

**OSHTEMO CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION**

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING HELD OCTOBER 9, 2014

Agenda

PUBLIC HEARING: SPECIAL EXCEPTION USE (LIGHTHOUSE COMMUNITY CHURCH) REVIEW FOR A TEMPORARY OUTDOOR EVENT TO INCLUDE A LIVE NATIVITY LASTING FROM DECEMBER 11 TO DECEMBER 14, 2014 AT THEIR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 4321 SOUTH 11TH STREET WITHIN THE R-2 RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT (PARCEL # 3905-36-405-031).

A meeting of the Oshtemo Charter Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, October 9, 2014, commencing at approximately 7:00 p.m. at the Oshtemo Charter Township Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Terry Schley, Chairperson
Fred Antosz
Wiley Boulding, Sr.
Dusty Farmer
Pam Jackson
Millard Loy
Richard Skalski

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

Also present were Karen High, Zoning Administrator; James Porter, Attorney; and Martha Coash, Meeting Transcriptionist. There was one other person in attendance.

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

AGENDA

The Chairperson asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

Mr. Loy made a motion to accept the agenda as presented. Mr. Skalski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Chairperson Schley asked if anyone in attendance wished to comment on non-agenda items.

There were no public comments on non-agenda items. Chairperson Schley moved to the next item on the agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2014

The Chairperson asked if there were any additions, deletions or corrections to the minutes of the meeting of September 11, 2014. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

Mr. Loy made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 11, 2014 meeting as presented. Mr. Boulding, Sr. seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Chairperson Schley moved to the next item on the agenda.

PUBLIC HEARING: SPECIAL EXCEPTION USE (LIGHTHOUSE COMMUNITY CHURCH) REVIEW OF THE APPLICATION FOR A TEMPORARY OUTDOOR EVENT TO INCLUDE A LIVE NATIVITY LASTING FROM DECEMBER 11 TO DECEMBER 14, 2014 AT THEIR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 4321 SOUTH 11TH STREET WITHIN THE R-2 RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT. (PARCEL # 3905-36-405-031).

Chairperson Schley said the next item on the agenda was the public hearing for a special exception use review from Lighthouse Community Church for a temporary outdoor event. He asked Ms. High to present staff input.

Ms. High explained the applicant desires to host a live Nativity event during a four-day stretch from Thursday, December 11 to Sunday, December 14 at their facility in celebration of the Christmas season. The Church is located at 4321 South 11th Street on the east side of the road between Parkview Avenue and the Township line. The Church property totals approximately 20 acres including the Church facility and parsonage. It is located in the R2 district.

She noted that a temporary event that lasts more than one day is a special exception use in the R2 district. It not only must satisfy the criteria for a special exception use but also the criteria for a temporary event.

Ms. High said this is the second year for the event having received approval for the premier event last year. The applicants are proposing only minor changes based on the results from last year's event, which went very smoothly and was highly successful.

She explained one proposed change is the addition of a fourth public night for the event. Last year, the event was held over three nights, but a fourth night was scheduled as a dress rehearsal. This year, there is no dress rehearsal scheduled, and all four nights would be open to the public. The reason for extending the event to four nights is due to the anticipated popularity. Last year, even in bad weather, about 1,600 people attended the nativity event. With potential for better weather and greater awareness of the event, it is anticipated the attendance will increase. The addition of the fourth night will accommodate a potential increase in crowd without impacting adjacent properties. The four nights would be scheduled for Thursday December 11 and Friday December 12 from 6:00 to 9:00 pm and Saturday December 13 and Sunday December 14 from 5:30 to 8:30 pm.

She said visitors would enter the main lobby area and be separated into groups of 12-15 people. When called, the groups would be guided along a path of six stations. Dual paths would be established to allow for greater efficiency in moving people through the process. Entertainment and refreshments would be provided within the lobby area along with a children's petting zoo on the south side of the building. This is the same process that was used last year and resulted in very efficient flow of visitors throughout the event. Based on last years' experience, during peak periods, visitors to the event would likely be on the campus no longer than 45 minutes including parking, organizing, taking the tour, and enjoying the rest of the activities and refreshments.

Ms. High explained the proposed event would take place within the front yard of the Church facility. There are 32 parking spaces in front of the Church that would be designated "no parking". However, 212 parking spaces remain, including an additional 50 spaces that would be striped and plowed on the lawn area north of existing parking. Based on last years' experience, this is more than sufficient parking, even at peak periods, due to the 30-45 minute turnover that occurs. The Church coordinated with Kalamazoo Christian School to provide an overflow lot if necessary. Further, volunteers and participants in the event will be parking in an additional cleared lawn area east of the paved lot providing additional spaces for visitors in the paved lot. Attendants will assist with parking on site, and the Church has contacted the Sheriff's Department to coordinate potential assistance with traffic management along 11th Street.

She said this year's plan for the event in terms of access as well as use of burn barrels is exactly the same as last year's and was developed in conjunction with the Fire Marshall and Fire Chief. As noted on the site plan, burn barrels will again be located along the pathways and incorporated into some of the tour stops. Provided these are

not located near hay or similar materials and have fire extinguishers nearby, the department was satisfied.

Ms. High noted this is the second time the Church will host this live Nativity event. They have indicated an intention to make this an annual community event. In instances of other temporary events that occur annually, the Planning Commission has in some instances, authorized administrative approval of events in subsequent years provided there are no significant changes and no issues with the event the previous year. If inclined to approve the event, the Planning Commission should consider whether to add such a caveat to this item as well.

Ms. High noted the application meets approval standards criteria.

Ms. High concluded by saying the Planning Commission should consider whether or not to include a condition regarding administrative approval of this event in subsequent years provided the event is substantially similar to the previous year and there were no issues with the event in previous years.

Chairperson Schley asked if there were questions for Ms. High from Commissioners.

In answer to a question from Mr. Antosz, Ms. High indicated no comments were received from residents regarding the application.

The Chairperson confirmed that things went well at last year's event.

Hearing no further comments, Chairperson Schley asked the applicant if he wished to speak.

Mr. Joe George, speaking on behalf of the Church, said the Church had one resident stop in to inquire about the event, and after hearing about it, made a donation to assist with event costs.

Mr. George noted several small changes and confirmed that parking went as planned last year, with no cars needing to wait on 11th Street. He also assured the Board there is no fee to attend but that the Church has several sponsors who will help with expenses.

Mr. Antosz noted he was concerned last year regarding the safety of children around fire barrels and was assured by Mr. George that groups of 10 to 15 people at a time are accompanied by a guide who keeps a close eye on children and the fires.

As there were no audience members present for comment, the Chairperson asked if there was a motion to approve the application.

Mr. Boulding, Sr. said he is in total agreement with approval of the event and with future events being approved by Administrative Staff, but that this year's request is for

four days rather than the three requested last year. He would like to see a cap of five on the number of days the Board approves for the event if it is to be handled in the future by Administrative Staff.

Mr. Boulding, Sr. made a motion to approve the request from the Lighthouse Community Church for a temporary outdoor event to include a live Nativity lasting from December 11 to December 14, 2014, subject to the following conditions:

1. The applicant complies with any comments and recommendations of the Fire Department during the course of this review and/or any subsequent inspection.
2. Any signage shall require a sign permit in conformance with the standards of the Township Zoning Ordinance.
3. Administrative approval of this event in subsequent years will be sufficient provided the event is substantially similar to the previous year, there were no issues with the event in previous years, and that the event does not exceed five days in duration.

Ms. Farmer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS/ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Chairperson Schley asked if there was old business or any other business to come before the Commission.

Mr. Boulding, Sr. said he had been by Flesher Field after recent rain and was concerned the soccer field had significant standing water in the playing area.

Ms. High said there was a delay in construction due to the late spring, and although there was significant topsoil moved into that area it is still somewhat low. It is hoped that next spring grass planted this fall will be established and able to absorb moisture. When Phase III is funded, the plan is to improve it further.

Chairperson Schley asked if there had been any complaints from the adjacent funeral home regarding soccer parents parking on the north side of their lot to access the fields; Ms. High said no complaints had been received.

Ms. Jackson told the Board she attended Stadium Drive Corridor meetings. They have included collaboration among many community participants. She said the Governor's office is interested, but noted the project will not be done for years.

Chairperson Schley reported the DDA continues to work on its selection process for a design partner for streetscaping at Stadium Drive and 9th Streets.

PLANNING COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

There were no comments from Commissioners.

ADJOURNMENT

Having exhausted the agenda, and with there being no further business to discuss, Chairperson Schley asked for a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Skalski made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Boulding, Sr. seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairperson Schley adjourned the Planning Commission meeting at approximately 7:23 p.m.

Minutes prepared:
October 10, 2014

Minutes approved:
October 23, 2014