

## Planning Commission Meeting, July 17, 2024

A Planning Consultant from Rowe attended the meeting via Zoom and gave a presentation on the work done to date along with an outline of the work over the next three months. Key content they created that will be part of the final Master Plan is a 'Chapter' of the plan called 'Natural Features'. This Chapter contains the following sections:

- Surface Water
- Floodplains
- Wetlands
- Suitable Soils for Agriculture
- Land Cover
- Septic Suitability

This Chapter is key as it calls out the characteristics that impact the land planning process. **Surface Water:** Identifies surface waters which include all of the lakes, streams, rivers and creeks. This showed that roughly 2.6 square miles of the township is water.

**Floodplains:** Identified floodplains (source is Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) along with The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (EGLE)). Building in these areas requires construction above the 100-year flood elevation and existing structures are not permitted to expand.

**Wetlands:** The State enacted a Wetland Protection Act in 1979 to help protect these areas and limit the uses to certain activities such as fishing, boating, farming. Permits for building in these areas are approved only upon review of an environmental assessment and finding that the proposed activity in that area is in the public interest.

**Suitable Soils for Agriculture:** Identifies the land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage and fiber crops.

**Land Cover:** The US Geological Survey maintains a National Land Cover Data Base, which categorizes all area of land into one of 15 specific classifications. This map showed that the township has 75% of its land in the 'Forest' categories.

**Septic Suitability.** The Township has no existing sewer system, thus all building waste water is managed via private septic system. This map shows the land categorized into one of 7 'Soil Types' identified in terms of permeability.

All of these elements are shown on preliminary maps that will be further refined as the process moves along.

Looking ahead to next month it is expected that demographics data presented at the initial Planning kick-off meeting will be updated along with a current Land Use map. Future meetings will include development of a Public Survey that will be sent out to Township residents. This survey will allow property owners to identify their thoughts on the Master Plan elements that will influence the final product. The survey will likely be a mailed document. There may also be Public Meetings where community input can be provided. At present, the Planning Commission is expecting Rowe to report out at each Planning Commission meeting that is regularly held at the Township Hall, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month at 5:30PM. MTRFRD will be at each Planning Commission meeting and we will summarize the outcome on this site.