

**OSHEMO CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION**

**MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 25, 2021**

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**Agenda**

**PUBLIC HEARING: SPECIAL USE, KALAMAZOO SELF STORAGE STORAGE RENTALS OF AMERICA WAS REQUESTING SPECIAL USE AND SITE PLAN APPROVAL TO ADD A 9,300 SQUARE FOOT SELF-STORAGE BUILDING TO THEIR SELF-STORAGE FACILITY AT 1515 S. 11<sup>TH</sup> STREET.**

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A virtual meeting of the Oshtemo Charter Township Planning Commission was held Thursday, February 25, 2021, commencing at approximately 6:01 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT AND  
WITHIN THE TOWNSHIP:**

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

**ABSENT:**

Also present were Iris Lubbert, Planning Director, Colten Hutson, Zoning Administrator, James Porter, Township Attorney, and Martha Coash, Recording Secretary.

Guests attending included Kevin Oliver, Oliver Architecture

**Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairperson VanderWeele called the meeting to order at approximately 6:01 p.m. and invited those in attendance to join in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of Agenda**

Hearing no changes, the Chair let the agenda stand as published.

**Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of February 11, 2021**

The Chair asked if there were additions, deletions, or corrections to the Minutes of the Meeting of February 11, 2021. Hearing none, he asked for a motion.

Ms. Versalle **made a motion** to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of February 11, 2021 as presented. Ms. Maxwell **seconded the motion**. The **motion was approved** unanimously by roll call vote.

Chairperson VanderWeele moved to the next agenda item and asked Mr. Hutson for his presentation.

**PUBLIC HEARING: SPECIAL USE, KALAMAZOO SELF STORAGE STORAGE RENTALS OF AMERICA WAS REQUESTING SPECIAL USE AND SITE PLAN APPROVAL TO ADD A 9,300 SQUARE FOOT SELF-STORAGE BUILDING TO THEIR SELF-STORAGE FACILITY AT 1515 S. 11<sup>TH</sup> STREET.**

Mr. Hutson said Storage Rentals of America was requesting Special Use and Site Plan approval to add a 9,300 SF self-storage building at 1515 S 11<sup>th</sup> Street. The proposed one-story building will provide an additional 58 indoor storage units to the site that will be primarily used for residential and office customers. The approximate 12-acre site currently serves as a self-storage facility in the eastern half of the Township.

Currently zoned I-1: Industrial District, Storage Rentals of America is located on the east side of S 11<sup>th</sup> Street, between KL Avenue and W Michigan Avenue. The self-storage facility abuts US 131 to its east and railway to its north. Adjacent to the west are zoning districts for R-1: Residence District and I-1: Industrial District. Adjacent to the south is zoned C: Local Business District. Wetlands are situated within the northern section of the property. Currently, there are 15 one-story self-storage buildings on site along with one office building. Any proposed Special Uses require review and approval from the Planning Commission.

He said when reviewing a Special Use request, there are three sets of criteria that need to be considered: the general Special Use review criteria outlined in Section 65.30, the specific requirements for *Storage Buildings and Mini Warehouses* outlined under Section 49.250, and the general Site Plan review criteria outlined in Section 64. He provided the following an analysis of the proposal against these three Sections. Overall, most of the requirements of Section 65.30, Section 49.250, and Section 64 have been met; he focused on the following highlights:

**Section 65.30: Special Use Review Criteria**

**Impacts:**

**The proposed use would be compatible, harmonious and appropriate with the existing or planned character and uses of adjacent properties; meaning the proposed use can coexist with neighboring uses in a stable fashion over time such that no neighboring use is unduly negatively impacted.**

An established industrial use already exists on-site. With the proposed use continuing to operate as an industrial use with minimal site changes proposed, and

being in accordance with both the Master Plan and the Zoning Ordinance, staff has no concerns that the proposed use will negatively affect neighboring uses.

**The proposed use would not be detrimental, hazardous, or disturbing to existing or future adjacent uses or to the public welfare by reason of excessive traffic, noise, smoke, odors, glare, or visual clutter.**

A self-storage facility has occupied the site since the date of its construction in 1975. The additional storage building is a minimal site change and will reduce the visual clutter as it will be replacing the scattered and unprotected outdoor recreational vehicles currently parked on the north side of the storage facility. Staff anticipates the proposed project will not generate such negative impacts on adjacent properties.

**Environment: The natural features of the subject property shall only be cleared or altered to the extent necessary to accommodate site design elements, particularly where the natural features assist in preserving the general character of the area.**

Wetlands connected to the headwaters of Arcadia Creek are located on the northernmost portion of the site under consideration. The proposed site modifications, as presented in the site plan, will not impact the existing natural features on the site. However, there is currently an existing outfall to the wetland to the north. If the storm sewer and outfall are reconstructed, an EGLE Joint Permit and coordination with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy will be required. If approved, the building will be located on the existing grassy area where outdoor recreational vehicles are currently being stored. The current percentage of open space on this site is approximately 55% (includes proposed building).

**Public Facilities: Adequate public and/or private infrastructure and services already exist or would be provided, and will safeguard the health, safety, and general welfare of the public.**

Public water and sewer are available at 1515 S 11th Street. Regarding the transportation network, the intersection to the north at W KL Avenue and South 11th Street is well controlled by a traffic signal. The intersection to the south where S 11th Street crosses W Michigan Avenue is also controlled by a traffic signal. This section of 11th street already supports several commercial and industrial uses. If the Special Use request is granted, it will not negatively affect the area as the proposed use will not generate noise, pollution, traffic, smoke, or odors aside from the construction of the 9,300 SF building. Impacts from this proposed use would not exceed the impacts of the nearby uses that have been established on this site since 1975.

The Township's Non-Motorized Transportation Plan does identify a 6 Ft wide Shared Use Path adjacent to the subject site on the east side of S 11<sup>th</sup> Street. **The applicant has requested a deferment for the 6 Ft wide Shared Use Path and has agreed to file a Shared Use Path SAD form with the Township as a condition of**

**Site Plan and Special Use approval.** This means that when the Township deems it appropriate to install the path and implement a Special Assessment District to fund the installation of the path, the owners and future owners of this site cannot oppose it. Bike lanes have already been established in both northbound and southbound directions in this portion of S 11th Street.

Section 49.250: Storage Buildings and Mini Warehouses

**A. Must be fully enclosed.**

The applicant has noted that the building being proposed will be enclosed, as indicated on Sheet A-100 in the site plan.

**B. Storage is primarily for, but not limited to residential and office customers.**

The applicant has noted that storage will be primarily used for office and residential customers, as indicated on Sheet A-100 in the site plan.

**C. The distance between buildings shall not be less than 30 feet.**

Distances between buildings are no less than 30 feet apart.

**D. Outdoor storage will require approval by the Planning Commission.**

This section of the review is not applicable as no outdoor storage is proposed.

Section 64: Site Plan Review

**General Zoning Compliance:**

*Zoning:* 1515 S 11<sup>th</sup> Street is zoned I-1: Industrial District. Storage buildings and mini warehouses are considered a special use within the I-1: Industrial District. The percentage of land on-site covered by buildings is 15.4%. The proposed percentage of land reserved for open space is 55%. All general zoning requirements have been met.

**Access and Circulation**

*Access:* Access to the site will not change. The proposed site has an established entrance drive along S 11<sup>th</sup> Street to access the facility. Most circulation aisles within the proposed site plan are approximately 30 Ft wide and have safe turning radii. Fire engines and other vehicles have ample space and circulation if emergency response is needed. Oshtemo's Fire Marshal has reviewed the proposed layout and has no concerns in terms of access and circulation.

*Parking:* The site currently has nine parking spaces in total, one of which being ADA accessible. All existing parking stalls are 10 Ft x 20 Ft. All parking requirements for storage buildings and mini warehouses have been satisfied as no changes to current on-site parking is proposed. He noted the site was established prior to the Township requiring all ADA spaces to be made of concrete. Given standard practice in this type of situation the current asphalt ADA parking spaces can remain, contingent upon passing cross-slopes and other pertinent ADA requirements.

*Shared Use Path:*

The Township's Non-Motorized Transportation Plan identifies a 6 Ft wide Shared Use Path adjacent to the subject site on the east side of S 11<sup>th</sup> Street. The

applicant requested a deferment for the 6 Ft wide Shared Use Path and has agreed to file a Shared Use Path SAD form with the Township as a condition of Site Plan and Special Use approval. This means that when the Township deems it appropriate to install the path and implement a Special Assessment District to fund the installation of the path, the owners and future owners of this site cannot oppose it. Bike lanes have already been established in both northbound and southbound directions in this portion of S 11th Street.

### **Building Design**

*Building Information:* The proposed 9,300 SF, one-story self-storage building will consist of approximately 58 new storage units. The height of the building will be approximately 10 Ft 7 inches tall and has a first floor elevation of 884.50. The majority of the existing buildings on the site range between 10 Ft and 14 Ft in height. The exterior materials for the proposed building as presented in the site plan are very similar to the exterior materials on the existing storage buildings on-site.

*Fencing:* The applicant is proposing a mixture of chain link and wrought iron fencing throughout the facility. Most of the fencing is intended to remain the same with the exception of the new fencing being proposed immediately north of the subject 9,300 SF addition. All existing fencing along with fencing being proposed is 6 Ft tall, which is the maximum height allowed within the I-1: Industrial District.

*Lighting:* A total of five new wall mounted light fixtures are proposed to be added to the 9,300 SF self-storage building. The applicant is proposing all new lighting to be cut-off fixtures. Building mounted lighting cannot exceed 14 Ft in height. The applicant illustrates in the photometric plan that the lighting will be mounted at approximately 10 Ft in height. The applicant is proposing there to be 3,795 lumens per lamp, which satisfies ordinance requirements. The foot candles shown in the site plan will be 0.1-foot candles or less at the western property line, which is acceptable when adjacent to residentially zoned property.

### **Landscaping**

Per Ordinance Section 53.150: Provisions for Existing Sites, landscaping is required along 11<sup>th</sup> Street since the expansion exceeds 2,000 SF. Such landscaping applies to the developed portion of the site, approximately 580 linear feet. The wetland area north of the developed area is not required to have additional landscaping. All necessary landscaping such as canopy trees, understory trees, and shrubs are provided in the site plan as all landscaping requirements have been satisfied.

### **Engineering**

Prein & Newhof and the Oshtemo Public Works Department have reviewed the project site plan and have noted that most of the on-site engineering concerns have been addressed; however, it is unclear whether the hydrant on the west side of the property near the entrance is existing or proposed. A proposed water main easement is shown but no note of the hydrant or water main connection. If

a water main connection is needed it shall be coordinated with the City of Kalamazoo Department of Public Services. Additionally, **as a condition of approval, Engineering requested that a Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Permit from the Kalamazoo County Drain Commissioner's Office be obtained prior to any site modifications.**

### **Fire Department**

The Township Fire Marshal is satisfied with the overall design of the site. An additional fire hydrant was required to be placed on-site due to the size of the expansion. The subject fire hydrant has been provided in the site plan.

Mr. Hutson indicated that overall, the site plan meets Township requirements.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Planning Department staff recommended the Planning Commission approve the proposed Special Use and Site Plan for the Storage Rentals of America Self-Storage Facility with the following conditions, which Mr. Hutson indicated can be handled administratively:

1. A signed Shared Use Path SAD form shall be submitted to the Township prior to issuing a Certificate of Occupancy.
2. There is currently an existing outfall to the wetland to the north. If the storm sewer and outfall are reconstructed an EGLE Joint Permit and coordination with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy will be required.
3. An updated site plan is submitted clarifying whether the shown fire hydrant is existing or proposed prior to building permit issuance.
4. If a water main connection is needed, it shall be coordinated with the City of Kalamazoo Department of Public Services prior to building permit issuance.
5. A Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Permit from the Kalamazoo County Drain Commissioner's Office be obtained prior to building permit issuance.
6. The ADA space shall be inspected by Township staff to ensure ADA requirements have been met. If the inspection fails, the ADA space shall be made of concrete prior to issuing a Certificate of Occupancy.

Chairperson VanderWeele thanked Mr. Hutson for his report and asked if commission members had questions. Hearing none, he invited the applicant to speak.

Mr. Kevin Oliver, Oliver Architecture, said he would be happy to discuss any further details or answer questions.

Ms. Maxwell asked if there is outdoor storage currently where the new building will be constructed, and if so where it will be going.

Mr. Oliver said yes, but they have informed clients they will no longer be able to store those items there as they are replacing outdoor storage with climate controlled storage. He confirmed that Kalamazoo Self Storage has nothing stored there themselves.

Mr. Vyas said he saw multi-level storage facilities in California and asked if that had been considered.

Mr. Oliver said this request to provide climate controlled indoor storage is a starting point. In the future his client will potentially remove existing storage facilities and build larger, multi-level storage facilities there.

Hearing no further questions, Chairperson VanderWeele moved to public hearing. As there were no members of the public who wished to speak, he asked for a motion.

Ms. Maxwell **made a motion** to approve the Special Use and Site Plan request from Kalamazoo Self Storage Rentals of America to add a 9,300 square foot self-storage building to their Self-Storage Facility At 1515 S. 11<sup>th</sup> Street, subject to the following six conditions recommended by Staff:

1. A signed Shared Use Path SAD form shall be submitted to the Township prior to issuing a Certificate of Occupancy.
2. There is currently an existing outfall to the wetland to the north. If the storm sewer and outfall are reconstructed an EGLE Joint Permit and coordination with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy will be required.
3. An updated site plan is submitted clarifying whether the shown fire hydrant is existing or proposed prior to building permit issuance.
4. If a water main connection is needed, it shall be coordinated with the City of Kalamazoo Department of Public Services prior to building permit issuance.
5. A Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Permit from the Kalamazoo County Drain Commissioner's Office be obtained prior to building permit issuance.
6. The ADA space shall be inspected by Township staff to ensure ADA requirements have been met. If the inspection fails, the ADA space shall be made of concrete prior to issuing a Certificate of Occupancy.

Mr. Vyas **seconded the motion**. The **motion was approved** unanimously by roll call vote.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no comments from members of the public.

## **OTHER UPDATES AND BUSINESS**

Ms. Maxwell noted the Planning Commission keeps approving shared path conditions that accompany staff recommendations for approval and asked for an update on Township plans for shared path development.

Ms. Lubbert said that the Township needs approximately 51% of property owners in a designated area to sign SAD agreements before a special assessment district can be established to collect funding to develop sidewalks in that area. Slowly but surely we are making progress toward achieving enough SADs to be able to implement the plan.

Attorney Porter said the Master Plan includes non-motorized paths. We are slowly collecting SAD agreements because the Township is reluctant to require business owners to build segments of sidewalk that do not currently connect to anything. He noted there are some non-motorized paths completed on Drake Road and West Main Street.

Ms. Lubbert said the Township Supervisor will be asking the Township Board to revisit this policy in the near future and that any proposed changes would come back to the Planning Commission.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

With there being no further business to consider, Chairperson VanderWeele adjourned the meeting at approximately 6:30 p.m.

Minutes prepared:  
February 26, 2021

Minutes approved:  
March 11, 2021