

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD OCTOBER 27, 2022

Agenda

STEERING COMMITTEE: HOUSING PLAN COORDINATION AND KICK OFF (Continued)

A meeting of the Oshtemo Charter Township Planning Commission was held Thursday, October 27, 2022, commencing at approximately 6:04 p.m. at the Oshtemo Township Hall, 7275 West Main Street.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bruce VanderWeele, Chair
 Deb Everett
 Micki Maxwell, Vice Chair
 Alistair Smith
 Chetan Vyas

MEMBERS ABSENT: Kizzy Bradford
 Anna Versalle

Also present were Iris Lubbert, Planning Director, Martha Coash, Recording Secretary, Emily Petz, W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research (attended virtually) and Curt Aardema, AVB.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairperson VanderWeele called the meeting to order at approximately 6:04 p.m. and those in attendance joined in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

The Chair asked if there were any changes to the agenda. Hearing none, he let the agenda stand as published.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

Mr. Aardema, of AVB, noted the extensive experience AVB and Hinman, their partner in the Prairies development, have with a variety of housing developments they own and manage in the area. They are excited to hear the discussion of the vision for future housing in the Township. He indicated they are looking forward to the discussion at the November 17 Planning Commission meeting.

He provided the history of the acquisition of the Prairies and noted large developments can take a long time from acquisition to realization due to a number of factors. He described the challenges for market viability for golf courses and noted a number of them have closed in the area. He also indicated before any development of the Prairies a full traffic viability analysis would need to be done.

Chairperson VanderWeele thanked Mr. Aardema for his comments and moved to the next agenda item.

Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of October 13, 2022

The Chair asked if there were additions, deletions, or corrections to the Minutes of the Meeting of October 13, 2022.

Hearing none, Chairperson VanderWeele asked for a motion.

Ms. Maxwell **made a motion** to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of October 13, 2022 as presented. Mr. Smith **seconded the motion**. The **motion was approved unanimously**.

The Chair moved to the next item on the agenda and asked Ms. Lubbert for her presentation.

STEERING COMMITTEE: HOUSING PLAN COORDINATION AND KICK OFF (Continued)

Ms. Lubbert said at the Planning Commission's August 11, 2022 regular meeting, the Commission was asked to review and answer questions presented by Emily Petz of the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research to ensure the consultant was clear on the Planning Commission's vision for the housing study. Using the Commission's answers, Ms. Petz attended the October 13 Planning Commission meeting and presented an updated project scope and contract (changes primarily included additional data gathering, analysis, and public engagement) as well as draft survey questions. Using the feedback collected, additional changes to the contract and draft survey were made.

She introduced Ms. Petz, who attended virtually and led discussion on the following subjects:

- **Review and collect feedback on the updated supplemental survey questions. The intent of this survey is to give the public the opportunity to give specific feedback about housing in Oshtemo that will supplement the data collected from the County's housing survey.**

Ms. Petz reviewed the survey as updated after discussion at the October 13, 2022 meeting, methods for distribution and obtaining responses, as well as the plans for

soliciting extensive input through public meetings with various constituencies. The group was satisfied with the revisions and authorized proceeding with the survey as presented.

- Review of the amended contract, collect feedback, and if satisfactory forward it to the Township Board with a recommendation of approval. Based on feedback from the Planning Commission and Planning Director, the timeline for the project has been extended.

Ms. Lubbert noted the Commission updated the contract with Upjohn at the October 13, 2022 meeting to include an additional \$5,000 in order to accommodate additional work. She said it would be pertinent to extend the timeline of the contract by two months, to the end of July 2023, in order to provide sufficient time to accomplish the additional work.

As the group agreed that was a reasonable request, Chairperson VanderWeele asked for a motion.

Mr. Vyas **made a motion** to extend the contract timeframe with W.E. Upjohn for an additional two months, to allow completion of all contracted work by July 31, 2023. Ms. Maxwell **seconded the motion**. The **motion was approved** unanimously.

- Provide feedback on the draft postcard that will be sent out to advertise the supplemental housing survey and upcoming public meetings (specific dates to be determined). The language from the postcard will also be used in other promotion efforts.

The group reviewed the postcard for language and effectiveness and agreed it was ready for publication.

- Additional discussion about the Planning Commission's thoughts, concerns, and dreams for housing in Oshtemo.

The group provided ideas of what they would like to see in the Township as an ideal eco-system regarding the mix of different housing types. In general, the consensus was to provide a variety of types of housing options but to keep the rural feeling.

Ideas for future housing development discussed included:

- Invisible density increases such as "tiny houses" on big tracts of land
- Ways to expand density in RR district with restrictions
- How to prioritize different locations and units by location
- Senior housing needs
- Housing opportunities in commercially zoned areas to increase density in already dense areas
- How to achieve an increase in targeted density through zoning changes

- Cottage or “tiny house” development, including as part of the village concept
- Exploration of a zoning change regarding the minimum size allowed for houses

Ms. Petz discussed the housing supply and demand issue: demand for housing of any size/price is much larger than the supply available. Adding options would help to create affordability. Any increase in supply would be very beneficial regardless of type.

Possible strategies discussed included:

- Adding housing above commercial spaces
- Lowering minimum parking requirements for large commercial concerns to allow more development in currently underutilized space
- Base parking space requirements on the number of bedrooms per unit rather than on the number of apartment units

In conclusion, Chairperson VanderWeele said he was hearing the Commission wants more housing in general and more affordable housing but wishes to keep the rural character, at least in the western portion of the Township.

Ms. Petz said there will be more in-depth discussion about these things as we move through the process and thanked Commissioners for a great conversation.

Chairperson VanderWeele moved to the next agenda item.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

OTHER UPDATES AND BUSINESS

Ms. Lubbert said the November 17 meeting will have a full agenda and will likely be lengthy.

ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further business to consider, Chairperson VanderWeele adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:33 p.m.

Minutes prepared:
October 26, 2022

Minutes approved:
November 17, 2022