

OSHTEMO CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD JANUARY 13, 2011

Agenda

REVIEW OF DRAFT TWO OF THE WEST MAIN STREET SUB-AREA PLAN

REVIEW OF DRAFT ONE OF VARIOUS AMENDMENTS TO THE ZONING ORDINANCE.

A meeting of the Oshtemo Charter Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, January 13, 2011, commencing at approximately 7:00 p.m. at the Oshtemo Charter Township Hall.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

Also present were Jodi Stefforia, Planning Director; James Porter, Township Attorney Chris West, Associate Planner, and about 20 members of the public.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. The "Pledge of Allegiance" was recited by the Commissioners.

Agenda

Mr. Anderson noted that some of the agendas that have been printed in Planning Commissioner packets as well as those printed for the public have an error on them. He noted changes to the agenda including moving public comment on non-agenda items to the beginning of the meeting and adding elect officers and ZBA liaison to the agenda. He then asked if there were any other changes to the Agenda. Being none, Ms. Gelling made a motion to accept the Agenda as amended. Mr. Skalski seconded the motion. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Elect Officers and ZBA Liaison

Mr. Anderson asked for nominations for Planning Commission officers and ZBA liaison. Mr. Benson nominated Mr. Anderson for Chairman, Ms. Gelling seconded the nomination. Mr. Gould nominated Ms. Gelling for Vice Chair, Mr. Skalski seconded the nomination. Mr. Skalski nominated Mr. Anderson for ZBA liaison, Ms. Gelling seconded the nomination. Ms. Gelling nominated Mr. Skalski for Secretary; Mr. Skalski declined the nomination as he would be missing some meetings during the year. Ms. Gelling then nominated Mr. Gould for Secretary, Mr. Skalski seconded the nomination. Mr. Anderson asked if there were any more nominations. Hearing none, he asked for a vote. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

The Chairman asked if there was any public comment on non-agenda items.

Dan Thompson, 105 Echo Hills Drive, said that it is difficult to read the name plates for the Planning Commissioners and suggests larger, easier to read name plates. He also asked if the Planning Commission would allow the public to add comment to the Planning Commissioner deliberation period of the meeting in order to clarify what the Planning Commission is discussing.

Hearing no more public comments, the Chairman closed the floor to public comment on non-agenda items.

Minutes

The Chairman said the next item was the review and approval of the December 16, 2010 minutes. Ms. Gelling made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Skalski seconded the motion. The Chairman called for a vote on the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Review of Draft Two of the West Main Street Sub-Area Plan

The Chairman said the next item on the Agenda was a review of draft two of the West Main Street Sub-Area Plan.

Mr. West presented the plan to the Planning Commission. He mentioned that the original draft they reviewed at the previous meeting has been modified in order to clarify what is envisioned in this area. The changes made are outlined in the memo accompanying the draft in the Planning Commission packets, the contents are incorporated herein.

He noted that the transportation network is not intended to add additional commercial or through traffic into neighborhoods. He added that dedicated greenspace will be included within future developments in the area and is not specifically called out on the plan map. The types of streets and various transportation network improvements included on the sub-area plan map have been defined more thoroughly than they were originally. He also

stated that the north to south road on the south side of West Main Street has been changed from a collector to a local street indicating that this street will not be considered a through route between West Main Street and KL Avenue. A second tier of commercial development is not intended along West Main Street. Changes to that effect have also been included.

Ms. Gelling asked staff to include a definition of 'swale' and/or the inclusion of graphics of stormwater management techniques. Ms. Stefforia agreed.

Ms. Gelling stated she didn't like some parts of the plan that stated that the specific use doesn't matter as much as the form and character of developments. She asked for changes to this to state that the plan is intended to identify uses as well as their form. Mr. West added that other parts of the plan detail specific uses envisioned in the area but the part of the plan in question could be modified.

Ms. Gelling added that terminology used throughout the plan describing commercial uses envisioned should be consistent.

Mr. Benson suggested some changes to the text removing the term 'underutilized' from page two and to revisit the public input portion of the plan on page eight to further describe and validate the results.

The Chairman then opened the floor to public comment.

Sue Mellinger, 351 West Ridge Circle, stated that she was concerned that connectivity would be to the detriment of Country Club Village (CCV). She acknowledges the need for connectivity but CCV does not want more connectivity and that there have been no public safety issues to date due to lack of connectivity. She added that connecting new developments to CCV would infringe on the neighborhoods rights to be as it was originally developed.

Gerard Pahl, 5817 Manorwood Drive, read a letter from James Grace, 5986 Scenic Way Drive. He stated that CCV residents are tired with the accusations that they are requesting special treatment of their neighborhood. The residents only want to protect their neighborhood and that new housing that would be constructed in new neighborhoods would not be similar to what is in CCV. He added that connectivity is viewed as a good thing by the Township but CCV residents do not believe it would be good for the neighborhood. He added that public safety has not been an issue in the past in CCV.

Margaret Masuzawa, 331 West Ridge Circle, continued to read Mr. Grace's letter after Mr. Pahl's public comment time expired. She read that traffic and crime would increase in CCV with more connectivity. She added that the rural character of the neighborhood would be altered with more connectivity.

Sheri Mohmand, 6147 Old Log Trail, continued to read her letter from the previous meeting. She said that the old 9th Street Focus Area was changed to the current West Main Street Sub-Area because wealthy developers have asked for commercial

development in the past and were denied their requests and now the Planning Commission is catering to their desires. She stated that the Township is ignoring 9th Street land owners who are minorities and helping rich developers. She wants the 9th Street Focus Area restored.

Kadir Mohmand, 6147 Old Log Trail, stated that as a Muslim he is discriminated against. He noted that he is a neighbor and wants to be treated as such. He wants anything included in the West Main Sub-Area to be included on 9th Street as well.

Dan Thompson, 105 Echo Hills Drive, said that connectivity is driving the planning process but it is more of a guideline than a law. He presented a photo to the Planning Commission and submitted it to the record. He said that more traffic would be a safety issue in CCV and more connectivity would create through traffic in CCV.

Mark Orbe, 527 Lodge Lane, felt that the public input in the past meetings has not been included in this draft. He stated that a specific greenspace designation and buffers are not specifically provided on the sub-area plan and the plan does not address the rural character of the area. He was concerned that north to south connectivity would create through traffic.

Steven Duisterhof, 309 Lodge Lane, stated that he felt the Planning Commission has sensitivity toward the needs of the public. He added that the construction of more roads in the Township would be disrespectful to the character of the area.

Adriana Rosas, 132 West Ridge Circle, said she likes that CCV only has one entrance and exit and that there is a sense of community in the neighborhood. Connectivity would bring traffic and crime into the neighborhood and decrease the quality of life of residents. She opposes the plan.

Michael Robertson, 132 West Ridge Circle, felt that connectivity would create through traffic. He has had no issue in the past with community services not being able to get to him when living in similar neighborhoods elsewhere. He added that the plan is not good for the neighborhood.

Gerard Pahl, 5817 Manorwood Drive, stated he feels a sense of community in CCV when he is walking in the streets. He added that he wouldn't want more people on the streets in CCV that would come if the neighborhood is connected to other neighborhoods.

Margaret Masuzawa, 331 West Ridge Circle, said that if there is no flexibility added to the transportation network plan that it would be unfair to CCV and all of Oshtemo.

Jeff Bertolissi, 6075 and 6101 West Main Street, asked for clarification regarding where medians would be placed along West Main Street. He then asked if the improvements to West Main Street would widen the road. He said that flexibility would be needed when the transportation network is constructed as well.

Hearing no more public comment, the Chairman closed the public comment section of the meeting and moved into Planning Commission discussion.

The Chairman asked staff if they could help to answer the questions brought forth by the public. Ms. Stefforia began to answer the questions posed during public comment.

She stated that the sub-area plan map deals in generalities and future development does not need to be a mirror image of that map. She added that there is not a specific greenspace designation on the map as greenspace would be a part of any development that occurs and could possibly be required if future zoning ordinance language requires it. She clarified that all of the streets shown on the map are also placed in general locations and that they may not look exactly as drawn when development occurs. She emphasized that MDOT and Kalamazoo County Road Commission representatives encouraged connectivity, a local transportation network, and improvements to West Main Street; because of these recommendations, these elements have been included in the plan. She also added that CCV is not being singled out with regard to the use of stub streets and outlots; the other neighborhoods in the sub-area have stub streets that are shown on the sub-area plan to be utilized.

Mr. Skalski stated that added connectivity would not be to the detriment of the area. He knew of times when residents of other areas with only one entrance and exit have been stranded due to lack of connectivity. He was concerned with the public safety ramifications if connectivity was not addressed in the sub-area. He added that connectivity would not include the construction of a road that could easily be used as a cut-through street and appropriate design and traffic calming measures could be implemented to prevent such cut-through.

Mr. Benson commented that some of the text regarding connectivity ought to be changed on page 5 of the plan for clarification.

Ms. Gelling commented that Oshtemo will see development in the future and the Planning Commission, and the Township as a whole, is trying to accommodate that growth in the best possible way. She acknowledged that it will be impossible to meet every demand of every Township resident but that the Planning Commission is trying to do its best to come up with a plan that will be of benefit to the Township as a whole.

Mr. Gould asked staff if it was the intent of the plan to connect neighborhoods to the apartment complexes along KL Avenue. Ms. Stefforia answered that is not the intent of the plan.

Mr. Bushouse commented that connectivity is not just about emergency services and can be implemented to the benefit of a neighborhood. He gave examples from his personal experience regarding the ways in which connectivity would benefit certain neighborhoods as well as instances in which connectivity has been implemented incorrectly to the detriment of neighborhoods. He mentioned Whitegate Farms as an example of when connectivity has been correctly implemented. He added that new plans

would develop with sidewalks or trails that would improve safety to pedestrians by getting them out of the streets.

The Chairman asked staff what the next step in the West Main Sub-Area Plan would be. Ms. Stefforia stated that if the Planning Commission was satisfied with the plan and only wanted a few minor changes it would be appropriate to allow staff to make those changes. She added that the plan will come back along with all the other chapters to the Planning Commission when the master plan in its entirety is complete.

The Chairman then asked the Commission if they were happy with the plan as is. Ms. Gelling indicated that she was. Mr. Benson wanted some clarification added on page 8 regarding the results from the public survey to show that the survey was scientific and random but that he was in favor of the document.

Ms. Stefforia then presented the changes that were made to the Township-wide Future Land Use Map. She stated that after hearing from the public that 9th Street should have a sub-area study as well as the Commission's consensus on it, there has been a new sub-area created along 9th Street and partly along KL Avenue. She added that it is not the same geographic area as the original 9th Street Focus Area because since then two single family neighborhoods and two large apartment complexes have developed in the original study area that do not warrant another look at this time.

The Chairman said he would support staff revising the plan as discussed and does not need to see another draft of the plan. The Planning Commission agreed.

Mr. Gould stated that he wanted to make sure that the public understands the process that is going on and that their concerns have been heard. He didn't know if the public would approve all parts of the plan that is drafted.

Work Item: Proposed Text Amendments – Draft One

Mr. West presented the proposed text amendments to the Planning Commission, incorporated herein by reference.

Mr. Gould asked if there would be an application fee for temporary outdoor events. Ms. Stefforia said that there could be a fee. Mr. Skalski agreed saying that some of the Townships expenses should be covered through the fee. Mr. West added that the Township has been waiving fees in the past for events sponsored by charities or non-profits.

Mr. Bushouse stated that he would like the term 'filling stations' to not include large propane stations. He stated that these types of uses would not be what the Township envisions within its commercial districts. Staff agreed and said that the definition of filling stations would be changed to reflect this concern.

Ms. Stefforia mentioned that an 85 foot setback in Section 64.780 would likely be too large and that a 50 foot setback would be more appropriate. Mr. Porter agreed saying that a 50 foot setback would be more defensible. Mr. Bushouse stated that an option for additional screening instead of the setback would be appropriate as well.

Mr. Gould asked whether the changes to the sign ordinance would allow electronically changeable copy signs to alternate between bright colors. Mr. West said that this was not the intention of the ordinance and that the terms 'flash' and 'scroll' could be defined to make this clear in the ordinance.

Mr. Skalski asked if the changes to the electronically changeable copy signs would affect billboards in the Township. Mr. Porter stated that the Township has little jurisdiction over billboards along the highway.

Mr. Loy asked staff why a six second time frame for electronically changeable copy signs was decided upon. Ms. Gelling added that it seems odd to go from 24 hours to six seconds. Mr. West said that adjacent municipalities typically have four to six second time frames on their signs but that Oshtemo could choose to increase this time frame. The Planning Commission agreed that the time frame should be increased.

Mr. West indicated that the comments and suggestions that have been made by the Planning Commission would be included in a second draft of the proposed text amendments for the next meeting.

Other Business

Ms. Gelling said that she had gone to the new First National Bank and noticed that there were not handicapped parking spaces in front of the building. Mr. Gould said that they are behind the building and that bank staff has been trained to keep a watch out of handicapped customers to help them enter the building.

Ms. Stefforia asked the Planning Commission if they would want to present certificates of appreciation to Ms. Everett and Mr. Schley for their service on the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission agreed.

Planning Commissioner Comments

Ms. Gelling stated that she believed Mr. Anderson did well during his first meeting as the Chairman. She also welcomed Mr. Bushouse and Mr. Loy to the Planning Commission.

Adjournment

The Chairman asked if there were any further comments, and hearing none, he called for adjournment. Ms. Gelling moved to adjourn the meeting, and Mr. Skalski seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:30 p.m.

Minutes Prepared:
January 14, 2010

Minutes Approved:
| ~~_____~~ January 27, 2010