

**Date:** 1/24/07 10:28AM  
**Subject:** Planning Commission, January 23, 07

Columbia Township Planning Commission  
Loretto Baker (Twp. Bd. Rep.) Roger Gaede (chairman), Steve Holmstrom, Pam Jarvis , T. H. Parker,  
Beverly Wahr, Don Watkins (secretary/vice chair)  
January 23, 2007

Public Hearing called to order by Gaede at 7:30

Present: Baker, Gaede, Holmstrom, Jarvis, Parker, Wahr, Watkins  
Absent: none

John Calhoun, Twp. Treasurer, Charles Riesdorff, Region II, Phil Tocco, MSU Extension Agent

Gaede called the study meeting to order at 7:30

Charles Riesdorff, Region II, Discussed the areas of the county and township that have been identified as good quality crop lands, with good soils, drainage and larger parcels that do not have public utilities. These are lands that might be suitable for preservation. Farmers can use development right sales through the state (Purchased Development Rights, PDR). Such a program is in place but the funds available are very few and as such severely limits the program. However unlikely, it is possible that the county or township could make available funds to develop such a program.

Phil Tocco, MSU Extension Agent, presented a program that traded development rights from farm lands to increased density in areas where utilities are in place (Traded Development Rights, TDR). There is a TDR program in Kent County but no others in the state. Such a program requires a sliding scale of development density in an area called the receiving area, where developers could buy rights from farms in the sending area and use them in the receiving area. The advantage for the developer to buy rights must be significant for such a program to work. A big advantage of the TDR program is that it is the developer's money used and not public funds.

The commissioners found the possibilities a lot to digest and much thought would be involved.

Motion by Parker and seconded by Jarvis to approve the minutes of December 5, 2006

Motion by Watkins and seconded by Wahr to adjourn at 9:30

Don Watkins

Secretary/ Vice Chair