

**OSHTEMO CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION**

MINUTES OF A WORK SESSION HELD NOVEMBER 9, 2017

A work session of the Oshtemo Charter Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, November 9, 2017, commencing at approximately 5:00 p.m. at the Oshtemo Charter Township Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cheri Bell, Chairperson
Fred Antosz, Vice Chairperson
Dusty Farmer, Secretary
Kathleen Garland – Rike
Mary Smith
Bruce VanderWeele

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ollie Chambers

Also present was Julie Johnston, Planning Director and James Porter, Township Attorney. Approximately 12 persons were in attendance.

Call to Order

Chairperson Bell called the meeting to order at approximately 5:05 p.m.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

The Chairperson called for public comment on non-agenda items. Seeing none, moved to the next agenda item.

Maple Hill South Sub-Area Plan Discussion

Ms. Johnston refreshed the Planning Commission and the members of audience on the work that had been completed to date on the Maple Hill South Sub-Area Plan, including the public outreach, Planning Commission work sessions and the contents of the current draft Sub-Area Plan.

She indicated that the evening's work session was to discuss any final concerns the Planning Commission had with the Sub-Area Plan, listen to any public input and make some decisions about how to move forward with the Sub-Area Plan and the larger Master Plan Update. Ms. Johnston thought the best approach that evening was to document the concerns with the Sub-Area Plan and discuss how the Plan might be changed to address those concerns.

The Planning Commission members outlined the following concerns:

1. Would like a visual understanding of 6 dwelling units per acre.
2. How are the density bonuses applied?
3. This is the last large “green” area or open space for this part of the Township, which should be emphasized in the Plan.
4. If the site becomes parcelized, how do we manage density and preserving open space if the parcels develop separately?
5. Need to consider some language about building form (size and scale) that was preferred from the public workshop.
6. Need to ensure building height is addressed adjacent to the existing residential developments to the south.
7. Concerned with connecting to Green Meadow Drive to the development because it will increase cut-through traffic.
8. Consider closing Driftwood Avenue to stop cut-through traffic in this single-family neighborhood.

Chairperson Bell then asked if any members of the public wished to provide comments on the draft Sub-Area Plan.

Mr. Brian Stults, resident of Skyridge Subdivision, indicated his main concern regarding possible new development in this area is its impact on Driftwood Avenue. He stated that Skyridge is the only subdivision in Oshtemo where an apartment complex gains access to a main road through a single-family subdivision. If the new Plan for this area provides new connections to Drake Road and West Main Street that the apartment complex could utilize, he would request the connection to Driftwood be closed.

Ms. Karen Curtis, resident of Skyridge Subdivision, also requested the Driftwood Avenue connection to the apartment complex be closed as soon as a different access point is developed.

Mr. Curt Aardema, representative from AVB who have a purchase option on this property, indicated that they are in the process of reviewing possible development possibilities for the site and appreciates the flexibility provided by the current draft Sub-Area Plan.

As no other members of the public wished to speak, Chairperson Bell opened discussion back to the Planning Commission. Ms. Johnston indicated that each area of concern should be discussed to help staff understand what changes to the Plan will be needed.

1. Staff will bring examples of different residential types that are approximately 6 dwelling units per acre to the December Planning Commission meeting.

2. Density bonuses will be developed when the zoning ordinance language is developed for this Plan. However, the intent is that bonuses would be for all of the acreage planned for residential and that it would be given only in response to the development of public open space, which is dedicated for a public purpose, like a park.

A request was made to consider limiting commercial square footage in the development of the zoning ordinance and including bonuses in the Sub-Area Plan for nonresidential square footage if public spaces are developed.

3. Discussion was had that even though this area is man-made greenspace (golf course) it is still the last real green area in this part of the Township. The Plan needs to emphasize this more and include language about the importance of preserving some of this green space. Ms. Johnston indicated the draft Plan would be updated.

4. It was determined that managing density and preserving open space will need to be carefully considered when the zoning ordinance for this area is written.

5. Ms. Johnston indicated that the gradation of uses and intensities of building size and scale from the north (more intense) to the south was an attempt to address the visual preference survey results from the public workshop. The residents who attended the workshop clearly indicated a more single-family residential scale as the preferred building type. Language in the plan states the following:

“The southern edge of the sub-area shall be exclusively occupied by residential land uses, to ensure compatibility with adjacent established residential areas. Further, if the height and bulk of any proposed residential construction is not equivalent to the existing development, a natural greenspace buffer/ vegetative screen shall be provided.”

The Planning Commission was satisfied that this language resolved this issue.

6. The Planning Commission requested removing building height requirements from the Plan and instead address the issue of building scale and its adjacency to the existing residential neighborhood. Ms. Johnston indicated she would update the draft Plan.

7. Discussion was had regarding Green Meadow Drive. Ms. Johnston indicated that while she understood the concerns regarding traffic impacts, Green Meadow is a public road which connects to this area to the north. From a planning perspective, this connection makes the most sense with regard to access and connectivity. A consensus was not reached on this topic.

8. The Planning Commission agreed that if additional vehicular connections are made for the apartments in this location, that the connection to Driftwood Avenue should be closed, if possible. Discussions will be needed with the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County and emergency responders. Ms. Johnston indicated that she would update the Plan to include language supporting this request.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Planning Commission determined that with the recommended changes, they were ready to proceed to the planned public hearing scheduled for December 14, 2017.

Any Other Business

Seeing no other business before the Planning Commission, Chairperson Bell requested a motion to adjourn.

Adjournment

Ms. Farmer made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. VanderWeele supported the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The Planning Commission Work Session was adjourned at approximately 6:50 p.m.

Minutes prepared: December 1, 2017

Minutes approved: December 14, 2017