

October 12, 2006

Highland Conservancy October E-Newsletter

Happy Fall! I just spent a beautiful weekend up north where the colors on the trees ranged from golden yellow to crimson red. In the evening it was completely quiet and peaceful as the full moon crested above the edge of the trees across the lake. What a great environment to write the latest conservancy news!

Highland Trails Committee - What with the ridiculously high gas prices this summer I found myself often fantasizing about riding my bicycle to work. One thing that held me back was the lack of connected bike or hiking paths to get there. It was something I had never noticed before but some of the bike trails went part of the way, then broke off, then suddenly picked up in another area. It made me realize once again that a cohesive plan for trails would be important to promote recreation in Highland.

At a recent meeting at the township, Oakland County Parks and Recreation presented the new Greenway Plan for Highland, a plan many of us worked hard on (see last newsletter). An important part of this new plan is to gather interested parties together to develop trails for Highland.

If you would like to be part of this planning, there will be a meeting Tuesday, October 24th at 7:30 p.m. at the township hall. We will be working on hiking, biking, equestrian and multi-use trails for Highland Township. Please join us.

King Senior Citizen Complex - Mr. King recently presented his revised plan for a senior citizen complex for his property on Hickory Ridge just north of M59. Gone are the high rise buildings. However, the plan we recently reviewed still has a very high population density and very little open space. My personal concern remains the fact that even this new plan would pack far too many folks into too small of a space. If this development was more along the lines of New Urbanism developments such as Seaside in Florida, there would be large areas of natural, green parkland to act as a buffer and compensate for the closer living quarters. King's revised plan still packs in high density into almost every available bit of land yet does not offer the tradeoffs in green space, community friendly layout or architecture that New Urbanist designs do. I'm also concerned that such high density will also bring: increased traffic congestion, light and noise pollution, and the increased underlying infrastructure needs. This area is currently part of a Micro-analysis Study by the Highland Township Planning Commission. Meanwhile, there is a local group called RFD59 that is working on the political front to support and defend Highland's master plan. It is their contention that the King project does not fit into the Master Plan as it is inappropriately located and needs to be located in an area already designated for that density. As Mick Bell of RFD59 recently pointed out, "the idea that Highland needs a place for seniors is disingenuous because it fails to consider the Master Plan, which cost the taxpayers tens of thousands of dollars, and was based on public input from

the citizens of Highland.” Please contact Mick Bell at 248-887-5399 for more information on RFD59. If you are interested in seeing a copy of the revised proposal for the King Senior Citizen complex, please visit the township offices.

Highland Conservancy - If you are interested in keeping Highland rural and preserving our natural resources, please visit our website:

www.HighlandConservancy.org