

**OSHTEMO CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION**

MINUTES OF A WORK SESSION HELD SEPTEMBER 26, 2019

Agenda

Village Theme Development Plan discussion

Maple Hill South Overlay Zone: Discussion on Density and Open Space

A meeting of the Oshtemo Charter Township Planning Commission was held Thursday, September 26, 2019, commencing at approximately 6:00 p.m. at the Oshtemo Charter Township Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bruce VanderWeele, Chair
Ollie Chambers
Ron Commissaris
Dusty Farmer, Secretary
Micki Maxwell
Mary Smith, Vice Chair

MEMBER ABSENT: Keshia Dickason

Also present were Julie Johnston, Planning Director, James Porter, Township Attorney and Martha Coash, Meeting Transcriptionist. Six other persons were in attendance.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairperson VanderWeele called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m.

Agenda

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

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

Mr. Brian Pierce noted his sister, Ms. Melissa Skowronski, spoke on his behalf at the last Planning Commission meeting letting the Commission know of his interest in the development of an ordinance to address medical and recreational marijuana businesses within the Township.

He said he has relatives with property in Oshtemo Township and wishes to bring cannabis business to the Township. He noted that many people are looking into business opportunities and that the State has set high standards for participants. He

said as the Township goes through the process to develop an ordinance he would like to be a resource as they pursue fact finding.

Attorney Porter explained the Township opted out before regulations were developed by the State to provide time to determine what permitting might be allowed. Now that regulations are in place, the Planning Director will need to develop an approach to decide what, if any, type of facility, including when, where and how they might be allowed are appropriate. Eventually that question will be referred to the Planning Commission.

Ms. Farmer agreed the Township opted out originally to protect itself before State regulations were put in place. She noted no formal vote was taken on what to do in the future, and that though not all Board members may be in favor of permitting marijuana businesses, many are supportive.

Approval of the Minutes of September 12, 2019

Chairperson VanderWeele asked if there were any additions, deletions or corrections to the Minutes of September 12, 2019. Hearing none, he asked for a motion.

Mr. Chambers made a motion to approve the Minutes of September 12, 2019 as presented. Mr. Commissaris supported the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Village Theme Development Plan discussion

Ms. Johnston said at the September 12th Planning Commission meeting, more information was requested on the impact of the possible zoning changes the draft Village Theme Development Plan recommended for the Form-Based Code Overlay. Staff added a section to the matrix provided by Wade Trim to try and explain the probable outcomes of the zoning change.

In addition, she said, a request was made related to the two projects that have developed within the Form-Based Code Overlay area – the memory care center on Stadium Drive and the veterinary hospital on Parkview Avenue. She provided Information related to the deviations from the Form-Based Code for these projects as well as the Planning Commission minutes from those meetings.

She also provided a copy of the Form-Based Code indicating sections recommended for change and/or elimination and noted the amendments may require additional text changes. A full review of the Overlay will need to be conducted and changes recommended if the draft Village Theme Development Plan is adopted.

In response to a request from Chairperson VanderWeele, Mr. Rich McDonald, a member of the DDA Board representing the Hinman Company, which is the owner of

several properties in the Village, wrote a letter explaining what changes to the Form-Based Code would be helpful to spur development in the area. That letter was provided to Commissioners.

Four schematics from Wade Trim were presented based on two sites within the Village area. One set was based on current Form-Based Code language and the other was based on the recommended changes to the code. She said at this meeting the task for the group was to consider and decide upon one of the three options:

Option One – Keep the Form-Based Code generally as is but incorporate modifications to certain sections.

Option Two – Convert the Form-Based Code to an overlay district, keeping certain sections and eliminating others.

Option Three – Eliminate the code entirely and refer to traditional zoning districts.

Ms. Johnston walked through the ramifications and results of change for each option and explained the reasons staff prefer option one, which would allow some flexibility. If option one is chosen, the Form-Based Code could be looked at soon and a review of codes for modification done.

After consideration, the group concluded their preference was to pursue Option 1 as recommended.

Ms. Johnston will bring a final draft of the Village Theme Development Plan to the October 10 Planning Commission meeting. It was agreed, although not required, that after consideration at the October 10 meeting, a public hearing will be held on October 24 before approval. Much public input has already been provided and it would be good to solicit any further input at a public hearing.

Maple Hill South Overlay Zone: Discussion on Density and Open Space

Ms. Johnston noted at the August 22 Planning Commission meeting, a request was made for more information on the difference between gross and net acreage and how it might be applied to open space and residential densities within the proposed Maple Hill South Overlay Zone. She indicated in the current draft Ordinance net acreage is described as follows:

Net Acreage. *For the purposes of this Article, net acreage shall be defined as the gross acreage of the proposed development, minus public/private rights-of-way and stormwater detention areas. However, stormwater detention areas may be included within the net acreage if they are designed as functional open spaces, are accessible to pedestrians, and do not require safety fencing.*

Without having a specific plan to review, staff has assumed that road rights-of-way and possible storm water detention areas will utilize approximately 25 percent of the available property. She provided calculations that outlined the difference between utilizing gross and net acreage on both open space and residential densities. She indicated different scenarios were utilized based on the full acreage of the Overlay zone, the acreage without the MDOT property, and the requirement within the Overlay zone of a minimum of 80 acres.

Ms. Johnston noted an additional request was made by the Planning Commission to provide a spreadsheet on the residential densities of apartment complexes within Oshtemo. These densities were derived from acreage amounts found within the Township's GIS system and total unit numbers found on the apartment websites. Based on these numbers, the average density of the 19 complexes reviewed is 11.3 dwelling units per acre. This is 3.3 dwelling units per acre more than what is planned to be permitted by right within the Maple Hill South Overlay, and 1.3 more than what would be allowed as an incentive for the development of additional amenities.

She recommended the Planning Commission focus discussion on net versus gross acreage, open space, and density requirements for the draft Ordinance.

Ms. Johnston worked through the density implications and suggested open space requirements be based on net acreage. Using net gives them more buildable area. Conversely, if we are looking to increase density allowances in the Overlay, density should be based on gross acreage.

In addition, any density bonus needs to be attractive enough to be a good incentive for builders and suggested that for the next meeting, board members consider densities based on gross and net as well as how much the density bonus should be.

Chairperson VanderWeele asked if there were any audience comments on this agenda item.

Mr. Curt Aardema of AVB, said the board's dialogue, thoughts and ideas were appreciated. He indicated one goal is to provide housing types for multiple groups of people in the community. Higher density, walkable to businesses, is limited in the township. What is laid out in the overlay zone helps to lead in that direction. He felt growth in this area is good for the community as it allows rural character to be maintained to the west. Density on the east end of the community helps preserve open spaces and that seeking access to recreational areas is appealing.

Mr. Joe Gesmundo, also of AVB, explained they are seeing a shift in housing demand today. People are attracted to higher density, walkable environments. He noted growth at Stryker and Pfizer in the area, as well as the new Advia headquarters being built in the Township, is attracting a lot of young professionals. To handle the needs of that demographic, we need to move with the times and the demand.

Chairperson VanderWeele thanked them for their comments and moved to the next item on the agenda.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Johnston announced the Township received the Michigan Association of Planning environmental planning award for the *Go! Green Oshtemo Plan* at a ceremony the previous evening.

Ms. Farmer added the Township Board will recognize those who worked on the award winning plan at their October 22 meeting.

Ms. Johnston informed the board that Iris Lehmann has been hired as Township Planning Director. She will begin her duties on October 28. Ms. Johnston expects to finish up with the Village Theme Development Plan and possibly the Maple Hill South Overlay Zone before completing her work with the Township.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to consider.

PLANNING COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Planning Commissioners had no comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further comments, Chairperson VanderWeele adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:38 p.m.

Minutes prepared:
September 28, 2019

Minutes approved:
October 10, 2019