Flint Township
1490 S. Dye Road, Flint, MI 48532

Suggestion Committee
March 30, 2017
Final Report and Recommendations to the Flint Township Board of Trustees

The Suggestion Committee was created by the Flint Township Supervisor after the 2016 general election because she and other individuals who were campaigning for a Flint Township elected office heard from residents and businesses that the Township should change its name to differentiate it from the City of Flint.

The organizational meeting of the Committee was September 29, 2016. Jerry Preston was selected by the Supervisor as Chairman of the Committee. The Committee’s members were self-selected and unlimited in number. Anyone could be a member of the Committee simply by providing their email address to the Secretary of the Committee, Deb Nebraski. Each member would receive the meeting materials via email before each meeting. Anyone who attended the meeting could participate in the meeting. The Committee understood that it had no authority or power to do anything except make this recommendation to the Board of Trustees. The Committee made every effort to be as inclusive and transparent as possible. The number of attendees at the meetings varied from 12 when it was cold and icy to nearly 100 at other meetings.

Initially, the Committee had no name. We called ourselves the _______ Committee because we did not want the name of the Committee to predispose or direct the outcome of the Committee. Most decisions of the Committee were by unanimous consent. Later, following the identification of the purpose of the Committee, it was agreed to call our Committee the Suggestion Committee.
Purpose
At the first meeting of the Committee, it was agreed that our purpose was:
1. Identify processes required to:
   Change the township name.
   Convert to a city.
   Change the U.S. Postal address to match the name.
2. Determine the Advantages and Disadvantages of each form of Governance.
3. Determine the Advantages and Disadvantages of changing the name.
4. Select a new name if a name change is determined to be in the best interest of the Township.
5. Make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees.

Possible Recommendations
The Committee developed a possible set of recommendations. They included but were not limited to:
1. Recommend a change in the name of the Township.
2. Recommend conversion to a city.
3. Recommend a new U.S. Postal address.
4. Recommend no change.

Committee Activity
The Committee held nine (9) meetings including one public hearing. The Committee agreed that it was important to have as much information as possible, and encouraged written comment throughout the process. Individual members conducted independent research and shared that information with Committee members. Minutes of Committee meetings and all written comments a part of this report.

Initial meetings of the Committee were fact finding. We consulted with the Township’s attorney Peter Goodstein on the processes to change the name of the Township and the procedure to convert to a City. We had a representative of an insurance company address what we thought was a correlation between ZIP Codes and insurance rates. While we were unable to secure someone from the U.S. Post Office to meet with us, the Chairman had several conversations with the Address Manager of the Post Office in Detroit.

Finally, we developed lists of Pros and Cons of Converting to a City and the Pros and Cons of changing the Township’s name.
Findings
The Committee has made its recommendations after determining that:

1. We want to retain the limited form of governance of a township. We extensively examined the concept of converting to a city. A very large majority of the Committee indicated that even with limits placed on the new city officials through the new city charter, they felt that taxes and other costs would increase and the benefits would not. The motion to recommend converting to a city was postponed indefinitely.

2. We want to retain the limited form of governance of a township but to change the name of our Township, keeping the elected officials in place. There were members of the Committee that felt by changing the name we would be “kicking” the City of Flint in their time of need. Some felt that we should be there to support the City and share in the prosperity when it returns. There were also views that we should not make changes as we have been affiliated with the Flint name since 1835 and it will be difficult to make that change.

3. ZIP Codes are a significant part of the identity of the Township. We learned that the U.S. Post Office would be reluctant, at best, to make any changes regardless of any action we might take to change the name or become a city. We learned that there are seven (7) ZIP codes with four (4) different city names attached to them that are required as part of the Official U.S. Post Office address for Flint Township.

4. Insurance Companies have told us that there is very little relationship between ZIP Codes and insurance rates, however, the experience of the Committee does not seem to confirm their statements. We believe that we might improve our insurance rates with a ZIP code that properly reflects our Community.

5. Changing the name, at the very least, will bring a separate identity to our Community and could improve esprit de corps. Hopefully, businesses, organizations, clubs, and events would adopt the new name into their identity further solidifying the new identity for the community.

6. A name change could create a more positive image for the Township.

Recommendations
The Committee makes the following recommendations:

1. That the Township Trustees change the name of our Township to Carman Hills.
a. Prior to proceeding with the name change process, the Suggestion Committee recommends that the name first be submitted to the voters of the Township at the next regular or special election.
b. If approved by the voters, the name should be submitted to the Genesee County Board of Commissioners as provided by the State of Michigan Constitution, with the guidance of the Township’s attorney. (Bauckham, Sparks, Rolfe & Thomsen, P.C. Letter 12/18/1992 to Novi Township)
c. When approved by the Commissioners, the transition to the new name should be done as economically as possible i.e. replace stationary when exhausted or required for some other reason, replace signs on vehicles as new vehicles are purchased etc.
d. While the official new name of our township will be the Charter Township of Carman Hills, we recommend that we refer to our new community by its name only, not Carman Hills Township, but just Carman Hills.
   i. Other communities are commonly called by their name only i.e. Otisville, not Otisville Village; Gaines, not the Village of Gaines, Canton, not Canton Township and Chesterfield not Chesterfield Township.
   ii. The official name should be provided to all organizations and encourage its use immediately upon adoption by the Board of Trustees

2. That the Trustees petition the U.S. Post Office to assist in solidifying Carman Hills’ new identity by changing the ZIP Code addresses to reflect that the address is physically located in Carman Hills.
   a. Ideally, the boundaries of Carman Hills would be the boundaries of a new or several modified ZIP Codes that have Carman Hills attached to them.
   b. Short of a complete overhaul of the ZIP Codes as suggested above, we would ask that the names attached to ZIP Codes 48507 and 48532 be changed to Carman Hills. A majority of these ZIP Code addresses are in the Township and it seems to be an easy move on the part of the U.S. Post Office to make this change.

3. That the Trustees petition the U.S. Postal Service to change the name of the Flint Southwest Post Office to the Carman Hills Post Office. This
should be a minor change for the Post Office and assist in building the esprit de corps of the new Carman Hills Community.

Adoption of this Report to the Trustees
This report and its recommendations were approved by unanimous consent at the Suggestion Committee’s March 2, 2017 meeting. The March 30th meeting selected the new name.

Summary
The members of the Suggestion Committee were pleased to serve our community and Flint Township in this manner. We hope our work has been helpful. If there are concerns we have not addressed, or anything that needs our further review, we would be pleased to meet again on that subject and update our report. Without further direction, with the submission of this report, we consider our work finished and have adjourned sine die.

Jerry Preston
Chairman, Suggestion Committee

Attachments:
1. Minutes of the meetings and the public hearing of the Solicitation Committee
2. Written comments received at the public hearing and those sent to the Township, which were directed to the Solicitation Committee
3. Copy of the ZIP Code map with the Township Boundaries identified
4. Copy of the information received as a part of the search and review of the Carman Hills name and the other names of the top ten that have been suggested.

Amendment to this Report
At the final meeting of the Suggestion Committee, 3/30/17, the name Carman Hills was selected to modify this report which was originally approved at the meeting of the Committee on 3/2/17.
103 names were submitted during the month of March. The Committee created a form that it asked each person submitting a name complete. The form asked for several pieces of information including the pronunciation of the name, its etymology, other places the name is used, meaning in English and other languages, and any additional information supporting the name.

Each of the names was considered by the Committee one by one and most were removed from consideration by consensus. Following this procedure, 10 names remained. Supporters of each of the remaining names spoke briefly about the meaning of the name, its potential to build community esprit de corps and its use as a marketing and promotion tool. A series of votes were held. Following each vote the name receiving the lowest number of votes was removed from consideration. This provided the following prioritized list:

1\textsuperscript{st} – Carman Hills
2\textsuperscript{nd} – Garland
3\textsuperscript{rd} – Dyewood Heights
4\textsuperscript{th} – Genesee Hills
Tied for 5\textsuperscript{th} – West Haven, Westwood Hills
Tied for 7\textsuperscript{th} – Oak Hills, Torrey Heights, Bristol Heights
10\textsuperscript{th} – Rolling Oaks
Flint Township's 7 Zip Codes
48433 – Flushing
49473 – Swartz Creek
48503 – Flint
48504 – Flint
48507 – Flint
48529 – Burton
48532 – Flint