

**OSHTEMO CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD OCTOBER 12, 2017**

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**Agenda**

**PARKS AND RECREATION PLANNING UPDATE**

**OLD BUSINESS**

- a. **Master Plan Update**
  - i. **Rural Character Preservation Strategy**
  - ii. **Maple Hill South Sub-area Plan**
  - iii. **Future Land Use Map**
- b. **Village Theme Development Plan Update**
- c. **Zoning Ordinance Re-organization Update**

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Future Planning Commission Projects**

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A meeting of the Oshtemo Charter Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, October 12, 2017, commencing at approximately 7:00 p.m. at the Oshtemo Charter Township Hall.

ALL MEMBERS WERE PRESENT:      Cheri Bell, Chairperson  
Fred Antosz, Vice Chairperson  
Ollie Chambers  
Dusty Farmer, Secretary  
Kathleen Garland-Rike  
Mary Smith  
Bruce VanderWeele

Also present were Karen High, Parks Director, and Martha Coash, Meeting Transcriptionist; no other interested persons were in attendance.

**Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairperson Bell called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m.; the "Pledge of Allegiance" was recited.

**Agenda**

Chairperson Bell asked if there were any additions, deletions or corrections to the Agenda. Hearing none, she asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

Ms. Smith made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. VanderWeele supported the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items**

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

### **Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 14, 2017**

Chairperson Bell asked if there were any additions, deletions or corrections to the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 14, 2017.

Hearing none, the Chairperson asked for a motion to approve the minutes as presented.

Mr. VanderWeele made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 14, 2017 as presented. Mr. Chambers supported the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **PARKS AND RECREATION PLANNING UPDATE**

Chairperson Bell noted Ms. Johnston was not in attendance and moved to the next item on the agenda, an update on Parks and Recreation Planning. She asked Ms. Karen High for her update.

Ms. High provided an overview of the parks in the Township system, their usage and amenities: Township Park, Flesher Field, Grange Hall and Community Center. She also included the Lillian Anderson Arboretum and the K-L Avenue Nature Preserve, though they are not operated by the Township. Background, progress to date on restoration and funding, and future plans were also discussed regarding the Drake Farmstead Park property.

She also reported on feedback from the community survey which showed that walking trails are the highest priority for citizens.

Finally, she talked about plans currently being considered for the future for all Township parks. She said the Township Board is interested in providing a new neighborhood park for the area of the Township bounded by Drake Road, K-L Avenue, U.S. 131 and West Main and discussed possibilities for the type and location, noting there is not a lot of vacant land available for such a project, but that there may be an opportunity to purchase some of the golf course property for that purpose.

Ms. Smith wondered if there has been coordination of an effort to look into such a purchase. She believed a right of first refusal for sale of the property was in effect and

that we would need to know if we could acquire some of the property for a park before making a zoning change for the sub- area.

Some discussion followed acknowledging the value of parks in general for many reasons, that a park in the neighborhood as described would be a positive move, and possible avenues for acquisition of land. It was not clear to Commissioners what the current status of the golf property is and concern was expressed regarding prematurely changing the zoning there as part of the sub-area plan.

In answer to a question from Chairperson Bell, Ms. High said a quick calculation shows the township spent \$35 per capita in 2014 and 2015 on parks and that park land is less than 1% of total Township property. There are nine acres of park land for every 100 residents. She said those statistics need to be recalculated in order to provide better numbers prior to the Master Plan update.

Chairperson Bell moved to the next item on the agenda and asked Ms. High to provide updates for the remainder of the agenda items on behalf of Ms. Johnston.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **a. Master Plan Update**

Ms. High reported the Township Board approved distribution of the plan to our local jurisdictions and Ms. Johnston sent the letters out on October 11. We are now in the 63-day comment period. Ms. Johnston asked Wade Trim to make the changes to the plan that were discussed at the September meeting and hopes to review them at the October 26 Planning Commission meeting.

### **b. Village Theme Development Plan Update**

Ms. High noted the second open house was held the week prior and although there were not as many attendees as at the first open house, there was a respectable turn out. Wade Trim is in the process of updating the plan and preparing recommendations. A subcommittee meeting is planned for late November to review their work.

### **c. Zoning Ordinance Re-Organization Update**

This project will start up again in January.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Future Planning Commission Projects**

Planning projects for next year will be a park, greenway and non-motorized master plan.

## **PLANNING COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Ms. Farmer pointed out that the Commission can opt to say no to building plans in some situations within the Maple Hill Sub-Area, but if plans conform to an approved use, they could not refuse. She also said the Commission does not have to move forward with the sub-area plan right now, that it could be finished in the next couple of years if the Board does not have enough information yet about the area.

Ms. Smith said she did not know if the entire golf course property is owned by the Elks at this point and the situation needs to be understood before proceeding.

Chairperson Bell said the parks update from Ms. High was eye-opening; she did not know the Township Board was hoping to add another park. She was glad to have the comments from the last citizen planning meeting regarding densely populated residential areas and was also glad to know a sub-area update does not have to be done right at this time. Based on the size of the parcel in doubt, some caution needs to be exercised.

Ms. High said Attorney Porter has found someone to talk with to see if the property owners would be willing to work something out regarding a park.

Ms. Garland-Rike said she understood there was a possibility of closing some streets and had some concern about a road going through green space in a residential area, since there are no sidewalks and students from apartments in the area walk in the street. Retirees also walk there. If there is a road, sidewalks would be needed. She felt it would be good to slow the process down.

Ms. Farmer noted that if sidewalks are built, the responsibility to pay for them would fall to the residents. She said interconnectivity with other municipalities for kids walking to school is needed.

Mr. VanderWeele stressed the importance of trying to stay ahead of the process to achieve the goals desired, to be proactive, and said we need to guide the direction of the area before it gets away from us.

Mr. Antosz said it is up to us to write ordinance to determine how property is developed.

Ms. Farmer pointed out the ordinance would be zoning specific, that what is put in now dictates the area land use. She felt if someone has a right of first refusal on the property it would be courteous to let them know where the Township wants to go. She

didn't know if a conversation has taken place with the owners regarding whether there might be a way for the Township to obtain land for a park.

Chairperson Bell pointed out the possibility of a greenspace bonus for higher density development.

Ms. Smith said if there is a possibility of a park on the golf course land, we need to know that.

Hearing no further comments, Chairperson Bell asked for a motion to adjourn.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Garland-Rike made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. VanderWeele supported the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:22 p.m.

Minutes prepared:  
October 14, 2017

Minutes approved:  
November 9, 2017