

Final - small change

PRESERVE SCIO 2008! IT'S NOW OR NEVER!, Scio Township Trustee Chuck Ream

Your May 22 article "Scio Township passes resolution to reject task force report" never tells the reader what it was that most members of the Scio Township Board found objectionable in the County Road Commissions "North Zeeb Road Task Force Report" of 2006.

We objected to it because this report was an expensively choreographed "set up" to undercut our Scio Township zoning in the future – in order to allow a big and busy shopping center that is not in our Master Plan (and the neighbors don't want) - at the corner of Zeeb Rd. and I 94. The same sort of strategy was tried with the Baker Road Corridor Joint Planning Initiative of 2004 - for the area south of Dexter. These are attempts to make an "end run" around our legal and traditional planning process in order to allow huge, high density, residential and commercial developments.

It is great to talk about future land use. It is not good, however, to have our planning commissioners sign reports that contain assumptions that Scio Township is going to change its zoning in order to increase the revenue of a developer. We have a Planning Commission and a Board to make those decisions.

Ninety five percent of the text in this consultant written Zeeb Road report is as wonderful as mom and apple pie, containing all the latest sorts of "green" and forward looking "flowers and sunshine" (as my grandpa used to say). The nasty subterfuge is slid into just a few paragraphs. The Road Commission spent your tax money lavishly on this report, and they expect a major return on their investment.

The current Scio board will not only protect neighborhoods near Dexter and near Zeeb Rd. We will defend all the neighborhoods of Scio. We will defend all of our citizens who hope that the zoning and planning near their homes will not be ignored and overturned by slick talkers with big fancy plans.

In terms of the North Zeeb Rd. area our motion reaffirmed a basic principle of the Scio Township Master Plan, that this land will be developed as **"Two (2) distinct areas, one commercial to the south of I-94 and the other governmental/public to the north of I- 94"**. Nowhere is it written in stone that there must be gigantic commercial development and traffic congestion at every single freeway intersection!

Please look at the "assumptions and conclusions" in the report that were rejected by the current Scio board majority.

We refused to recognize that the "goals of enhancing revenue" (of the Road Commission) was a valid reason for us to change our zoning or master plan. (see page 16 of the report).

We did not agree that it is desirable to allow a large anchor store (see page 12 under "A Large Anchor") on land that was zoned for governmental/public use (things like libraries, recreation centers, senior centers, art centers, community theater, parks, trails etc.)

We made it clear that the "relatively sparse population" of Scio Township (see page 12 of the report) was just fine with us, in fact "it has been the longstanding policy of the Scio Township Board to keep population density low outside of the Jackson Rd. sewer service area" (from the motion). We don't

We stated for the record that “in the future, the Scio Township Board will not accept the legitimacy of the use of text from the North Zeeb Road Task Force Report to undermine the principles or position of Scio Township in a court of law. Our proper planning process remains available to all landowners.”

This motion touched a raw nerve with Trustee Dries. He got so upset because the complicity of his “Team Scio” gang lies exposed. Two of his candidates and a main supporter of his slate of candidates for the August 5 primary election signed this document that threatens the planning and zoning process of Scio. I (Trustee Ream) was willing to let the motion pass without any political comment, until I read Trustee Dries howling in last week’s “Leader” article about how my motion to protect a Scio neighborhood was a “politically based cheap shot” which did not have “a kernel of truth or value”. He commends the Road Commission for “doing the right thing” with its transparent attempt to avoid Scio’s proper planning process.

Mr. Dries wants to cover up the fact that, although his slate of candidates will say every nice sounding platitude, in fact they will “sell out” the Scio Township Master Plan each time they are tested in the real world. They can be counted on to say one thing – and do another. Dries schemed to let Dexter have land from Scio Township to put 575 more homes just south of Dexter in “Harvest Valley”. (How would Dexter homeowners like to have 575 more new homes to compete with on the market?) His group evidently wants to draw outside traffic to the center of Scio with a major unplanned commercial center at Zeeb and the expressway. His “Team Scio” initially formed in order to kill off the Parks and Recreation portion of Scio Township Proposition J of 2005 (which passed with 75% of Scio voters in favor). That’s right; the “Team Scio” slate is against teams! They will never allow a big park with baseball and soccer fields. They will look you right in the eye and say “The voters didn’t really mean to vote for parks and recreation”. Trustee Dries openly says “I don’t think density is important”. (How did he get elected in Scio?)

This sort of thing is ludicrous drivel; it is the greatest danger Scio has ever faced. Electing folks who think like this would be the death of the green and open Scio Township that we love - but the Dries gang will spend more money than anyone has ever spent on an election in Scio.

The bigger they are the harder they fall. (In Ann Arbor Township Tom Monaghan pumped in massive funds for candidates who would kill the local planning and zoning – but voters there were not fooled.)

Scio Township is now in a critical struggle which will determine whether we will remain a semi-rural township – or become a densely packed suburb. The Jim Dries slate has proven that they will wreck our residential zoning (“Harvest Valley” south of Dexter), ignore our commercial zoning, (at the intersection of Zeeb and I-94), and try to kill off the idea of Scio Township parks and recreation. That’s three monstrous strikes against them – and three strikes and you’re out!