

**OSHEMO CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD JULY 14, 2022**

Agenda

UPDATE: Raw Data from the 5G Survey

PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SESSION: Maple Hill South Mixed-Use Overlay

A meeting of the Oshtemo Charter Township Planning Commission was held Thursday, July 14, 2022, commencing at approximately 6:05 p.m. at the Oshtemo Township Hall, 7275 West Main Street.

ALL MEMBERS
WERE PRESENT:

Bruce VanderWeele, Chair
Micki Maxwell, Vice Chair
Kizzy Bradford
Deb Everett
Alistair Smith
Anna Versalle
Chetan Vyas

Also present were Iris Lubbert, Planning Director, James Porter, Township Attorney, Martha Coash, Recording Secretary and five guests.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairperson VanderWeele called the meeting to order at approximately 6:05 p.m. Those in attendance joined in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

The Chair determined there were no changes to the agenda and let the agenda stand as published.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

The Chair asked if anyone present wished to speak on non-agenda items. As no one responded, he moved to the next agenda item.

Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of June 23, 2022

Chairperson VanderWeele asked for additions, deletions, or corrections to the Minutes of the Meeting of June 23, 2022. Hearing none, the Chair asked for a motion.

Ms. Versalle **made a motion** to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of June 23, 2022, as presented. Ms. Maxwell **seconded the motion**. The **motion was approved unanimously**.

Chairperson VanderWeele moved to the next agenda item and asked Ms. Lubbert for her report.

UPDATE: RAW DATA FROM THE 5G SURVEY

Ms. Lubbert said the survey received 401 responses, which was excellent and the feedback will be helpful as we move forward. A representative from McKenna, the consultant on this project, will attend the first August Planning Commission meeting to analyze the data, talk through ordinance changes/code amendments, and the next steps they are proposing. She listed several places 5G information will be available to the public and asked Commissioners to let her know if they had additional suggestions.

Chairperson VanderWeele moved to a work session at 6:10 p.m. to discuss next steps for drafting of ordinance to implement the Maple Hill Drive South Sub Area Plan.

PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SESSION: MAPLE HILL SOUTH MIXED-USE OVERLAY

The Chair asked Ms. Lubbert for her presentation.

She distributed a draft of the document that had been worked on prior to her time as Planning Director. She also provided a sample ordinance document from another community similar to what she is interested in pursuing. Her recommendation was to develop a mixed-use zone of sorts, that would be a combination of rezoning and a PUD. The previous draft has good information that can be reformatted and expanded on to build a new ordinance, which would replace the overlay zone concept. She noted that one of her goals is that the mixed use zone could be used for implementing multiple sub area plans rather than having to create a separate overlay district for each.

She proposed moving toward a draft of a new mixed-use zoning district with the goal of completing a final draft by the end of the year. She added that the Township's Master Plan is good, but we currently have about 12 documents which should be updated and combined into one document to cover everything. A Master Plan update could follow. To achieve that goal, the Commission would likely hold work sessions and special meetings. She expects to incorporate heavy community and board involvement in the whole process.

Commissioners felt a special meeting to focus on this project would allow due diligence on this whole new package.

Ms. Lubbert noted the Oshtemo Downtown Development Authority (DDA) was in the process of drafting an update to ordinance language to mirror the 2019 Village Theme Development Plan to be more realistic for further development since the character envisioned could not be met due to the established roadway traffic speed, which is out not in their control. The update to the form-based code will be brought to the next Planning Commission meeting which will include a density bonus provision. The update was drafted with the assistance of the consultant who worked closely with her and the DDA board.

She acknowledged AVB was requesting to not go in the mixed-use rezoning direction and instead wished to move forward with the already developed overlay draft with amendments as needed. She asked Commissioners for “marching orders.”

Chairperson VanderWeele indicated if the Commission goes in the direction Ms. Lubbert was suggesting, the previous work would not be lost. We would blend the new document with much of what was developed previously, resulting in a uniform plan that could be used anywhere in the Township. He noted the 9th St. overlay was too difficult and never worked.

After some discussion of how a mixed-use plan would function, Ms. Lubbert walked through the sample mixed-use district ordinance to give the group a better idea of what she was proposing.

The Chair suggested Ms. Lubbert be tasked with blending the 2019 draft document with the mixed-use concept to be brought back to the Commission for consideration.

Ms. Lubbert said she might also pull from the draft of the Village Core Area language. She could work on the language during August and bring a draft to the Planning Commission in September.

Mr. Joe Gesmundo asked from what city the mixed-use sample document was taken.

Ms. Lubbert said it was from Cedar Falls, Iowa. She will also look for other examples. The Cedar Falls document was linked to a new area that was greenfield and it mirrors the intent of the Maple Hill plan.

Mr. Gesmundo suggested involving AVB and a consultant who has practical experience in lots of communities and with mixed-use plans who might brainstorm in sessions with staff instead of at a number of PC meetings.

Ms. Lubbert said her recommendation was that an open format be utilized to avoid a negative perspective from residents and noted a mixed-use district would apply to other areas as well. She said it would be easier for her to draft the document and return it to the Planning Commission for review, followed by stakeholder meetings and then return the draft with any resulting changes to the Planning Commission for further consideration.

Attorney Porter agreed with that approach.

Two residents who were in attendance spoke, both with a concern for transparency, the opportunity to see the big picture rather than bits and pieces to avoid rumors, and the desire for a chance for input from the community during this process.

Ms. Lubbert said it was her intention to meet with stakeholders to solicit their wishes through specific feedback. Transparency is her goal.

Chairperson VanderWeele said we will be creating a concept draft. It is not the Commission's role to develop actual plans. Even when finished we will not have a concrete development plan until AVB, or other developer, returns with one for The Prairies property.

Ms. Lubbert said full presentations to show at stakeholder meetings that provide the opportunity for feedback are important so we can all pull ahead together. She noted the Township is in the process of obtaining a Communications Specialist and hopes that will help in improving communication.

In response to a question from Mr. Rich MacDonald, Ms. Lubbert noted that existing overlay zones would not disappear with the creation of the mixed-use district. She however added that she is not a fan of overlays, as they complicate reviews. The Planning Commission could discuss this more.

The Chair said he felt there was confusion about terminology, that we are working through that and shouldn't get locked into terms. The 9th St. overlay has not worked. Part of the concern is that we don't want to go down that road again.

Mr. Curt Aardema said the reason the Maple Hill Sub Area plan was developed was due to the need for a special district for the unique area.

Ms. Lubbert said that is why referencing the Master Plan documents is important. The overlay zone was the known tool previously. Mixed-use is a newer type of tool. Going that route does not go against the intent of the Master Plan. The uniqueness of the area can still be accommodated.

She confirmed for Mr. MacDonald that if there is inconsistency with the Master Plan, the ordinance prevails.

Attorney Porter noted the ordinance should follow the Master Plan as much as possible.

Ms. Lubbert acknowledged that the mixed-use district is a completely new concept for Oshtemo. She will draft a document to consider and feels very confident it will work with and implement the Master Plan effectively.

She said if one owned property in a multiple zoning districts and wanted to rezone it, that if it falls within the Master Plan and is viable, it could be approved under this new designation. Amendments would be allowed after approval.

Mr. Aardema said this sounds like what we have done previously, but with current verbiage. A lot of work and a lot of pieces discussed are already drafted.

Ms. Lubbert agreed and said we will use the current draft, that basically this will be a reformatting. She felt it could be turned around fairly quickly. The mixed-use district applies to the golf course and could be used for any sub area plan in the future and amended as needed.

Ms. VerSalle felt the mixed-use vs. overlay plan cleans up the process and makes it much easier for the property owner in terms of flexibility to create their vision.

The Chair agreed, as long as the vision follows the Master Plan.

Mr. Gesmundo noted one of the things the Planning Commission identified is areas of density east of 131 and large acreage. Only one or two pieces fit that criteria. Also, a property owner would have to want to rezone. If one got to the point that it just was not workable, they could also back out.

Ms. Lubbert agreed no one would be forced to rezoning using the Mixed use district; it would be voluntary. Density bonuses could work in such a project and are important. She noted that there was a need for more structure. She likes the DDA work done in exploring density bonuses. The Planning Commission could build off that earlier work by reviewing it and making changes.

Chairperson VanderWeele said over time mixed-use might be used out Stadium Drive or West Main St; it sets a good basis. He thanked everyone for attending and participating in a good discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to consider, Chairperson VanderWeele adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:03 p.m.

Minutes prepared:
July 15, 2022

Minutes approved:
July 28, 2022