

OSHTEMO CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 23, 2012

AGENDA

DISCUSSION ITEM – BED AND BREAKFAST INNS

MASTER PLAN AMENDMENTS AND SUB-AREA PLANS – UPDATE ON STATUS

FOLLOW UP – TREE PRESERVATION

A meeting was conducted by the Oshtemo Charter Township Planning Commission on Thursday, February 23, 2012, commencing at approximately 7:00 p.m. at the Oshtemo Charter Township Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kitty Gelling, Chairperson
Carl Benson
Richard Skalski
Dave Bushouse
Millard Loy
Wiley Boulding, Sr.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bob Anderson

Also present were Greg Milliken, Planning Consultant, and Linda Ignasiak, Planning Department Administrative Assistant.

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE

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

AGENDA

The Chairperson called for approval of the agenda. Mr. Milliken asked if the Planning Commission could also discuss tree preservation under item 7, Old Business. The Chairperson agreed tree preservation could be added under item 7 and would be noted on the agenda as item 7, b. There being no further changes to the agenda, Millard Loy made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Mr. Skalski seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

The Chairperson called for public comment on non-agenda items. There being none, she asked that the Planning Commissioners move to the next matter.

MINUTES

The Planning Commission considered the minutes of the meeting of February 9, 2012. Mr. Benson presented and distributed to the Planning Commission members a memo clarifying what concerns he brought to the Planning Commission at its February 9, 2012 meeting. He requested that his memo be noted in the minutes. The Chairperson made a motion to approve the February 9, 2012 minutes, as amended. Mr. Skalski seconded the motion. Upon vote, the amended motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEM – BED AND BREAKFAST INNS

The Chairperson indicated the next item for discussion was Planning Commission consideration of various Zoning Ordinance amendments and approaches to include Bed and Breakfast Inns.

The Chairperson called for a report from Planning Consultant Greg Milliken. Mr. Milliken submitted his report to the Planning Commission dated February 16, 2012, and the same is incorporated herein by reference.

Mr. Milliken explained how Bed and Breakfast Inn's should be considered by first answering a number of questions, such as, do we want this? What districts should we allow Bed and Breakfast Inns? If residential, would we consider this a home occupation? Or if we decide to require a special exception use, what additional standards/restrictions are desired?

Mr. Milliken provided the committee with examples of other ordinances in our vicinity, for review and reference. All of the examples require the owner to live on the premises, otherwise classifying it as a hotel. Key items he thought we should consider are signage, lot size, road frontage and screening.

The Chairperson inquired about ADA requirements not being mentioned in the other ordinances. Mr. Milliken advised it was a building code issue and would be addressed during the construction review. He added there may also be a licensing process where these types of issues may be required.

Mr. Skalski asked if the classification would vary due to the number of units in the structure. Mr. Milliken stated that was locally specific and he compared tourism and resort communities that may see a need for a larger capacity vs. a small town.

Mr. Boulding, Sr. asked if being a Bed and Breakfast Inn meant only serving breakfast. Mr. Milliken clarified any meal could be served, but were limited only to staying guests, which separates them from being a restaurant.

Mr. Benson shared his experience from staying at Bed and Breakfast Inn's where it was a state requirement to only allow a cold continental type breakfast to be served. He said no cooking was allowed. Mr. Bushouse agreed that in some states, if hot meals were

to be served, it meant following strict health department regulations and some owners preferred not to.

Mr. Benson talked about the older homes being renovated into Bed and Breakfast Inn's that are not ADA compliant. He thought some requirements would be waived if proven cost prohibitive. Members discussed existing Bed and Breakfast Inn's in Kalamazoo where older 2-story homes had been converted into Bed and Breakfast Inn's and do not have elevators.

Mr. Benson asked then, what type of Bed and Breakfast Inn's do we want in Oshtemo Township?

Mr. Loy suggested if newly built Bed and Breakfast Inns were considered, they should have to meet all code requirements. Mr. Benson shared his notice of a high rate of turnover on many of these and thought if we allow them to be newly built, what other uses could be obtained. He also thought the intent of a Bed and Breakfast Inn was to take a large existing home where someone is currently living and help amortize the cost of maintaining the place. In these cases, if the business doesn't work out, it could go back to being a single residence.

Mr. Boulding, Sr. talked again about food service and what might draw people to Bed and Breakfast Inn's. He said if they cannot serve hot meals, then they are basically just a rooming house. Mr. Benson said the atmosphere can be a promotional aspect in some areas. Mr. Milliken noted they are quite popular and there are a large number of Bed and Breakfast Inn's in the state of Michigan, all subject to the same laws. The Chairperson stated many are in a historical setting, full of charm and ambiance, often with some seclusion that is appealing to many people.

Mr. Milliken stated since Oshtemo doesn't have a historical area, we have to rely on what residential districts we have. Mr. Skalski thought they didn't belong in R-2, platted areas. He thought AG-Rural was more fitting to their characteristics.

The Chairperson asked for a quick review from each commissioner. Mr. Loy began and said his idea would be having a Bed and Breakfast Inn located in a rural area that allowed a few parked vehicles with neighbors far enough away that vehicles coming and going would not be an intrusion.

Mr. Bushouse discussed Bed and Breakfast Inn's recently when a resident inquired about creating one out of their home. He thought it would be nice to have that option and if the Township was considering these at some point, then we should discuss having an ordinance in place. He said his ideal image for a Bed and Breakfast Inn is a large owner occupied home on a stretch of acreage, in a quaint atmosphere.

Mr. Boulding, Sr. thought people coming to visit students, for example, might find visibility a factor if we restrict them solely to AG-Rural areas. But he does not object to the rural area preference.

Mr. Skalski agreed with Mr. Boulding's statement and would not object to pursuing the subject further.

Mr. Benson supports the idea in RR, R1, R2 & R3 as a Special Exception Use. He offered to do more research and report back to the commission.

It was noted that some Bed and Breakfast Inns served wine and crackers to their guests and the Chairperson inquired about the ramifications of wine being served, and if it should be permitted. Mr. Milliken said we could put 'no alcohol' in the Zoning Ordinance or leave it up to the business and the Liquor Control Commission to determine.

The Chairperson said she had no problem pursuing the topic of Bed and Breakfast Inns, and welcomed additional information and data.

Mr. Loy added that by requiring a Special Exception Use, the Planning Commission will have the ability to review the request.

The Chairperson asked the commissioners if they would like Mr. Milliken to research further and report back at his convenience. Concluding there was a consensus of interest in Bed and Breakfast Inns, the Chairperson asked Mr. Milliken if he could please see where Bed and Breakfast Inns would be most suitably placed in the Township and the commission could take it from there.

Mr. Milliken agreed and welcomed any further thoughts/suggestions after tonight's discussion.

OLD BUSINESS –

UPDATE ON STATUS OF MASTER PLAN AMENDMENTS AND SUB-AREA PLANS

The Chairperson indicated the next item on the Agenda was Old Business and the first topic under that is an Update on the Status of Master Plan Amendments and Sub-Area Plans. She asked for a report from Planning Consultant Greg Milliken.

Mr. Milliken said he thought it best to review all the amendments to the Master Land Use Plan that are currently in the works. He also noted a proposed change to the Master Land Use Map in the Maple Hill Drive South area to include Maple Hill Drive, North of West Main. Similarly, the 9th Street Sub-Area had been expanded to go north of West Main.

The Chairperson asked about the Genesee Prairie Sub-Area. Mr. Milliken said they are currently working on zoning ordinance amendments for that area and have been working with Bob Miller from Western Michigan University for the University's feedback. Mr. Milliken said he expects this item will be appearing soon before the Planning Commission. The Chairperson commented on how informative and agreeable Mr. Miller had been last year when spending time with the Planning Commissioners, and that he seemed committed to doing what was best for the Township.

Mr. Milliken said one option would be to put Areas 1,2,4 & 5 on the shelf until Area 3 is completed and do everything at once, or work on Areas 1,2,4 & 5 to the point Area 3 is and bring them all to the Board at the same time.

Mr. Milliken noted where in his report he briefly described the 3-4 month process. The Chairperson thought that was the original intent, so that we could avoid going through the approval process twice.

Mr. Skalski asked if there was a reason to process one or more areas and not wait until all five were ready. Mr. Milliken said the current driving force would be West Main and the Longjohn property. He said if we want zoning laws in place we need the plan adopted before we get the zoning adopted. Mr. Skalski said it makes sense to address West Main, to have something in place in case that property should come forward. He added a lot of work has taken place there already, making it appear something is going to happen.

The Chairperson said her personal opinion would be to get Maple Hill Drive done and bring everything to the board at one time.

Mr. Loy said he thought Maple Hill could reasonably wait and after waiting to see what is planned to take place on West Main, his preference would be to get something in

place and deal with Maple Hill at a later time. He said we have talked about the Maple Hill area for 10-12 years and nothing has changed in all that time.

The Chairperson asked Mr. Boulding, Sr. if he felt comfortable addressing the topic and he said no, but seeing all the tree cutting taking place on the Longjohn property and the Maple Hill Area being something he was not familiar with, he still didn't feel he could prioritize one over the other.

Mr. Skalski said because of what he has seen take place on West Main, he thinks they may try to move ahead as soon as possible, simply because it appears they are ready.

Mr. Benson said he thinks we should go ahead with West Main but feels we may not have acted soon enough for the Longjohn property. Mr. Benson agreed with Mr. Skalski in that it seems the Longjohn property has two stages in mind and the first stage has taken place. The second stage has only been on hold due to the Michigan winter. He thinks we should work on West Main before it gets out of hand.

Mr. Bushouse said areas one and four are ready, we've done work on Area 2 and since Area 3 is not a pressing issue, we should push Areas 1, 2 & 4 through right now. This way it would seem we were not singling out Area 2 and if Area 5 is far enough along we should move forward with all, except Area 3 for approval.

Mr. Milliken said as much as he hates to go off course from what the board had originally planned to do, He doesn't want to be faced with no review standards, should a site plan come in. He recommends putting forward area four and five, the Community Profile and Future Land Use Map. That would get us in position to move forward with area 2.

Mr. Loy reminded the committee that a project cannot begin without an Earth Moving Permit. After a short discussion, the Chairperson asked for a motion. Mr. Benson made a motion for the Century Highfield Sub-Area Plan, the 9th Street Sub-Area Plan, the Community Profile, change the 9th Street Sub Area boundary on the Master Land Use Plan and put Maple Hill Drive on hold for now. Mr. Skalski Supported the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Milliken advised the next step will be sending these items to the Township Board for approval of drafts for distribution.

TREE PRESERVATION – FOLLOW UP

To follow up on Tree Preservation, the next step was a permitting process. The committee discussed regulations for incorporating the process and decided to have Mr. Milliken provide samples to review at the next Planning Commission meeting. The Chairperson decided to have it on the agenda starting with discussing the permit process. Mr. Bushouse commented that he had an original ideal of Oshtemo having what he called a forest area. His goal was not only beautification, but an educational aspect as well and to motivate people to plant trees. It would be nice to restrict plat developers in a way that requires a lot of a certain size to have to plant at least two trees. The commissioners agreed and the Chairperson thought an incentive could be an appeal to motivate. Mr. Skalski said giving a discount at Lowe's or Wedel's was a good idea to start with. The Chairperson said she would like to see seedlings handed out. The Planning Commission agreed they now had a direction on this topic and the Chairperson closed discussion.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Milliken for the work he has done and thinks he has given momentum to the board.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

PLANNING COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

The Chairperson wished Mr. Anderson well on behalf of all the commissioners. She also noted her appreciation to all members as she felt they were working well together and much was getting accomplished. Dave Bushouse and Millard Loy thanked the Chairperson for supplying Bob Anderson's hospital address while he is undergoing treatment at University of Michigan.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission and having exhausted the agenda, the Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 8:03 p.m.

Minutes prepared:
February 27, 2012

Minutes approved:
March 8, 2012