OEPA would have final authority in monitoring compliance, the ten local jurisdictions through the Community Authority, and the Big Darby Accord Panel would also play a part. Mr. Hatmaker explained the Big Darby Accord Panel (BDAP) will be a multi-jurisdictional group that will monitor and review development applications

Mr. Tim Richardson explained to the Board that the Nature Conservancy has already endorsed the plan, but have some concern about being able to purchase open space. The Hellbranch Forum, which Prairie Township had been involved in for four or five years, is also interested in the monitoring process.

Mr. Hatmaker said that overall, the support from the ten jurisdictions, the conservation community and building industry is positive. Mr. Whyte asked if any elected officials would be overseeing or appointed to any of the boards set up to monitor development. Mr. Hatmaker stated that the board members will either directly or indirectly appointed by elected officials, or may have elected officials as members. The Big Darby Accord Panel will have a representative from each jurisdictional township on the board. Mr. Weiner explained, the BDAP will be an advisory panel before development would go through the regular processes.

Mr. Whyte asked for a contour and topography map of the area and questioned the high density areas in respect to drainage. Mr. Hatmaker asked if the Economic Development and Planning Dept. could provide the maps, Mr. Lee Brown said he will ask the GIS (Geographic Information System) manager to provide them. Mr. Whyte pointed out that the area near Feder Road and Jones Road, which will be in the Town Center development area, experiences major flooding into the ditch towards the Big Darby Creek.

Mr. Tim Richardson explained to the Board how important the Town Center Master Plan will be to the Big Darby Accord. The first phase of the Town Center will set the precedent of the Accord and should be an example of architecturally designed, high quality development.

Mr. Lee Brown explained the Big Darby Accord will be on the County's next Planning Commission Meeting agenda, September 13, 2006. The Planning Commission tabled the Accord in August so staff could meet with Brown and Prairie Township residents and officials to answer any question and review the County's role in the Accord. County staff had an open house in Brown Township earlier in August and now with Prairie Township. Once the Big Darby Accord is approved at Planning Commission, then it will proceed to the Prairie Township Zoning Commission, and to the Board of Trustees. On October 12,

2006 the Big Darby Accord is scheduled to be heard by the Franklin County Board of Commissioners. Once adopted, the next phase will be the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which will lay out the revenue sharing details, the TIFS, the annexation agreement with the City of Columbus, development contributions of the Community Authority and details of updates for zoning and subdivision regulations. The county is working on conservation development consistency between Brown, Pleasant and Prairie. The alternative waster water treatment systems will be built Franklin County standards, the developers will provide a performance maintenance bond and the Franklin County Sanitary Engineer will take over ownership and do the monitoring and maintenance of it. They will also bill the residents in the development for the use of it. Previous plants built in the 50's and 60's were not built or maintained adequately, so the County will be involved with the construction and monitoring the maintenance of these new plants.

Mr. Weiner, stressed that only the new residents living in these new developments would be paying for the waste water treatment systems. The County has several options on how to collect the money for the facilities.

Ms. Swisher, explained to the Board that further discussions on the Big Darby Accord might be helpful however they will have to be done by special meeting so we can proceed with the adoption of the document.

Announcements: *None*

Next Meeting: ***Next meeting will be on Sept. 7, 2006 at 5:00 p.m. Special Meeting to further discuss the Big Darby Accord.***

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m. by Mr. Howard Balzer, Chairman.

Submitted by: Dana Scott, Zoning Clerk