

**OSHTEMO CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 12, 2026**

---

**AGENDA**

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

**CONCEPTUAL REVIEW OF REVISED WEST MAIN VILLAGES MIXED USE  
DISTRICT DRAFT DEVELOPMENT SCHEMATIC PLAN**

---

A meeting of the Oshtemo Charter Township Planning Commission was held Thursday, February 12, 2026, commencing at 6:00 p.m. at the Oshtemo Township Hall, 7275 West Main Street.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Michael Chapman, Township Board Liaison  
Deb Everett  
Scot Jefferies  
Alistair Smith  
Jeremiah Smith  
Ron Ver Planck

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

Also present were Jodi Stefforia, Planning Director; James Porter, Township Attorney, Leeanna Harris, Planning and Zoning Administrator; Colten Hutson, Zoning Administrator; and approximately 45 interested persons.

**CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Everett called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Those in attendance joined in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Commissioner Everett introduced the item of Agenda Approval and requested the addition of a Public Comment period for non-agenda items at the beginning of the agenda. The Commission concurred with the addition.

Trustee Chapman requested the addition of a five-minute presentation from Little Pistol Farms. The Commission agreed to include the presentation following the close of the newly added Public Comment period.

Commissioner Jefferies made a **motion** to adopt the agenda as amended. Commissioner A. Smith **supported the motion.** The **motion passed** unanimously.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Commissioner Everett opened the floor for public comment on non-agenda items. Two individuals addressed the Commission regarding concerns over the potential battery storage energy system installation.

## **LITTLE PISTOL FARMS PRESENTATION**

Ms. Katie Schneider, co-owner of Little Pistol Farms, presented on the 2025 activity for her Agritourism Category 2 land use.

Ms. Schneider stated the 29-acre farm operates using organic practices (though not certified), grows non-GMO pumpkins, and received Agritourism Category 1 and 2 approvals in 2025. She reported the roadside farm stand and hayrides were successful, parking functioned without issue, and community engagement was strong. The farm produced approximately 15 tons of produce and 75 tons of pumpkins. Of total sales, 86% were products grown on-site, 11% were hayrides, 2% farm-related items, and 1% merchandise. She indicated the operation was economically viable in its first year and recently received Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) certification.

Ms. Schneider also shared that the farm formed partnerships with local organizations, including Kalamazoo Gleaners, to donate unsellable produce. Looking ahead to 2026, she stated the farm intends to continue operations but will pause expansion and capital investments due to concerns about potential impacts from a proposed adjacent industrial-scale energy development, citing possible effects on crop quality, agritourism operations, and long-term viability.

She thanked the Commission for the opportunity to provide the report.

## **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Commissioner Jefferies nominated Commissioner A. Smith to serve as Chair, supported by Trustee Chapman.

Commissioner A. Smith nominated Commissioner Everett to serve as Vice Chair, supported by Trustee Chapman.

Trustee Chapman **motioned** to appoint Commissioner A. Smith as Chair and Commissioner Everett as Vice Chair. Commissioner Ver Planck **supported the motion**. The **motion passed** unanimously.

## **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF JANUARY 8, 2026**

Chair A. Smith asked if there were any additions, deletions, or corrections to the minutes of the January 8, 2026, meeting. Vice Chair Everett noted a correction to the header date on the main page, stating the date should reflect January 8, 2026.

Commissioner Jefferies made **a motion** to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of January 8, 2026, as amended. Mr. Commissioner Ver Planck **supported the motion**. The **motion passed** unanimously.

### **CONCEPTUAL REVIEW OF REVISED WEST MAIN VILLAGES MIXED USE DISTRICT DRAFT DEVELOPMENT SCHEMATIC PLAN**

Ms. Stefforia presented her staff memo dated February 3, 2026, regarding the revised conceptual development plan for the 48-acre West Main Villages property located south of West Main Street. She explained that the applicant is proposing significant revisions to the previously approved layout, requiring a new conceptual review and public hearing pursuant to the Mixed-Use District ordinance.

Utilizing the Mixed Use District (MUD) ordinance, the applicant secured rezoning of the subject 48-acre West Main Villages Mixed Use Development in 2025. The mix of uses includes commercial, apartments and two-unit dwellings (duplexes). The previous zoning of the properties was R-2, Residential and West Main Street Overlay Zone (north end) and 9th Street Overlay Zone (southern 20 acres).

The primary revision includes the placement of a Kroger store in the northwest portion of the site, replacing three previously approved retail buildings and a portion of the multifamily component. The proposal also includes a drive-up pharmacy and a fueling station. Ms. Stefforia noted that fueling stations are not permitted in the Mixed-Use District; therefore, that portion of the site would require rezoning to a Commercial District if the proposal proceeds.

Additional changes include:

- Removal of a traffic-calming curve and traffic circle to accommodate truck circulation.
- Reduction of multifamily buildings from 10 to 8.
- Decrease in total multi-family dwelling units from 336 to 252.
- Replacement of 52 duplex lots (104 units) with 77 single-family home lots.
- Overall reduction of 111 dwelling units, decreasing density from 11.5 to 9.6 dwelling units per acre.
- Elimination of certain outdoor amenities previously shown, while maintaining required buffers, street connectivity, stub streets, and public utilities.

Ms. Stefforia reviewed the Township's housing plan projections and noted that, despite the reduction in units, current and pending residential developments are expected to meet projected housing needs.

Ms. Stefforia further stated that staff have concerns regarding whether the Kroger layout, including approximately 380 parking spaces and the fueling station, aligns with the walkability and design intent of the MUD. She expressed concern that this project is the first use of the MUD tool and would be precedent setting in how it is applied elsewhere in the Township. She indicated that conditional rezoning of that area of the development to the Commercial District instead of keeping it in the MUD is a potential option available under Michigan law but cannot be required by the Township.

Ms. Stefforia outlined that if the Commission finds the conceptual revisions acceptable, the next step would include a formal rezoning request, updated traffic impact study, and an additional public hearing. She asked the Commission to consider whether the revised plan remains consistent with the intent of the MUD and the draft Oshtemo 2045 Comprehensive Plan.

Chair A. Smith invited the applicant to present.

Mr. Tony Ferlito, with the Ferlito Group, representing the development team, addressed the Commission regarding the proposed revisions to the previously approved West Main Villages Mixed-Use development. He stated the two primary changes include the addition of a 99,000-square-foot Kroger grocery store in the northwest portion of the site and the replacement of 52 previously proposed duplex lots (104 units) with 77 single-family home lots. He indicated the reduction in density reflects current market conditions and a preference for lower-density, single-family products. He also noted that a neighborhood meeting was held on January 29, with mailed invitations to approximately 265 residents; ten residents attended due to inclement weather, and questions were addressed during that session.

Mr. Darrel DeHaan of Integrated Architecture provided additional details regarding site design, walkability, and connectivity. He emphasized that pedestrian circulation remains a priority, with approximately three miles of sidewalks and trails planned throughout the development. While the previously proposed traffic circle and curved roadway were removed to accommodate truck movements associated with the Kroger store, he stated other traffic-calming features remain incorporated into the layout. He also noted that community amenities, including clubhouse facilities, pool space, and open park areas, remain part of the concept plan.

Mr. Tim Stewart of Hurley & Stewart Engineering discussed civil engineering components, including stormwater management, utilities, roadway design, and traffic analysis. He stated that infrastructure will meet or exceed Township standards and that the previously approved traffic impact study will be updated to reflect the revised land use and layout. Preliminary review indicates a slight reduction in AM peak traffic and a modest increase in PM peak traffic, which the internal street network is expected to accommodate.

Mr. Ryan Panoushek, Real Estate Department, Assistant Asset Manager for Kroger's Michigan Division, and Mr. Mark Gambill, Senior Real Estate Manager for Michigan and Ohio, presented the Kroger proposal. They explained that Kroger currently operates approximately 120 stores in Michigan and is pursuing West Michigan expansion. The proposed 99,000-square-foot store is smaller than a typical marketplace format and will focus primarily on grocery offerings rather than general merchandise. The store would include a drive-up pharmacy, pickup services, deli, bakery, floral, and prepared food departments and create 150 new jobs. Kroger representatives emphasized their commitment to community partnership and food access, including participation in food rescue and food bank programs throughout Michigan.

Chair A. Smith opened the public hearing and public comment, reminding speakers of the four-minute time limit. Ten community members spoke in opposition to the revised West Main

Villages MUD Development Schematic Plan. Primary concerns included opposition to street connectivity to existing neighborhoods and the addition of another grocery store.

Following public comment, Chair A. Smith invited Commission discussion and directed initial questions to Mr. Ferlito.

Trustee Chapman stated concerns regarding housing affordability with the proposed shift from duplex units to single-family homes and expressed concerns that the revisions appear financially driven. Trustee Chapman also raised concerns regarding diesel truck traffic, noise, and particulates, removal of previously proposed traffic-calming measures, and inconsistency with the intent of the Township's MUD, noting the Township is "capped out" on big-box retail per prior planning work. Trustee Chapman reiterated that he has many concerns about this project.

Chair A. Smith and Mr. Ferlito discussed the timing and nature of the prior Kroger/gas station concept discussed last summer. Mr. Ferlito stated the prior appearance was informal and not a formal request or public hearing, and that the current submittal reflects work completed to present a full concept plan.

Chair A. Smith stated the Commission's prior concerns were clear, including traffic impacts. He stated he did not support the revised concept.

Commissioner Jefferies stated appreciation for investment in the Township but expressed concerns about the scale of the commercial component and whether the site design reflects a walkable, neighborhood-oriented mixed-use concept. Commissioner Jefferies referenced smaller-format neighborhood grocery models and encouraged consideration of alternative site design approaches to better align with mixed-use intent.

Vice Chair Everett stated the revised plan does not fit the intent of the Mixed-Use District.

Commissioner Ver Planck questioned the proposed residential price points and affordability, as well as how the development aligns with the surrounding residential context. Mr. Ferlito provided estimated pricing ranges, stating duplexes would be approximately \$350,000–\$400,000 and single-family homes approximately \$400,000–\$450,000, noting increased construction costs since 2019. Commissioner Ver Planck requested Kroger representatives to elaborate on "higher-end specialty grocer" language and what additional services/facilities would be offered compared to existing nearby grocery options.

Mr. Gambill (Kroger) responded that the store would provide differentiated grocery offerings and prepared foods not typically available at Meijer or Walmart and stated the location would be walkable for nearby neighborhoods and new residential units. He encouraged interested residents to visit existing Kroger stores to understand the offerings.

Township Attorney Jim Porter clarified the Commission's role under the ordinance is to determine whether the revised submittal meets the MUD concept plan review standards and whether the concept plan should be approved as submitted.

Commissioner J. Smith stated he did not believe the revised concept fits the Mixed-Use District vision and noted concerns regarding the scale of the store and adequacy of existing grocery options in the area.

Trustee Chapman **motioned** to deny the request, finding the revised plan does not meet the Mixed Use District concept plan review standards. Vice Chair Everett **supported the motion**. The **motion passed** unanimously.

Chair A. Smith reiterated the revised plan does not conform with the mixed-use concept previously approved. Ms. Stefforia clarified that the prior approval remains in effect and that the proposed revisions were not accepted.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair A. Smith opened an additional public comment period following the Commission's action and invited anyone wishing to speak, particularly in light of the decision just placed on the record, to come forward. Two individuals addressed the Commission with concerns about affordability and connectivity.

Seeing no further public comment, Chair A. Smith closed the public comment portion of the hearing and invited Planning Commissioner comments.

### **PLANNING COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Trustee Chapman stated that during the current moratorium period for the proposed BESS (Battery Energy Storage System), it is important to proactively engage the community. He suggested developing a structure, such as a public forum or a hearing versus a committee to ensure residents have meaningful input as the Township evaluates next steps.

Vice Chair Everett inquired whether the previously postponed BESS presentation (due to weather) had been rescheduled. Ms. Stefforia confirmed the presentation is scheduled for April 9, 2026. She further stated staff met internally to discuss options for community engagement on the BESS topic, with the goal of creating a format that allows greater interaction than a traditional formal meeting setting.

Commissioner J. Smith expressed appreciation to the developer and Kroger representatives, acknowledging the challenges of development in the current economic climate.

### **OTHER UPDATES and BUSINESS**

Chair A. Smith asked if there were any additional updates. There were none.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Minutes Prepared: February 16, 2026

Minutes Approved: March 12, 2026