

# SPRINGFIELD CHARTER TOWNSHIP



SEAN R. MILLER, CLERK

248-846-6510 | 248-846-6538 FAX

**Dr. Monfils Meeting**  
Springfield Township  
12000 Davisburg Road, Davisburg, MI 48350  
January 16, 2026  
11:30 AM

**PRESENT:**

Richard L. Davis, Township Supervisor  
Sean Miller, Township Clerk  
Sarah Richmond, Township Parks Director  
Dr. Michael Monfils, Director of Michigan Natural Features Inventory  
Danielle Sink, Supervisor's Assistant/Recording Secretary

Supervisor Davis opened the meeting by thanking Parks Director Sarah Richmond for coordinating the discussion and acknowledged prior correspondence with Dr. Monfils. He emphasized the Township's commitment to openness and transparency, noting that the Township has made extensive materials available publicly and has worked diligently to address community concerns related to the proposed gravel mining application. Supervisor Davis explained that the Township conducted a competitive selection process to identify qualified, independent environmental consultants without conflicts of interest. After screening multiple firms, the Township interviewed three companies and advanced two, Ramboll and Fleis & Vandenbrink, based on expertise and independence. A third firm, Atwell, declined participation due to the complexity of the review.

Supervisor Davis outlined the Township's strategy to evaluate both proposals collaboratively rather than selecting a single firm outright. He stated that the goal is to identify strengths and weaknesses across each proposal to ensure no critical environmental discipline is underrepresented. He underscored that potential impacts to natural resources, particularly those that are irreversible, are being elevated as the highest priority, and that decisions will be driven by facts and science rather than public pressure. To reinforce transparency, the Township intends to publish an evaluation worksheet online so the public can understand the criteria and provide informed input.

Supervisor Davis described the role of special counsel Gerald Fisher, noting his extensive background in Michigan zoning law and experience with similar applications. With Board authorization, Supervisor Davis, Attorney Fisher, and Township Counsel Greg Need have been empowered to interview and engage

# SPRINGFIELD CHARTER TOWNSHIP



SEAN R. MILLER, CLERK

248-846-6510 | 248-846-6538 FAX

environmental firms. The Township recently met to initiate the comparative evaluation process and anticipates that the selected consultants' work will subsequently be reviewed by an additional layer of experts. Supervisor Davis invited MNFI to participate in this secondary review, citing MNFI's credentials, institutional knowledge, and deep familiarity with sensitive natural systems within Springfield Township.

Supervisor Davis explained that the Township negotiated a \$150,000 escrow from the applicant to fund independent environmental review, ensuring the process does not burden taxpayers. Any engagement with MNFI would be subject to Board approval and coordination with the applicant under the escrow terms. He reiterated his appreciation for MNFI's potential involvement and emphasized the value of incorporating diverse, expert perspectives to protect Springfield Township's unique natural resources.

Dr. Monfils expressed appreciation for the invitation and explained MNFI's conservation-driven mission and commitment to objective, data-informed analysis. He noted that MNFI's role would focus on reviewing consultant findings, assessing whether sufficient information exists to evaluate potential impacts, and identifying gaps or uncertainties, particularly where complex systems do not yield definitive predictions. He asked clarifying questions regarding scope, including whether MNFI would review consultant analyses rather than re-evaluating applicant submissions directly.

Supervisor Davis confirmed that the Township does not intend to duplicate consultant work. Instead, MNFI would serve as a second-level review to assess completeness, defensibility, and relevance to Springfield's unique conditions. He invited MNFI to participate in the fact-finding process and reiterated that all meetings, materials, and records are being documented and posted publicly to ensure accountability and defensibility under applicable law, including Public Act 113 governing gravel mining.

The discussion focused extensively on Springfield Township's exceptional environmental features, including high-quality fen systems, protected wetlands, and proximity to a nearby Superfund site. Supervisor Davis and Parks Director Richmond highlighted concerns regarding groundwater drawdown, aquifer temperature changes, impacts on plant and mussel species, and the interaction of mining activities with existing contamination containment efforts. The Township emphasized that while gravel mining exists elsewhere in the region, Springfield's ecological conditions are unusually sensitive and warrant heightened scrutiny.

Supervisor Davis noted that certain hydrogeologic studies require active drawdown testing and that the applicant is in the process of installing a high capacity well. He stressed the importance of proper well placement and methodology to ensure accurate data and avoid skewed results. He reiterated the

# SPRINGFIELD CHARTER TOWNSHIP



SEAN R. MILLER, CLERK

248-846-6510 | 248-846-6538 FAX

Township's intention to subject all technical work to rigorous, multi-disciplinary review and to require additional studies where necessary.

Dr. Monfils acknowledged the complexity and uncertainty inherent in environmental impact analysis and stated that MNFI may rely on peer-reviewed scientific literature to inform its assessments where appropriate. Supervisor Davis affirmed that such recommendations would be discussed collaboratively and, where necessary, brought forward for consultant consideration and Board approval. He emphasized that the process would remain flexible and adaptive to ensure no relevant data is overlooked.

Supervisor Davis stated that the Township has negotiated a pause in the application timeline and is not constrained by deadlines. He emphasized that the Township will not be rushed and is prepared to take the time necessary, even multiple years, to complete a thorough, science-based review. He affirmed his role as a steward of the process and reiterated that decisions will proceed only when the Planning Commission and Board are confident, they have all necessary information.

Dr. Monfils indicated he would confer with MNFI staff to assess capacity, expertise alignment, and potential costs, noting that MNFI operates largely on grants and contracts.

Parks Director Richmond requested that MNFI outline potential scope, comfort areas, hourly rates, and administrative considerations.

Dr. Monfils confirmed MNFI could prepare a service outline and cost estimate, recognizing that scope may evolve.

Supervisor Davis concluded by reiterating his appreciation for MNFI's consideration and emphasized that excluding such expertise would be negligent given the stakes and uniqueness of Springfield Township's natural resources. He invited continued dialogue, provided contact information, and noted that extensive application materials are available on the Township website under the gravel mining application page for review. The meeting concluded with mutual understanding that there is no urgency and that follow-up will occur after MNFI's internal discussions.