

Livonia Township Meeting Results

June 24, 2009 Open House

Town Government

Is Livonia Township Headed in the right direction?

Definitely headed in the right direction: (0)

Generally headed in the right direction: (5)

Generally headed in the wrong direction: (0)

Definitely headed in the wrong direction: (0)

What are the greatest factors in your vote?

- To keep our leaders honest
- Low taxed
- Quality maintenance
- Lower taxes
- Fair taxes
- Someone who would build a sense of community

Greatest Threat

What do you believe is the greatest threat that Livonia Township currently faces? What should be done to address this challenge?

- Continues growth pressure and the Twin Cities grow out
- Lack of spirit
- Lack of community
- Growth will happen, it is inevitable so we may as well thoughtfully plan for it
- A lack of community that fosters relationships with residents
- Annexation
- Unplanned growth (2)
- No state aide to townships

Environmental Protection

The County's Comprehensive Plan contains some modest goals relating to environmental protection. These goals have not translated into land use policies that would preserve or protect sensitive areas from encroachment of development.

Is there a need or desire for the Town to be proactive on environmental issues within the township?

We need to be more aggressive in addressing environmental issues within the township: (2)

We should be more proactive in environmental matters when there is a critical environmental concern that directly impacts the Town: (1)

We should defer to Sherburne County, but stay involved with their efforts at environmental protection: (3)

The Township has no role in addressing environmental issues: (0)

Comments:

- We need to take care of our environment
- What is sensitive
- Protect sensitive shoreland and wetlands
- Environmental protection requires thoughtful proaction. It benefits society at every level from unconscious residents to wildlife to the land in general. This should be pursued to set up land use policies. It is often possible to make them a win/win for developers, residents and the environment.
- Should have a plan to ensure everyone pumps their septic system every 3 years

Zoning

This map is the current zoning for Livonia Township. The zoning is established by Sherburne County and ordinances are enforced by County Officials.

The General Rule District provides for 2.5 acre lots throughout much of the township. The Urban Expansion district contemplates lot sized consistent with the City of Zimmerman. Commercial and industrial zones are primarily for highway- oriented commercial or industrial development.

Do you have any feedback on this map?

- So far the only things addressed are agricultural zoning, residential, highway and a small amount for commercial and industrial. We need to consider natural places that contribute to society's sense of community (libraries, parks, community centers, etc.)
- Need more commercial areas north on boundary highway 169

- There should be a township rule that would specify how much a land a person owns by going by the land abstract so old fence lines don't count anymore. This would eliminate fights between neighbors.
- Urban expansion areas have been eliminated-agreement between county and townships.
- This map is a bit scary because general rural zoning allows all kinds of development-right next to homes.
- There should be industrial expansion to the northwest of Zimmerman off 45 where water lines exist.

Greatest Opportunity

What do you believe is the greatest opportunity that Livonia Township should act on in the coming years? Is there an unrealized opportunity that the Town should be acting on?

- Industrial tax base-Industrial Park (2)
- Industrial/commercial area near/on Hwy 169
- Preserving rural character
- Getting younger people involved in community government
- Commerce
- Building a spirit of community among its members. Do this first and other growth seems to follow in the proper order and scale

Agricultural Uses

There are a number of agricultural uses still operating within the Township. Some consider the historic agricultural uses an important part of the landscape of the township. Others look at this rural land as a reserve for future development.

Long term threats to continuing agricultural operations primarily are rising land values and encroaching development.

Do you have any thoughts on the agricultural uses within the Livonia Township? What should be done to preserve them, if anything?

- Preserve farmland and open space
- Small farm and Ag land is important to community! Don't tax us out
- Livonia has a lot of wooded and hilly land which cannot be farmed but would be good for single family lots.
- Where are we at regarding the "green" area-taxes?
- Keep farms- encourage farming. Provide incentives for organic farming practices. If planned properly, there will be plenty of space for increased small farms and future residential expansion as well as industrial and commercial sectors. Insightful planners are necessary.

Aggregate Resources

Livonia Township sits on top of some of the best aggregate (also called “gravel”) in Sherburne County. With parts of the Metro area shipping aggregate in by rail from Montana, there is an obvious pressure and desire by some to extract the aggregate from within Livonia Township.

Do you have any thoughts on aggregate extraction within Livonia Township?

- Mining should be allowed, consistent with current guidelines. (2)
- Township helps with core samples and inform land owners-possible co-op.
- Protect the natural resources and develop afterwards with a plan thought out ahead of mining.
- A thoughtful use-not overuse of resources is the best way to incorporate steady and controlled economic growth. The Arbor Lakes area of Maple Grove shows us that further creative development of former gravel pits is possible and profitable.
- Maybe it would help pay for expenses in the city like maintaining the roads that need maintaining
- Let it be mined

Lakes and Wetland Features

This map shows the lakes and wetlands that exist within Livonia Township. As you can see, large portions of the township contain these water features.

How important should water quality issues be to Livonia Township?

The Highest Priority: (8)

A very high priority: (2)

Something that is important, but not critical: (0)

A low priority: (0)

Comments?

- Water quality issues are larger than simple recreational fishing. They are a matter of a larger environmental impact. Water quality should always be a high priority as it effects so much environmentally.
- Dredge, stock with fish
- Build a dock or pier for you and elderly fishing interest
- West Hunter Lake is only 6.5 feet deep and is all weedy this year. It should be cleaned and some deep holes should be made so the fish do not freeze out.
- Fremont Lake needs to be stocked with panfish and made deeper if possible

Economic Development

The Township has minimal commercial and industrial land. The zoning has been established by the county. The Township does not provide urban services (sewer and water) to any of these properties.

Livonia Township has a young working-age population. At the last census, 21% of males in the township worked in the construction industry. The relatively long commuting times reported suggest that many township residents drive to the Twin Cities or an inner suburb for employment.

What should the Township's role be in matters of commercial growth and economic development?

- The township needs to work closely with Zimmerman to establish viable commercial districts
- Merge with Zimmerman (2)
- Bring in commercial and light industrial
- Consider the merits of merging with Zimmerman. Allowing townships the larger lots and higher density in the city.
- Is there an industrial park?
- Encourage small business-develop commercial area along 169

Transportation

This map shows the roads within Livonia Township. The largest expense of the town is in maintaining the roads.

The current development patten, with most homes places on moderate-sized lots, is expensive to maintain. While a developer may build the road initially, it is the township's responsibility to maintain it. Typically the tax revenue generated by each home is often not enough to maintain the road in front of that home.

Do you have any thoughts on the current transportation system or on the costs associated with maintaining roadways within the town?

- We definitely shouldn't be building roads that we can't maintain based on our budget projections. We should look at how to create pedestrian-friendly communities that encourage people to not use their cars.
- Need to work with adjoining communities to make the best system
- Roads seem to be well maintained except some gravel roads. Developments set aside a % for future use or home owners contribute a small fee to use.

Recreational Opportunities

What do you think of the recreational opportunities available within the Town?

We have more recreational opportunities than we need: (1)

We have the right amount of recreational opportunities: (2)

We could use more recreational opportunities: (3)

We have no recreational opportunities of value: (0)

What new recreational opportunities are needed and how should they be paid for?

- Enough already
- Cooperate with Zimmerman
- We need more horse trails for peaceful riding
- Use fees

Population Growth

Livonia Township's population rose steadily in prior decades. There is a debate over whether that growth will continue. There are some indications that there will be a rebound in the current soft market, but long-term, higher energy costs and a decline in demand for new, single-family housing may stifle growth.

Assuming that there is continued growth pressure in the township, do you have any thoughts or ideas on how that growth should be accommodated?

- Growth should happen in deregulated growth areas, not in sensitive environmental areas
- We need to designate high density and low density areas
- Need to re-evaluate lots sizes (now 2.5 acre) but should be of sufficient size to accommodate primary and secondary septic fields

What are the biggest challenges facing Livonia Today:

- Keeping taxes reasonable (11)
- For decades we have been brainwashed that subsidies and grants are required. If businesses were run this way they would go broke. (2)
- More land
- Sewer and water usage
- No industrial or commercial development
- Road repairs (3)
- More community families to attend meetings
- We need to build out and develop from our main traffic corridors and stop the spotty development
- We need commercial development for our tax base

- High cost of living
- Money not available to build roads as planned
- Businesses need to come in to provide tax income
- More planning needs to be done on the area around Lake Fremont
- If we keep growing we will have to deal with crime, traffic, roads and schools
- Hwy 169 slow down
- Rapid housing growth
- Jobs in township(2)
- Road plans
- Large lots, wasted land(2)
- Threat of annexation(2)
- Aging population, difficult for this group to support again infrastructure (2)
- Threat of “large government” abolishing townships
- Unchecked growth
- Urban expansion(3)
- Not paying for schools
- Declining home values because of fuel prices
- Lack of business opportunities in township for local residents
- Expanding city sewer water because of their poor planning-lack of money
- Building a true community
- Proper land use(2)
- Keep good town board
- Communication to all
- Need more commercial/industrial
- Empty houses
- Pollution
- Build community centers
- An incentive for livestock farmers to run their manure through a septic type of system to trade methane for electricity generation for their uses and sell back to co-ops.
- Once your septic is in an existing home you shouldn't have to pay huge city renewal charges to rip up city streets and yards to replace the service

Reasons to Move to Livonia Township:

- Large lot sizes/open space (6)
- Snowfall in the middle of the pine trees is “quiet”
- Own well and septic
- Parks
- Wildlife
- Scenery (4)
- Clean air
- Great schools (12)

- Kind people (6)
- Nice roads (6)
- Nice town (4)
- Quiet (2)
- Close to metro but still live rural (2)
- Small town feel (4)
- Great connections to suburbs/jobs/shopping (8)
- Alone on my porch at sunset-rocking chair until the sun goes down
- Woods and lakes
- Convenient location to churches
- Good tax base(2)
- Long range planning (2)
- Low taxes
- Livonia has been good with tax money
- Clean feel
- Easy to get away to the north county hunting/fishing
- Secure/low crime (3)
- Maintenance of the ecosystems, especially the lakes
- No raising taxes (2)
- A lot of young people
- Hunting
- Close to good hospitals and doctors
- Plans for better transportation by train, better highway access are in progress
- Parks and trails are being developed