

OSHTEMO CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD OCTOBER 27, 2011

Agenda

MASTER PLAN – 9TH STREET SUB-AREA PLAN – DRAFT ONE

FUTURE LAND USE MAP - AMENDMENT

ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

A meeting of the Oshtemo Charter Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, October 27, 2011, commencing at approximately 7:00 p.m. at the Oshtemo Charter Township Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kitty Gelling, Acting Chairperson
Bob Anderson
Carl Benson
Dave Bushouse
Fred Gould
Millard Loy
Richard Skalski

MEMBER ABSENT: None

Also present were Jodi Stefforia, Planning Director; **Consultant Greg Milliken** and ~~two~~ **three** other interested persons.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at about 7:00 p.m.; the “Pledge of Allegiance” was recited.

Agenda

Mr. Skalski made a motion to accept the Agenda as submitted. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

The Acting Chairperson asked if there was public comment, and hearing none, asked that the Board move on to the next item on the Agenda.

Minutes

The Acting Chairperson asked if the members had had a chance to review the minutes. Hearing no suggested changes, the Acting Chairperson asked for a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Anderson then moved to approve the minutes, as presented, and Mr. Gould seconded the motion. The Acting Chairperson called for a vote on the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

MASTER PLAN – 9th STREET SUB-AREA PLAN – DRAFT ONE

The Acting Chairperson said the next item on the Agenda was review and discussion of draft one of the 9th Street Sub-Area Plan. Greg Milliken presented draft one of the 9th Street Sub-Area Plan to the Planning Commission.

The Acting Chairperson questioned why medium density residential was proposed north of West Main Street noting she would prefer it be planned for low density residential adding that she was concerned about traffic on this stretch of 9th Street as it is only two lanes. Greg Milliken responded that during the public input at the design workshop, the consultant team had heard from folks in that area that a transition from the high intensity commercial to the south to the single family residential to the north was desired. As a result, the team has recommended medium density residential in this area which would allow for senior housing and condos rather than suggesting that low density residential as the transitional land use in this area.

Richard Skalski commented that he was comfortable with medium density residential in this area as a transition indicating that he did not believe anyone would invest their savings to live in a house that backed up to the rear of Meijer or Menards.

Fred Gould responded that he agreed with Richard Skalski and feels that it is a good area to transition from the four corners to the low density residential to the north. He added that there are other instances of medium density residential on two-lane road segments in the Township that do not pose a traffic problem.

Carl Benson noted that folks at the design workshop were clear that they did not want commercial north of the four corners and that he can support either low density residential or medium density residential in this area.

Bob Anderson noted he would be comfortable with either low density residential or medium density residential for this area.

Millard Loy commented that medium density residential is okay for this area to transition to the low density and rural residential to the north. He added that he lives by high and medium density land uses and they do not create a lot of traffic.

Dave Bushouse added that in his opinion medium density residential is appropriate here as a transition.

Fred Gould then commented that it was important to emphasize within the document that the lines of each land use category is generalized and not set in stone. He noted that he read references to form based code design standards and suggested that the Planning Commission refer to the work done for the village area form based code when implementation begins to re-use as much as the work already accomplished in this respect.

Carl Benson suggested that instead of referring to 'national big box' retailers that the plan just state 'big box' retailers as some big box retailers are not national.

Jodi Stefforia asked Greg Milliken to what depth commercial on West Main Street in the West Main Street Sub Area was shown? Greg Milliken responded it is shown at about 800 feet deep but is just a generalization not set in stone to any specific depth until the implementation work is done.

The Acting Chairperson then asked if there was public comment.

Kadir Mohmand introduced himself to the Planning Commission. He stated he is not comfortable with the term Conservation Residential for the west half of the land he owns on the west side of 9th Street, south of Wal-Mart. He stated he would like to donate part of his land to the public for a park including the pond area. He would prefer a term such as 'green area' instead of Conservation Residential.

Sherry Mohmand then spoke. She thanked the Planning Commission for indicating commercial along the 9th Street frontage but requested that it be to a greater depth similar to the depth of commercial on the south side of West Main Street in the West Main Street Sub Area Plan. She added that she is not comfortable with the proposed Conservation Residential noting that this term was used in the Genesee Prairie where it was appropriate but this land abuts Wal-Mart and there are no prairie lands to conserve. She noted that she found the term Conservation Residential offensive given that there are three Muslim land owners in the sub area. She reiterated her husband's offer to donate the west part of their land to the public so that it may be kept in a natural state.

Scott Hudspeth then spoke. He indicated that he agrees with the Planning Commissioners that medium density residential is the appropriate land use north of the Menards and Meijer properties and retention ponds. He added that stormwater has not been a problem in the area since the Menards pond was reconstructed a couple years ago except for the pre-existing low areas. He added that no-one is going to build a single family home in a low area that abuts Meijer or Menards and that medium density residential is appropriate here.

Hearing no more public comment, the Acting Chairperson closed that portion of the meeting.

Fred Gould commented that he understands the Mohmands' sensitivity to the term Conservation Residential and asked Greg Milliken if another term could be used.

Greg Milliken responded with an apology to the Mohmands indicating that he was not aware of the negative connotation with the term and certainly did not mean to offend them. He thanked the Mohmands for their input indicating his goal for tonight was to gather feedback and he will revisit and revise the draft document and map based upon the responses.

Richard Skalski added that he agrees with the concept of conservation residential but would prefer that it be renamed. He noted that the area has unique topography with hills, valleys and wet areas. He would encourage any development to respect the natural features using the PUD process instead of leveling the land as would be expected in a traditional low density residential plat. He would like to see design standards developed for this area.

The Acting Chairperson indicated that tonight was a good session and she is grateful for the input of the public and fellow planning commissioners. She asked that draft two be ready for the November 10 meeting.

MASTER PLAN – FUTURE LAND USE MAP AMENDMENT

Jodi Stefforia explained that the only change to the map from the version adopted with the Master Plan in June was an expansion of the 9th Street Sub Area Plan to include the area just north of Menards and Meijer in the study area. This area was included in the 9th Street study area per the request of the Township Board in July. She added that this amendment will be worked in with the others, the three draft sub areas, and adopted together following a public comment period on all the amendments.

ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

Jodi Stefforia reported that the amendment to Section 76.410e that the Planning Commission sent to the Township Board for adoption was sent back. The amendment

was to require illuminated signs to be turned off at 10 p.m. (presently allowed until midnight) when the business is not open and it abuts a residential zoning district.

At the request of the Acting Chairperson, the following Planning Commissioners indicated interest in keeping the time at 10 p.m. – Gould, Benson, Skalski, Loy and Anderson. Bob Anderson indicated he did not support a time earlier than 10 p.m.

Jodi Stefforia noted that she had heard from two businesses in the Township both opposed to turning their sign off earlier than midnight for safety concerns and ability for people to find them after hours when coming to their property. She added one was a car repair business where tow trucks and customers drop off vehicles after hours and the other was a credit union with a 24-hour ATM. She opined, for future reference, that perhaps banks and credit unions are not a good use in residential area given the noise and lights associated with ATMs and drive up traffic.

The Acting Chairperson asked how many complaints have been received about sign illumination. Ms. Stefforia responded about a half-dozen.

Dave Bushouse suggested that the issue be revisited by staff to come up with more of a breakdown including distance to the nearest residence or residential district versus just abutting a residential district. Jodi Stefforia offered to further study the issue and bring back a recommendation at a future meeting.

Other Business

Ms. Stefforia asked the Planning Commissioners to pencil-in a tentative meeting on December 22 in the event that applications and/or work items warranted a second meeting in December.

Planning Commissioner Comments

Fred Gould asked if he should plan to return his Zoning Ordinance once his term is up. Jodi Stefforia told him to keep it.

Millard Loy asked about the Mad Science building and the yogurt business on KL Avenue. Jodi Stefforia responded that the addition to the Mad Science building was for the other occupant, a building contractor and that she did not know why the yogurt business was not moving forward in the other building. Millard Loy then asked about the logging occurring on West Main Street. Jodi Stefforia responded that she was not aware of the owner's plans.

Bob Anderson thanked Kitty Gelling for chairing the meeting for him.

Kitty Gelling indicated she was willing to Chair anytime and thanked Bob's wife for bringing him to the meetings. She also mentioned the Rotary Halloween event at the Armory this Sunday.

Dave Bushouse noted he was glad Bob Anderson was at the meeting. He added that he has observed several areas where storm water ditches are being cleaned up near Drake Road and is concerned that it will result in greater flows to the City's system east of Drake Road leading to flooding in the intersections. In response to a question from Fred Gould, Dave added that he is also concerned about ITC and wonders why they are not pursuing the I-94 Corridor.

Adjournment

There being no further comments, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:20 p.m.

Minutes Prepared:
October 31, 2011

Minutes Approved:
November 10, 2011