



# Rochester Hills

## Minutes - Draft

### Planning Commission

1000 Rochester Hills Dr  
Rochester Hills, MI  
48309  
(248) 656-4600  
Home Page:  
[www.rochesterhills.org](http://www.rochesterhills.org)

*Chairperson Deborah Brnabic, Vice Chairperson Greg Hooper*  
*Members: Ed Anzek, Gerard Dettloff, Nicholas O. Kaltsounis,*  
*Stephanie Morita, David A. Reece, C. Neall Schroeder, Ryan Schultz*

---

Tuesday, March 20, 2018

6:00 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

---

## CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Deborah Brnabic called the Special Work Session to order at 6:07 p.m. in the Auditorium.

## ROLL CALL

**Present** 8 - Deborah Brnabic, Gerard Dettloff, Greg Hooper, Nicholas Kaltsounis, Stephanie Morita, David Reece, C. Neall Schroeder and Ryan Schultz

**Excused** 1 - Ed Anzek

Quorum present:

Also present: Sara Roediger, Director of Planning & Economic Dev.  
Kristen Kapelanski, Manager of Planning  
Jill Bahm and Rod Arroyo of Giffels Webster  
Maureen Gentry, Recording Secretary

## DISCUSSION

2018-0095 Master Plan Work Session - Giffels Webster

*Ms. Bahm summarized what would be discussed, and what was discussed at the joint visioning session, the youth council visioning session and the session with City Staff. At the joint visioning session, she had provided a summary of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, emerging issues and trends, and she outlined the top votes. She stated that (the consultants) really wanted the Commissioners to tell them what issues to share or questions to raise at the public open house in April.*

*At the joint meeting, they talked about the Master Plan chapters of Housing, Land Use and Redevelopment Sites. The influencing themes were community health, age friendly communities, sustainability and transportation, and she had prepared a summary. Those themes would be weaved throughout the Plan. Improving community health by promoting and supporting active lifestyles for all ages was mentioned, and they would talk more about walkability, transportation, the aging*

*population and improving quality of life for older residents to support their abilities to remain in the community. Protecting and preserving the City's natural resources for current and future residents was mentioned. Improving connectivity in and around the City by providing multiple modes of transportation came up.*

*Ms. Bahm went over some population and housing statistics and how population was projected to change over time. By 2045, SEMCOG projected Rochester Hills' population to grow to 79,000. The segment of population over 65 increased 33% between 2000 and 2010. In 2000, 11% of the population was over 65 and in 2020, it would be 24%. They had to think about how to prepare for that and make changes in the community. Household size was remaining relatively stable, but it would probably decrease over the next 10-20 years. In 2013, 19,000 people commuted in to Rochester Hills and nearly 8% of those came from outside the region, and 27,000 residents commuted out of the City.*

*Ms. Bahm showed some maps of existing parks, subdivision open spaces, woodlands, schools, watersheds, woodlands and tree canopy and vacant land.*

*Mr. Kaltsounis pointed out that one piece of vacant land shown had been set aside as open space for his subdivision. He did not think it should be considered vacant land that could be built upon and should be off the map. Ms. Bahm said that the vacant lands did not necessarily mean they were vacant for development. If the map was shown at the open house, she thought it was be a good idea to note that it did not imply that all the land was necessarily available for development.*

*Ms. Morita observed that Suburban Softball was not indicated on the vacant land map. She understood what Mr. Kaltsounis was saying about land being banked in exchange for density. If they wanted to be consistent, a lot of the subdivisions in the northwest sector had done the same, and there was no indication that they were open space. Ms. Bahm said that she would compare it with the green space map to see if things should be taken off.*

*Ms. Bahm talked about the goals and objectives from the 2012 Master Plan. She read them all, and some were discussed briefly. She suggested that they could talk about how to reframe objectives so that they were able to be used as tools for measurement. There were eight identified, and for the first, Residential, she asked if there was anything that should be added or changed.*

*Mr. Kaltsounis said that they always talked about walkability and parks, and he wondered if there was an easy way to express that. Ms. Bahm said that it raised the question about whether they wanted to have the goals be specific to the types of land uses or if they should be more in line with some of the themes of other planning objectives they talked about - weaving things together more. There were goals that related to transportation and parks and open spaces, and maybe there was a way they could be threaded together. It would mean they wanted residential connected to goods and services by walking. Mr. Kaltsounis said that it was not really a goal; walkability was talked about at many meetings.*

*Ms. Bahm discussed the goals for Retail/Service. She asked if they were aiming at serving the existing residents through more neighborhood goods and services or encouraging more retail destinations or if it did not matter as long as something looked good.*

*Mr. Hooper felt that Rochester Hills was not a regional destination. He gave the vacant K-Mart site as an example. If something was going to have been a regional draw, it would have been that place, and it was not, and they ended up with an Art Van. He thought the City was more of a local destination draw. There were not big vacant parcels left to bring in the major players.*

*Mr. Dettloff asked if that goal would address the issue of big box stores. Ms. Bahm agreed. Mr. Dettloff asked about the balance from the retail side with the Amazon-type issue. He asked if there would be suggested strategies for the business recruitment side. Mr. Arroyo confirmed there would be, and added that there were a lot of emerging trends from the data that they would discuss.*

*Mr. Hooper thought they should focus more toward cutting edge, whatever it was. Mr. Arroyo said that the focus would be on quality, experience and service. The retail market was bifurcating into the lower-end, cost conscientious and the higher-end, quality product people were willing to pay more for. What was suffering was the middle. There would likely be some of the lower-end, but they wanted to be more high quality with a high level of service to create a customer experience to make people visit.*

*Mr. Hooper asked where they saw the office market heading. Mr. Arroyo maintained that there was still potential growth in that area, but the market had been oversaturated for a long time. It would not be a rapid growth. There was an indication that manufacturing and technology were*

*increasing. The City had the ability to provide for some of that. Ms. Bahm added that office space needs were smaller per worker than in the past, because people worked in more open concept floor plans. Mr. Hooper remarked that hopefully, the airline trend would not be followed where seats were down to 2 x 2 feet.*

*Mr. Reece thought that trend would have a short fuse. They were already starting to see the experiments not working where kids came to work in pajamas with hamsters. It was going back to a more traditional experience. Ms. Bahm said that there certainly was a need for those private office spaces, but every employee would not need one. Mr. Reece noted that the office market was pretty tight now, and occupancy rates were close to 90% - Class A, in particular. Industrial space in the tech parts had very low vacancy rates.*

*Ms. Bahm next read the goals for Office/Research/Technology. She asked for any thoughts about those. She felt that flexibility was important, and that they had to think about accommodating changing land uses by keeping flexibility in mind. Mr. Hooper suggested that they would want to promote a redevelopment tool. Some of the office space was pretty tired looking, so he thought that whatever they needed to do with flexible zoning to create and encourage redevelopment they should.*

*Ms. Bahm brought up Transportation and said that they would not get into a lot of it because of the upcoming Master Thoroughfare Plan, but a lot of the goals of the Master Plan would help form the MTP.*

*With regard to Recreation, Mr. Hooper asked if the Master Thoroughfare Plan and Parks and Recreation Plan would be referenced in the Master Plan. Ms. Bahm agreed that they would be.*

*Historic Preservation was next, and Ms. Bahm asked if it should be a goal on its own or inserted into residential or commercial areas. She wondered if there were historic sites that would be better served if they were redeveloped to a different use. Mr. Hooper said that was tried a couple of times, and it was very expensive. It had not worked out for the Lorna Stone or the Eddington homes.*

*Ms. Morita asked if something indicated that the City needed to expand its community facilities and public safety areas. She noted that the City had just updated all of its fire stations. She was not sure they needed to expand. Ms. Bahm said that they could take that part out. Ms. Morita agreed with Mr. Hooper about historic preservation. It had been a*

*problem, and they were currently dealing with something on Council. When someone came to them about a historic designation, the City (taxpayers) paid for a consultant to study it. If someone did not want to be designated, the City had to pay for another study. It had been very frustrating for Council. The City did not have a concentric area; they were scattered all over. There was some nice areas by the museum, and she felt it was worthwhile, but encouraging the preservation and enhancement of historic resources had not been done, and she did not think Council would want to put money towards it. She said that the Historic Districts Commission had been through one frustration after another. Once something was designated and it was not maintained, it was very hard to get it undesignated to demo it, and it was a nightmare.*

*Mr. Hooper suggested that they could focus more towards maintenance of existing, high quality historic properties. He recalled when the historic home burned down on Auburn Rd. and Council went through something for two years. There was one on Crooks that had been going on for ten years. Ms. Roediger advised that it was scheduled to be demolished in the summer, and that the Lorna Stone building was being restored. She thought that historical preservation could be weaved into some other things and not be a separate spotlight. It could be a more general theme in terms of character and historical assets and not called out separately.*

*Chairperson Brnabic thought that people resented a property being designated and not having a choice. She said that it would be different if someone chose to purchase a property knowing it was designated, but it had turned into a hardship for a lot of people. She agreed that it could be very costly to follow the rules and regulations. Ms. Bahm felt that they could think about other tools and resources that might be available to historic property owners.*

*Mr. Kaltsounis agreed that they had to hit reset, and that it had not worked out. Ms. Bahm thought that it would be a good question to raise at the open house. Ms. Morita said that she would prefer not to raise it - it was not something the City was interested in. Ms. Bahm suggested that there would be other opportunities to talk about it, as it did not sound like they wanted to drop it completely. Ms. Morita said that if they could find a way to do it at no cost to the taxpayers, she would be all for it. It was just an expense that the City did not have a lot of control over. Once something was designated, the City had even less control. It had not helped the City to have historic structures maintained, in fact, it had acted as an impediment in some cases. It became too expensive to maintain something up to SHPO standards.*

*Regarding Natural Features, Mr. Kaltsounis asked if they needed "Require long-term operation and maintenance standards for storm water facilities to retain the level of water quality protection over time." Mr. Arroyo said that there was typically an ongoing need to address flooding and to maintain appropriate detention of storm water before it hit tributaries. He felt that it was a good idea to address it and to continue to monitor it. He thought it would be good to have something in the Master Plan that recognized that. Mr. Kaltsounis knew that every time a project was before the Commission, it had gone through a lot of review and there were a lot of details worked out. However, there were people that came and said that their backyard flooded because of such and such a development. He thought it could open a can of worms. Mr. Arroyo explained that they would not be investigating existing problems. It would be to protect from flooding. He thought it would be good to encourage storm water management systems that helped retain as much water on site through the use of low impact design, etc.*

*Ms. Bahm brought up potential redevelopment sites and asked for input from the Commissioners to share at the open house. She mentioned the landfill area in Section 24 from the 2012 Master Plan and asked if it should stay a landfill planning area. Ms. Roediger noted that staff got a lot of inquiries about development, and it was a potential area. There were obviously environmental costs. There was an extensive inventory done by ASTI, but they could be more specific about areas that could redevelop and what type of uses would be appropriate. In the current Master Plan, it had been left pretty open-ended.*

*Ms. Morita thought there was an issue with that property a while back when someone wanted to put in residences. Ms. Roediger agreed that someone had proposed a mobile home park, which was not appropriate. Ms. Morita asked if the problem was that it was zoned residential. Ms. Roediger said that the problem was contamination and the cost of redevelopment. She thought that a good portion of that section was zoned Industrial.*

*Ms. Bahm said that another site that came up for potential redevelopment was Bordine's. Mr. Hooper recalled that they tried to redevelop it ten years ago. Chairperson Brnabic noted that the investors fell through. Ms. Bahm considered that people would not hold onto property forever.*

*Mr. Reece asked if the owners of privately-owned sites would be informed if their site was being studied for possible redevelopment. Ms. Bahm said*

*that would be helpful, and Mr. Reece thought that they had to be notified. If they were going to have conversations, that was fine, but they had to include the owners.*

*Mr. Hooper suggested Suburban Softball. Mr. Reece mentioned the northeast corner of Rochester and Tienken, and wondered if there was still a significant portion to be redeveloped. Mr. Hooper pointed out that it was another historic property. The front was left historic, and the rest of it was delisted, but no extensive redevelopment had taken place.*

*Ms. Morita stated that one of the intersections that made her crazy was Auburn and Adams. A building burned down, and there was a vacant lot. There were some older, smaller businesses, a gas station, and a church that liked to use the vacant lot south of the gas station for parking busses and campers listed for sale. The other side was Auburn Hills, which looked nice, and it was embarrassing what the City's side looked like. She thought that would be a good intersection to take a look at. Mr. Schroeder noted that the restaurant owner owned all the properties there, and he wanted to redevelop.*

*Ms. Bahm reminded the Commissioners about the open house on April 23 from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m. at Rochester College. She asked if they could be there. She thought that they would get some good participation. She also noted that there had been 602 responses to the survey. She asked them to remind people to take the survey and to invite them to the open house. Mr. Dettloff asked if there was a cutoff for the survey. Ms. Bahm said that it would be closed about a week after the open house.*

**Discussed**

## **NEXT MEETING DATE**

Chairperson Brnabic noted that the next Work Session was scheduled for April 17, 2018 at 6:00 p.m.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Hearing no further business to come before the Planning Commission and upon motion by Mr. Kaltsounis, seconded by Mr. Schroeder, Chairperson Brnabic adjourned the Special Work Session at 6:56 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deborah Brnabic, Chairperson  
Rochester Hills Planning Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nicholas O. Kaltsounis, Secretary