

**FINAL**  
**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE**  
**\*\*SPECIAL\*\* PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**  
Monday, November 22, 2021  
2009 Township Drive  
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

**A. CALL TO ORDER:** Chairperson Parel called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

**ROLL CALL:** Present: Brian Parel, Chairperson  
Brian Winkler, Vice Chairperson  
George Weber  
Sam Karim  
Joe Loskill  
Absent: Chelsea Rebeck, Secretary (excused)  
Bill McKeever (excused)  
Also Present: Dave Campbell, Township Planning Director  
Paula Lankford, Asst. to the Planning Director  
Jill Bahm, Partner, Giffels Webster  
Rose Kim, Staff Planner, Giffels Webster

**B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOTION** by Winkler, supported by Loskill, to approve the Special Planning Commission Meeting Agenda of November 22, 2021, as presented.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

None. *(Nov. 1st meeting minutes will be reviewed at the regular meeting on Dec. 13th)*

**D. UPDATE OF ACTIVITIES**

None.

**E. PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

Chairperson Parel opened to Public Discussion of Matters Not on the Agenda.

No comments.

Chairperson Parel closed Public Discussion of Matters Not on the Agenda.

**F. TABLED ITEMS**

None.

**G. OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**H. SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

None.

**I. NEW BUSINESS**

**I1. MASTER LAND USE PLAN**

Review of the 2015 Master Land Use Plan in accordance with the State of Michigan's Planning Enabling Act of 2008.

Dave Campbell – Jill Bahm and Rose Kim from Giffels Webster are present. We all know Giffels Webster very well as our Township Engineers, Jason Mayer, Nancy McClain and their team. Giffels also has a Planning Division that Jill is in charge of. As we have discussed at several meetings, Commerce Township is due, probably overdue, to conduct a five-year review of our master plan that we last updated in the early part of 2015, with the bulk of that work for that update taking place in 2014. The Planning Department, Paula and I, had discussions with Jill and her team about helping us with that review process. As noted in the Planning Department's cover letter submitted in your packets, effectively there are three options. We can stay with the master plan as it currently exists with the 2015 version. We can do an update to that master plan, or if the Planning Commission so chooses, we can start with an entirely new master plan.

As I'm sure Jill will explain better than I, the master plan is meant to be a multi-year vision of your community in terms of land use. The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act says it's a 20-year vision. Some communities like to look at it as more of a 10-year vision. I say whether you're using a 10-year or 20-year schedule, Commerce Township is due to take a good look at our master plan in 2024. However, we thought a five-year review is always prudent, and that is spoken to in the Planning Enabling Act, which is where we are a little bit overdue. For starters, we will have a review of the 2015 master plan, and then it will be up to you as a Planning Commission where you want to go with it from there.

Jill and her team have provided some draft materials that were included in your packet. They have had an opportunity to update some of the demographic data in the Township relative to the 2015 master plan and the updates that we have seen in the years since. There were updates to some of our land use categories. Jill and her team have provided opportunities for the Planning Commission to discuss where we may want to look at some updates to our master plan relative to some of those changes we've seen over the last few years.

I know there are some topics that we discuss here at the Planning Commission frequently that would probably be matters that we would want to consider as part of our master plan. The biggest one that we talk about, probably more often than any other, is traffic through Commerce Township. We also have a lot of discussions about different types of housing, whether it be multi-family, rental units, senior housing, and whether we are at or nearing a saturation point with those types of housing. That's a discussion that we have had with the Planning Commission, and certainly with the Township Board as well.

For tonight's meeting, what I'm hoping for is an informal discussion with Jill and Rose to introduce ourselves and let them know what some of our priorities are here in the Township, along with some of the things we would want to potentially look at as part of either an update to our master plan, or an entirely new master plan if that's the route we want to go. Jill, if that is a fair enough introduction, I'll turn it over to you and Rose.

Jill Bahm – That was great. Good evening. I'm a partner at Giffels Webster, as Dave said. With me is Rose Kim who is a staff planner. Thank you for having a special meeting to accommodate this conversation. I know that it is a holiday week and we're interested in moving on in a prompt manner. As I go through the presentation, feel free to ask questions along the way. You don't have to necessarily take any action tonight. This is really informational and conversational as well.

To give you a little bit of background about myself, I've been a planning consultant for almost 15 years. Before that, I've worked as city planner in a couple different

communities, as well as the DDA director. I was the first DDA director in Highland Township several years ago in the early 2000's. Also, I have been a Commerce Township resident from 1998 until 2016, and then we moved about a mile east and we are now in West Bloomfield. We were on Long Lake, and now we're on Union Lake. I'm very familiar with the community and this is really a treat for me to be able to work with you in Commerce Township.

Ms. Bahm approached the overhead and gave a review of the presentation.

Ms. Bahm - So just an overview about what a master plan is and what the planning process typically looks like. Then a little conversation about the 2015 master plan, and then discussion and Q&A as you have time.

Briefly, what is planning? I like this quote from the American Planning Association; *Good planning helps to create communities that offer choices for where and how people live. Planning helps communities to envision their future. It helps them find the right balance of new development, essential services, environmental protection and innovative change.*

One of the things that I like about planning and why I enjoy what I do so much is because everything we do touches everything that we see in our communities. There's not one thing that we can change or see in our community that doesn't impact something else. Seeing those connections between all of those things, and then thinking about things comprehensively I think is a real challenge to our communities, but when done well, it can really help us accomplish great things as well.

Planning is a process for coordinating the impacts that people and activities have on the physical and social environment in which they live. As I just said, it impacts almost every aspect of the community; where we live, the design and accessibility of businesses, parks, the extent of municipal services, and preservation and protection of natural resources. Most of the pictures that are in here, like this one, are from Commerce Township. Some are recent, and some are older.

Why do we plan? We plan to ensure that our quality of life is maintained and improved to develop a shared vision for the future of the community. We plan to protect property rights, which is something that's important. Sometimes we have residents that come to meetings and they may not be entirely in support of something. That may get difficult with folks who have a hard time understanding some of that, but we plan to encourage and support appropriate economic development. We really want to be supportive of economic development and recognize changes that are happening, but direct that in a way that fits with the vision of the community.

As you may know, there are three legislated public acts that regulate our planning and zoning activities. We've got the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, and the Land Division Act as well. This allows the Planning Commission to create and do long-range planning, and allows the community to adopt zoning guides and regulate the development. The Planning Commission, through the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, has the authority to create and adopt master plans, prepare capital improvement plans, provide public improvement approvals, and regulate subdivisions and review those as well.

The Zoning Enabling Act allows the Planning Commission the authority to draft a zoning ordinance, review rezonings, look at zoning approvals, special land use, site plan review, and other development tools such as a planned unit development, preserve open space and create a Zoning Board of Appeals, the mechanism by which we can grant variances for our ordinances.

As Dave summed up, it's the community's blueprint for the future. It can be a 10, 15 or 20-year vision that looks at land use, transportation, housing, infrastructure, natural resources, economic development, agriculture and other key elements of the community. Again, the planning horizon can be 10-20 years.

This is an important slide, and I think every time I have the chance to highlight this one, I do. Hopefully, the more I repeat it, the more people will remember it's true. The master plan guides future land use decision making. It's our policy guide, our document to layout the blueprint of our vision for the future, but the zoning ordinance and the zoning map are what regulate development.

Sometimes we will go through a master plan and we'll be talking about a future land use map and people will be concerned. They'll say, "You're changing my zoning." We'll say, "No, we're not. We're just talking about the future vision for the community." It's important to make those two distinctions. It's also important that we have our master plan and our future land use map in alignment with our zoning ordinance. We'll talk about that on this slide.

This is a zoning matrix, it's a zoning plan. Your current plan does have a zoning plan. It doesn't really look like this one, but this shows how on this side, we have the future land uses. On your future land use map, you've got those categories and descriptions. Those are here. Then we have the existing zoning districts on your zoning ordinance on this side. The dots are there to show how those align, so when we see single-family residential planned for the future of the community, what does that mean in terms of regulation? It's going to align in this community with the R-1 single-family district. You may have, and you do have, multiple categories of single-family residential zoning, and so you may see a couple of dots next to single-family. This is very helpful in a master plan document because it can help us see where we might need a new zoning district to realize the vision of the master plan, or where we might need to review or amend those zoning districts based on some of the recommendations of our master plan.

As Dave said, in Michigan, master plans are required to be reviewed every five years. That doesn't mean that they have to be updated every five years. It just means that it's good practice to open them up and take a look at what's in there. Look at our demographics, see what has changed and if everything we have in there is still relevant for moving forward. That's what we're doing with this process.

The most important thing that the Planning Commission will do is prepare the master plan. There's a few different things we're going to do. First, we're going to understand what's happening. We're going to update our existing conditions. That might be looking at our demographic data, which we actually did for you as part of this review document. We'll look at land use and some of the other conditions related to what's happening today. What is the vision of the community going forward? We will listen and seek input on the direction of the community, and create a vision based on what we know and what we hear. Then, we'll develop the future land use plan and map, and any other plans that might be associated with that. We may have area plans, or other smaller things we want to accomplish with our future land use plan. And then we act; probably the most important chapter of our master plan is the implementation chapter, because that's where we're really going to talk about how we're going to achieve the vision that we have laid out in the master plan.

Again, the authority to adopt the master plan sits with the Planning Commission. There's a public hearing involved with that. The Township Board is also able to approve or adopt the master plan as well, if they express their desire to do so. We think that's good practice. It hopefully ensures that there's buy-in and that everybody is on the same page

with what the vision is. Not only that, it means the Township Board also has an understanding of what's to come after. We talk again about that implementation chapter; if the Township Board has seen that and they agree with it, then they're able to support staff and the Planning Commission on those implementation items.

When we think about the beginning of the process, we want to think about who our key stakeholders are, and also be thinking about people who aren't normally at that table. We know the people we hear from all the time. We know the key businesses that we may want to include, but who else haven't we heard from that might have some interesting insights into this process? We want to ensure that we have a diverse range of groups or organizations, and then bring those people on early and have them understand this process. I think that really helps to engage folks in a positive way, rather than presenting them with something at a public hearing or at the end of the process. We don't want them to say next year, "We didn't know about this. We could have had some good input on it." You might include neighborhood associations, business owners, faith-based organizations. There's a whole variety of folks that could be involved with this.

We talk about what we would normally include in a master plan and this is a list of a lot of what we would include. Now, if we're doing an update, it's not necessary that we touch every one of these sections. As we go forward in our conversation, there may be parts of the master plan that you think are just fine, and we can refer to those. There may be other sections where you think they're fine, but we really need to update these three sections. These are important and we're having issues with this in our community. The process is kind of a long one. This is as laid out in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. I put this in to give a framework for a boundary of what to expect in the process. We do start out with the notice of intent to the required entities. That would include all of the communities that share a border with Commerce Township. It includes the county, SEMCOG, and anybody else who has established an interest in receiving these types of notices. Often it is the railroad and the utilities, and you may have those on file.

As we work through the master plan, there will be a point where the Planning Commission says, "We think this is a good draft and we'd like it to go out now for review." Then we send that to Township Board and we ask them to authorize staff to distribute. Once they do that, it's 63 days for an update, or 42 days for an amendment. We can talk about what that looks like later. During that time, the other nearby communities would take a look. Really what they're focused on is what we're talking about in Commerce Township that impacts their shared borders. You may have seen copies of the master plans from those adjacent communities where we have shared borders. You want to look at that and recognize whether there is anything planned in an adjacent community that would impact Commerce Township, either positively, or potentially negatively. When we send that to the county, they look at that as well. No one is looking at your plan to say this is a good plan, or this plan stinks. They really are just looking at those shared boundaries.

After that time, there is a public hearing with notice. Then, the Planning Commission adopts, the Township Board can adopt, and then the plan can be distributed. It's a long process. It generally will take about a year to get through the whole thing.

The planning process again; we look at what we have. That's research and analysis. What do we want? That's our visioning and goal setting. How do we get there? That's the plan, getting there, strategies, and is the plan working. Plan monitoring; that's a helpful tool. We don't have to wait five years. Every year, the Planning Commission can take a look at, in particular, the implementation chapter, and say, "What did we do this year? What items on here can we check off our list? And, what things do we want to do

next year?" It's a good way to stay focused and to really begin to see some things being accomplished. Also, you can transmit that as part of the Planning Commission's annual report, which is required, and share that with the Township Board. That allows you to look at the next steps for next year, and if you require some resources to do that, you can transmit that to the Township Board. It's also a nice tool to share with the community so that they can see how the master plan is being implemented over time. I can take a break, if you have any questions about the process at this point, or what a master plan really is?

The Commissioners had no questions at this time.

Ms. Bahm – Okay, going forward. We have a list, and these aren't the only things to consider when we do a master plan update, but they're important things that we should be thinking about. What's interesting is when you start to dive into some of these, you'll see the overlap between them. I think you'll start to see how creating a more complete street, or more full transportation network helps with being a more age-friendly community. How enhancing arts, culture and place-making helps support economic development.

An age-friendly community encourages active aging by optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age. The master plan should consider housing, transportation, safety, health, and social concerns. When we do that, we not only help our older residents, but we help younger residents as well, and residents of all ages.

Interestingly, in 2013, my kids went to Keith Elementary, Clifford Smart and Walled Lake Northern, and in 2013, we had an exchange student come to live with us. He's from Brazil and he spent the entire school year with us. He arrived in August, and by about September, he wanted to know if he could get the number for a cab company and how he could call a cab to take him around because he wasn't able to drive anywhere. I explained that we don't really have that here. As a planner, I knew all those things, but it really struck me when someone came from another place who expected to be able to express his independence and have freedom of mobility, and he really didn't where we lived. Unfortunately, my older son had graduated and no one was driving yet. My younger son wasn't driving yet, so we drove around a lot. We maybe take some of those things for granted that it is just the way it is, but when you hear things from another perspective, it's an interesting thing to consider.

Arts and culture strengthen the connection between people and the places they share in their community. Place-making can also be a part of that. The master plan is a good place to explore ways to encourage the arts and culture by incorporating strategies for public art, like gateways, murals, lighting, and there's a variety of other ways we can include arts and culture in our master plans. Again, it's good for the whole of our community. It's good for all of our residents, and it's good for economic development. As another side note, I'm on the board for the Huron Valley Council for the Arts. We had an Arts and Greens this past weekend at Bogie Lake Greenhouse. The Arts Council is present in the community and it is a great organization to tap into and begin to support. This would be considered to be part of that reach, and in fact, there really isn't any other arts organization in the area. The master plan could be a really great opportunity, whether some of that gets included in the master plan document or not, having those conversations in a public forum can really spur other conversations that can happen and be options of the planning process.

Housing is another topic, and I know that's a hot topic that you have been talking about as a Planning Commission. Great communities have a variety of housing choices for all ages, small and large, no maintenance to high-maintenance, a variety of price ranges and attainable housing. Attainable housing was included in the guide also. It's the idea that people should generally be able to afford housing in the community. Not that we just consider housing costs themselves, but we also consider the cost of transportation. When we combine those two, we do find that the housing costs can be a little on the higher side in our areas where people have to go a great distance.

Now what will be interesting is that we've had this pandemic, we've had a change in the way we work, and how does that impact traffic and rush hour, and how does that impact our offices? I can say, it didn't affect rush hour today. I don't necessarily think that we're all going to continue working from home forever, so I do think we will have to address some of those things, but transportation is a significant cost of housing.

I could land on that, because I know that was one of the conversations that you're having; over housing, over multi-family and over senior housing in particular. I think it's mentioned in the document that I sent you, but to be thinking of housing for older residents as not just senior housing, but are there other opportunities to incorporate housing choices in the community at some different level? Some place between a single-family home and a congregate, dedicated senior family housing, so that folks are accommodated and we don't end up with a lot of these buildings that we're seeing in different communities that seem to be somewhat single purpose. Having said that though, we know our community is still aging. The region, state and country; we are all getting older in all of our communities. With that comes those challenges. We can come back to that.

Complete streets means having a variety of transportation and mobility options that connect people to places and to each other, and allow residents of all ages to move about the community safely, effectively and efficiently. That doesn't mean that every street needs to accommodate all users, but that the network as a whole can accommodate everybody and everyone can get where they need to go through a variety of ways.

A diverse and vibrant local economy provides employment opportunities for current and future residents and balances out the community's tax base. I didn't put much in there on that and we didn't go into a lot of detail. I think that is something that could be addressed in the master plan update, maybe a market study, something more current. I think there had been some discussion about that in the last plan. That and public input seem to have been done quite a number of years ago, but not with the last update. That might be something we want to look at.

A healthy community makes decisions about land use, community design and transportation planning. This ties in with our complete streets, our age-friendly communities and some of the other things. This is a picture from a couple years ago. I had an experience not too long ago walking from the Subaru dealership to this sidewalk and over the bridge. It was eye-opening and dangerous. Once you get to the bridge, it's nice, and you end up on the trail. Even that day, it was late afternoon, there were quite a few people on the trail, including a group of women. I could hear them laughing a half mile away and they were having a blast. It was nice to see people out enjoying themselves. One other thing, it's part of being able to incorporate your daily life and activities together. To not have to make a special trip to go to Planet Fitness to go work out, but instead to be able to do walking while you're going to work or school, or running errands; it saves you time and it makes you healthier over time because you have the network in place to be able to do that. You've got goods and services at hand that

support you and it allows people that are older in the community to not necessarily have to drive everywhere.

Neighborhoods are what really make up a community. This is something that's rather new to be putting into a master plan document. I think it would be a challenge to do here in Commerce Township because you've got a variety of types of neighborhoods, and a wide variety of streets that maybe are single streets with a cul-de-sac which don't connect to anything else. But, the idea is that people tend to be more engaged when something is happening on their street, or down the street from them. They don't always know or care what's happening at the other end of the Township.

I think it's essential to get people engaged at that hyper, local level, and be able to have those systems in place so that we can communicate with them, and they can communicate back with us. I think it's not just for short and long-term planning, but thinking about sustainability and resiliency. Thinking about how we reach folks, particularly in times of disaster, economic disaster, a health-related disaster, flooding, any kind of environmental disaster; to be able to reach folks is important because not everybody knows where to go for information. We don't have a lot of good, local newspapers anymore. The radio is not going to be local enough. If people can get on social media, they do, and if they can get on the website, we've got to update our information in all of these locations. If we can start to think about a neighborhood network where we can share those resources with the community at that hyper local level, I think that is great for not only that, but also for reengaging people in the civic process.

Also, and you probably are seeing it as well, people aren't as willing to give of their time for volunteering. I don't know, maybe you've got a lot of folks lined up to take Planning Commission seats when they're available?

Dave Campbell – I wouldn't say they're lining up.

Ms. Bahm – But you don't have a hard time getting people?

Dave Campbell – I wouldn't say it's a hard time either.

Ms. Bahm – Well, that's good. There are a lot of communities where they are really struggling to find people to fill those seats. Volunteers are had to come by, and to be able to have people connect with the community. I think one of the things about Commerce Township that is similar to other communities of this size are that you've got folks divided between Walled Lake Schools and Huron Valley Schools, and maybe not even really making the connection that we're all Commerce Township residents necessarily. Being able to reengage people in thinking about the Township as the source for information I think helps the civic engagement process.

Sustainability and resiliency; a lot of times, when people think of sustainability, they think of environmental issues. We know that sustainable communities also rely on a good, strong local economy, and neighborhoods having a good strong community, civic and social life as well. All those things need to be in balance.

Resiliency is the idea of having a community that can bounce back and react positively to a sudden shock, again, like a health pandemic or an extreme weather event, but also can deal with persistent and chronic shocks like poverty and aging in the community; things that weigh on people and that can drag them down, weakening the community overall.



Some of the highlights from the 2015 master plan review. This is a photo from Wise Road Park. It's one of my favorite places and my favorite stand of trees is in that area. During our five-year review, we're taking a look at the plan's data. So, looking at the demographic conditions, and whether any refinement of the plan may be needed. Have you any significant developments, businesses in or out of the community, that might affect our demographics? I don't think you've had anything significant in the last couple of years that would change anything demographically.

Weber – I don't think there has been anything that would change the demographics.

Ms. Bahm – It is noted though that the population is projected to continue to increase in Commerce Township, although at a slower rate than in previous decades. The population is aging. School enrollment is declining. I was actually a little bit surprised to see that. It's a steady decline over the last five or six years. Building permits for multi-family housing units have increased over the past five years, which I know you know.

Chairperson Parel – In reading the plan you put together, did I read correctly that the population is actually slowing more than was planned in 2015? In 2015, we thought the population would be higher by now.

Ms. Bahm – Yes. It was also noted that school enrollment was not declining, and it had not been at that point.

Chairperson Parel – And now it is.

Ms. Bahm – Yes, and it was even in 2016. The very next year, it was down, and each year it has gone down. Last year, you couldn't really count that, and this year may still be problematic, but that had been the trend.

Weber – In the information you've provided, it shows a 2020 population figure, but that's not census data, correct?

Ms. Bahm – The 2020 population number is the census data.

Weber – It shows a figure of 38,500 residents.

Ms. Bahm – I'll have to double check.

Weber – I think the census was 43,000. Dave, correct me if I'm wrong.

Dave Campbell – It was over 40,000 I believe.

Ms. Bahm – That may have been the 2019 estimate, but I thought we had used the 2020.

Dave Campbell – Where it gets confusing sometimes is whether or not the Village of Wolverine Lake population is included in the Commerce Township population. You can separate it out on the census data. By default, my understanding is, with the Village being part of the Township, their population is included in the Township population unless it is sorted out.

Ms. Bahm – That’s a good question and we can double check that.

Weber – I’m assuming the census is one of the most important data points, not just for population, but for all of the demographics.

Ms. Bahm – Yes, it is. We know that just very minimal data has been released so far for 2020, and so we’re looking forward to seeing what the rest of that looks like when it comes out. It provides a lot more context. The rest of it is estimates, and they’re good estimates, but it’s not quite the same as seeing the numbers from the census bureau. Questions to consider; how did the 2015 master plan provide for the aging population? In particular, are there a variety of housing choices and transportation choices for older adults. I highlight that this doesn’t necessarily mean senior housing. I’ll just finish going through and then we can talk about these points. Existing land use, we looked at that. There didn’t seem to be many significant changes in the master plan. The Road Commission for Oakland County doesn’t have any major projects going on in the area. There was a conversation in the 2015 document that was referring to the widening of Union Lake Road, and the realignment of the Union Lake and Cooley Lake Road area. I don’t think that’s happening anytime soon. I know there was a pre-study, a pre-environmental analysis done by the RCOC because they got some money for that.

Dave Campbell – Correct.

Ms. Bahm – What I understand is that there isn’t money to do the actual EA.

Dave Campbell – That’s what the RCOC tells us. Although we just had a conversation last week with the state senator’s office and they think there may be an opportunity to come up with some funding for the environmental study.

Ms. Bahm – I think that would be a very important area to talk about with the next master plan update.

Chairperson Parel – That sounds like positive news.

Dave Campbell – Potentially.

Ms. Bahm – There are a lot of implications for that. That’s a huge connection for the area. I think it’s important to consider the businesses that are in that area, and what that area then transitions into if that realignment does take place.

Goals and objectives; to what degree have they been met? Have there been any that have been achieved? Are there any that are no longer relevant? Those I just put in as they appeared in your last plan. The goals were very broad in general. The objectives included a mix of action items, but it made it a little bit hard to track, or it may have made implementation challenging. Those might be some areas where we would want to have conversation.

The future land use plan; are land use categories in alignment with existing and anticipated development? Do all land uses seem to be accommodated in a way that makes sense? And, do the descriptions provide sufficient guidance for land use decision making? A lot of times if we are looking at a rezoning or a PUD review, we will take a look at the zoning ordinance to see what is intended there, but also we’ll refer back to the master plan to get a better understanding of what we had envisioned for that

particular area. You want to make sure those descriptions are very clear so it makes it easy for you to do your jobs. It also makes it easy for applicants and property owners to understand what might be possible and what might not be possible.

The housing categories do focus almost exclusively on the single-family, and most of those categories say 3.5 dwellings per acre. That's about 12,500 square feet per lot.

Those are in a couple of different categories. It's either single-family or multi-family, but really no mention of anything in between, which might be an interesting opportunity for us to talk about.

Looking at neighborhood commercial, and thinking about neighborhood commercial within the context of complete streets and having things that are convenient for residents. Thinking about age-friendly communities. Do we have sufficient opportunities for neighborhood commercial?

Then, both community and general commercial; are those both needed? Particularly with respect to big box centers. I know that's something that Commerce has dealt with for a number of years, and maybe struggled with having those plans change, but what that might look like and if those are both needed going forward.

The mixed-use categories are an extra section there that looks at the hospital, although nothing was really put on the master plan or the future land use map to allow for hospital expansion. It mentions that the hospital may want to expand, but it didn't really give you any direction for anything to do at that point. I don't know if they're still planning to do that, but that's another area we might want to explore.

The plans included a summary of West Bloomfield, White Lake and the other adjacent communities. Just noting that we helped White Lake Township with their master plan in 2011, so I'm very familiar with the idea of the Four Towns area at Cooley and Union Lake Road. I was extremely disappointed with the apartment buildings that called the development the Four Corners development, because it's Four Towns. That's the actual historic name of that place. Thinking about place-making earlier, it's a real authentic place. It's actually on the map if you do a Google search for Commerce and White Lake, you can see it pops up as Four Towns. It's kind of interesting and very cool that people still identify. People who have lived here for much longer than I have will often recognize that as being a place. Those might be other areas we want to consider, and especially if we're thinking about the future and road reconfiguration. What does that do to some of those properties and how can that still function as a place?

I'm done talking about that. I'll now let you ask me questions or tell me what you think.

Chairperson Parel – Okay, well first of all, I appreciate it. In reading the information, I don't think we get the story behind it. I do appreciate the stories because even the one about Four Towns was interesting to me.

This is my first time going through this, even as a regular member of the board. I think you hit on a couple things that I know many members of this board are really in tune to, which are the independent senior living aspect of this plan, apartments, transient residents, and are we maxed out with those two items with an aging population, with more people coming to the community. Traffic is a big one, and I still don't know if I completely understand how we can manipulate traffic with this plan, but we will dive into it. If you could solve the issue on Union Lake Road, that would be incredible. It would be a miracle, but it sounds like we have some positive news coming on that.

I've talked to Dave about this a lot through the years. I haven't brought it up to George yet, who is one of our Trustees. It was interesting that you brought it up, and I don't know how we can affect this, but the utilization of pathways to support pedestrian safety and support local businesses. That is near and dear to my heart. Anytime we have a

new project in the community, or we have the opportunity to open up a project with a developer, it's important to me to get sidewalks. I think sidewalks are wonderful. I love what we're doing with the pathway system. I love biking in the community. Because of your presentation, this was kind of the first time that I really thought about the aging community and how those people could benefit from that as well.

Joe made a great comment recently. We were looking at a possible development of a senior living facility. I didn't see it this way until he brought it up to me and to the board. He said to the developer, you're putting these people on an island. These are older people that need to get out, walk and have some kind of community. You're putting them in a building with four walls and there's a gun club across the street. There's nowhere for them to go. It's terrible.

Sometimes we will look to developers and say, if it doesn't make sense to put a sidewalk in front of your development, maybe we can pool it away and then use it somewhere better in the community. In talking with Dave, there's not a lot of opportunity there. Some of that has been spent and it is what it is. It sounds like the only way to get that done is to raise taxes, or work with some type of millage. We're not really in the business of raising taxes. George, I just wondered if I could turn it over to you. Has the Board ever talked about more pathways and sidewalks, and getting some of these rooftops to local businesses in a safer fashion? I live in the Bogie Lake area, in between a major high school and our old downtown. There's some cool businesses there; an outdoor ice cream shop, Long's Farm which in the fall, everybody's there. There's businesses there. I have two daughters but they're not going there because there's no sidewalks. I don't want them walking on Commerce Road. Even when I'm with my 40-year-old buddies and we're trying to bike down that road, it's dangerous. We have hundreds of families living within a mile of a major high school, and I think there's a lot of parents who don't feel comfortable sending their kids down there. I'm just wondering, George, have we had those discussions with the Township Board?

Weber – We do discuss walkability and trails. We've had lots of discussions centered around Five & Main and how do we create non-motorized ways for people to get there, east to west and north to south. I'll look to Dave. There is a trail way plan that I think is housed within ...

Dave Campbell – Within Parks and Recreation.

Weber – It's part of their master plan. There is a subset of that which specifically talks of trails and pathways. What's not captured there would be general sidewalks along major thoroughfares, et cetera. I know at one point in time, going back a number of years, the Board was not thrilled with sidewalks and didn't want sidewalks. Some of it was liability and maintenance related. Once you start putting them in, you own them and you're responsible for plowing them, et cetera.

Last month, we had a discussion with the Township attorneys regarding a sidewalk ordinance. So, specifically we have to own this in some way. In the preliminary discussion, an ordinance was drafted. I'm assuming Dave had some part of that with the attorneys. It was the first time the Board got to digest it, so it's coming. Probably within a few months, we will get to a place where we will actually have a sidewalk ordinance.

A longwinded answer, a combination between that and formalizing sidewalks, in conjunction with the trails and the pathways within the Parks master plan; I think we will get to this desired walkability. Dave, I know it's a subject near and dear to your heart as well, so if I missed anything or if there's more to the story ...

Dave Campbell – I think funding is obviously the key, and it's the key to everything. Historically, we have been reliant upon developers to put in sidewalks and pathways along their development frontages, but then you end up with something of a patchwork and we have these gaps in between. I have discussed this with some of you, and what we would love to have is for the Township to have a means by which some of those gaps get filled in. We do have this "in-lieu-of-fund", but it's not the kind of dollars that I feel we need to fill in some of the more significant gaps.

It's funny, when we mention Walled Lake Northern. Part of the challenge there is when the schools go to build a new facility, they build it where the land is cheap. They build a high school out in the middle of nowhere and everybody says, "Well, there's no good way to get there." That creates a challenge when you create these major destinations on an open field where the land was acquired cheap.

I would be excited to hear that focusing on non-motorized transportation would be part of this effort in looking at our master plan.

Weber – How do we do that in conjunction with the Parks master plan, so that we're not stepping over toes or duplicating efforts?

Dave Campbell – I'm going to come back to funding. I think we need to realistically look at a methodology to fund what we're showing. It's great to show a map that says we want all of these sidewalks and pathways in these locations, and we want them on this side of the street, and to connect A to B, but in my mind, until we have a way to fund it...

Weber – My question is, who owns it? Who owns the trails and the pathways?

Dave Campbell – In my mind, a sidewalk and pathway master plan is more appropriate in the community's master plan than it is in the Parks and Recreation plan. A plan for pathways within the parks themselves belongs in the Parks and Recreation plan, but when you're talking about linking destinations that are not park related, I think it's an appropriate component of a master plan.

Weber – So then we just need to have that discussion with Emily. Right now, her plan includes paths and trails that are outside of parks?

Dave Campbell – It does, and we were involved in creating that. I think it probably needs to migrate into our master plan.

Chairperson Parel – What about pathways that lead us to our parks?

Dave Campbell – I think those are some of the destinations that are important linkages when we're talking about a sidewalk and pathway plan.

Chairperson Parel – There's funding in the Parks and Recreation budget for pathways. Could someone justify using those funds to support pathways to those parks.

Dave Campbell – I think there's language within the Park's millage of what can and cannot be spent. I'm not sure that offsite pathways that lead to a park are eligible for those expenditures.

Chairperson Parel – Okay, well that’s enough on sidewalks. At least we’re having the conversation. Brian, do you have any questions for Jill?

Vice Chairperson Winkler – One of the things that struck me when I reviewed the 2015 master plan was that it was using data obtained from the public from 2004. It makes me think of how we might improve the public’s engagement in any revision of the master plan that we might come up with. Paula, you were probably around in 2004, weren’t you?

Paula Lankford – I was, yes.

Vice Chairperson Winkler – What was the vehicle used to get that public input? Was it just a public hearing in regards to the master plan?

Paula Lankford – Yes.

Vice Chairperson Winkler – Was there any kind of workshop?

Paula Lankford – There was. We held workshops as well. We invited the community to come in and speak. We didn’t have a ton of input from the public, but enough, if I remember correctly. That was a long time ago.

Dave Campbell – If you had to guess, how many public engagement events were there?

Paula Lankford – Not many, one maybe, along with the public hearing. That’s guessing.

Vice Chairperson Winkler – I think everybody on the Planning Commission has their own opinions about what should be addressed in the master plan, but I think it’s important to get more updated input from the public as part of this process. Whether we do a revision, or a complete rewrite of the master plan, we have to go through that public hearing process either way.

Paula Lankford – Correct.

Dave Campbell – Yes, by state law, we have to have a public hearing. To engage the public to the extent possible, I think it needs to be more than just one typical public hearing. I think there needs to be different avenues to try to get as much public input as possible.

Vice Chairperson Winkler – I have an ulterior motive for asking about this, because a lot of times when a petitioner comes in with a site plan and they disagree with what we decide upon, I remember saying, “Next time, engage yourself when we are going through the master plan and participate in the process.” However, if we haven’t given the public many chances to provide their input to the master planning process, that argument kind of goes away. Whatever we do, I would not like to see it become an unwieldy process, but if there are efforts to engage the public more, I think it would be a good idea. Maybe a public hearing isn’t enough. Maybe there’s something more we can do; ask citizens to join a committee to share with us their insights. Maybe we go to homeowner’s associations and ask various subdivisions to be part of a group that talks

about it. I've got my own ideas and priorities, and the public might agree with a lot of them, but I think if we can get input from the public, it will validate the process more.

Loskill – One way I think we could take advantage of technology is, instead of having everybody come into a meeting, is utilize social media. There are a number of groups that we could tap into to utilize, to put questions out to the public and get their response without them having to take an afternoon or evening off to come over here. I think that could be an easy way to get a lot of public input through a very easy process.

Ms. Bahm – I agree. That is what we're trying to do in more of our master plans, especially for the last couple years, and especially with the pandemic and not being able to have in-person meetings. You're trying to come up with ways that we can reach people online. I think it's a good way. We have known that people aren't coming out to public meetings at the Township Hall, unless something is being proposed down the street from them.

Vice Chairperson Winkler – And it's a shame.

Loskill – It is.

Ms. Bahm – It is, but people are busy. They have families, they're running around and working, maybe working different hours than they used to, they're stuck in traffic. For whatever reason, they can't or they choose not to participate. How can we give folks other opportunities? We go online, we do online surveys. We've done a couple events of what we call Virtual Open House. We like doing our open houses with big posters, colorful graphics and we walk them through the process, but we're also taking that same information and putting it on a website. People can see the posters just like they would if they were here, and then they have the opportunity to answer a couple questions and provide their input.

Another tool that we've used is our meeting toolkit, and it depends on how many resources we have available to us. To your point, about going to homeowner's association meetings; if we can give folks some simple directions on specific questions to ask, how to do it, how to collect the information, then those people can go out and reach their own constituents, run their own meetings and bring the feedback to us. That doesn't necessarily have to be expensive because if we rely on members of the community to actually run those, it might just be that we facilitate a training on how to run a successful meeting. That's another good way to reach out to people.

I agree with you. If we wait until the public hearing, it's usually a little late in the process. By then, we're nearly done with the plan. One other thing that we also do, at that open house, is we can have a preview for special stakeholders. So, maybe we have certain property owners, or whatever group that we feel doesn't participate as much as we'd like them to, which often tends to be the businesses. If we do have an open house, we can say that the first hour is only for this group. They'll come in and get special treatment, and they can offer their comments based upon their experiences. It could be property owners, realtors, or people in a related group that maybe don't always feel that they're welcome to make comments and suggestions. Public input is important and it's changing. Some social media is good, and other social media is not so great. We will not be using something like Nextdoor for example.

Chairperson Parel – Thanks for that, Brian. I think that's a good recommendation. Are you all set, or did you have anything else?

Vice Chairperson Winkler – The only other question I would ask is, how does Jill want to accept our input? Should we send an email, or give comments regarding those items to consider? I don't think we want to bore you with individual statements.

Ms. Bahm – Well I know we don't have a ton of time this evening because of the holiday. I'll leave that up to the chair. You can decide if you want to send them to Dave and have him forward them to me. If you'd like me to come back after you've had a chance to review.

Chairperson Parel – My thought is that we just run through it and see if anybody has any further comments. Then, if there's anything we want to send to Dave, if that works for you guys. The purpose of today is to start the conversation. Thanks, Brian. Sam?

Karim – I would like to start with some of my experience with Commerce Township. About 14 years ago, I was living in Ann Arbor and working at the University there. It's a different environment, a different community. Then I got married and moved with my wife to Commerce Township. I moved to a place on Commerce Road, about 3 miles west of the hospital. It took me, from my house to the highway, as much as it takes me from the highway to Ann Arbor. It was terrible, especially if there was a school bus in front of me, stopping at every corner.

Three years ago, I retired and we built a house and I moved back in here. I chose to find a place that was close to M-5, so it's the corner of Newton and Richardson. I'm pretty sure there's a lot of people in here that have the same issue. Transportation is terrible. There is no straight road. There is Commerce Road and Union Lake Road, which eventually connects to M-5. I'm looking at the map in here for planning, and I can see the area where the services, the commercial areas in red, are all at the border of other communities, serving other communities instead of our community. There is a huge area at the center.

I think transportation is very important, and I think if we're going to do any study, it has to be to look at the way communities connect with other communities, and with their center of services. Right now, we are experiencing a wave of developers asking to build new houses and new communities here. They are very expensive. So, I think it's on us to try to do something with the master plan to provide a way and route for those communities to get services, instead of letting them depend on other communities for shopping. When you want to shop, you go to Wixom, you go to Milford and different places. Somehow the update for this should concentrate on transportation more than anything else.

Chairperson Parel – Good point. I appreciate it, Sam.

Loskill – I have a bunch of minor points and specifics. The generalities, I'm concerned about maintaining the quality of life that everybody has come to expect and enjoy in Commerce. I'd like public input to see where the Township's feeling is. There are other minor issues that I think we need to address, like what's going to happen with Union Lake Road. Everybody knows that's a problem. How do we address it? It appears that it has been ignored for a while, and it may take a while to solve, but at least we should start moving the planning in that direction.



And then things like preserving trees, dark sky initiatives with lighting. I'd like to see the stars again. I went down to try to watch the lunar eclipse the other morning, and that was really almost the only star you could see in the sky. It's disappointing because I grew up in a spot where there were millions of stars in the sky every night. They're still there, we just can't see them because of all the light. I think there are little things we can do to help Commerce, but I think there are some big things we need to get input on from everybody and take the general temperature of our constituents.

Chairperson Parel – I think that makes sense. Thank you, Joe. George?

Weber – As Jill was talking, I was thinking about the process. I've had the discussion with Dave previously too. To capture this, I think this group needs to put together a vision. I wrote down words like inclusive, diverse, inviting, stable, vibrant. Somehow I think we need to have a vision that can act as our compass, and not to get too bureaucratic, but I think we need to have some guiding principles that will point to that vision. Whether it talks about transportation, multi-family vs. single-family, protecting open space and parkland, and so forth. Otherwise, we've got a lot of individual thoughts, and trying to herd all that into a master plan would be really complex. Now, we're doing an update, I'm assuming. That is one of the questions I'm going to ask. A lot of the heavy lifting has already been done here, but I do think the whole idea of having workshops versus just public hearings is a good way to do it. Those can be virtual. I think there are abilities to use social media to gather data in survey forms that can be turned into actionable information, and that can be valuable. We can take our time to do that to get to some critical mass of input of not only our commercial businesses, but residential and land owners, surrounding communities, et cetera. I'm interested in the whole process; putting together a strategy, understanding the process that I think you've laid out very well for us, developing a vision, deciding upon some guiding principles that will get us there. Then, I think we have a discussion with the Board and maybe we pick a quarterly discussion with the Board to say here is our vision and our guiding principles as we're going through the master plan. We want the Board to buy-in on this, along with Parks and Recreation, et cetera. If we do this in a vacuum, we will wind up making more changes. I would rather go through the pain up front versus the end.

Ms. Bahm – That's a great way to think about the next step, creating those guiding principles. It's one of the things that I think is really helpful. The way that you said it too, it's good to get all the players involved at the very beginning, a lot of the decision makers, in creating that vision.

What we've done, with some success with some of our master plans over the last couple of years, is to start with that visioning of leadership. We call it leadership visioning. It can be the Planning Commission, or what we've done in several communities is we've had all the boards; the Planning Commission, Township Board, Parks and Recreation, DDA, even the ZBA if they're interested. It's a little afield from what the ZBA usually does, but if they're engaged in the process, it's good to have their participation. We go through some exercises intended to bring to light those things that are the most important and set that as the guiding principles for the master plan itself. It's a good time to check in. Those things can lead to the next step of getting the public engaged. Community leadership has set these as guiding principles, and then begin to ask some questions of the community that are based on that. I like the idea of having the workshops online.

Weber – I'm assuming every place in the country does this. There are probably some processes, some visions, guiding principles that some community in Iowa did that are just awesome. We should review somebody else's roadmap to some of this. It's always easier to modify than to create.

Ms. Bahm – That is one thing I did not expect to hear from anybody tonight, but I don't mind.

Chairperson Parel – Absolutely, somebody is doing it right already. I totally agree.

Loskill – It's just the process, it's not the result.

Ms. Bahm – Right, and if it doesn't resonate, then it won't make sense. Those things that do, certainly ... Everybody wants a vibrant, engaged community, one that's got a positive quality of life.

Chairperson Parel – We hear a lot of those words. Everybody wants that, absolutely.

Ms. Bahm – But what is that?

Chairperson Parel – Does it actually mean something?

Ms. Bahm – Yes, what does that mean to people?

Chairperson Parel – And, can we implement it? I agree. I think we're talking about two different things. I like all the ideas. It's just one person's opinion, but I think we have to talk about two things. We have to talk about if we're going to make any adjustments to the current plan. Then we need to make the plan for approximately 2024 where we're going to go through and really dive into this thing.

Weber – What is the difference between an update and a tear-out? A new plan versus an update?

Ms. Bahm – I would say the level of detail. If you remember the slide where we had all of those things listed, I would say a whole new plan would touch on all of these things, except for Parks and Recreation because you already have that plan.

Chairperson Parel – And by 2024, we would have the complete census data, in theory.

Ms. Bahm – Yes, and so an update might just touch on some of these things. For example, you could have a really robust environmental section, a natural resources section, in a plan, and when you go to do the update, you might still agree with everything. Then you either reference it, or you can take that whole section and put it into your appendix and say that this is part of what we were talking about and it's still valid. That might be the difference between an update and a full blown new plan from scratch. Certainly they're not done without the context of what came before. It still includes that. It's not to say that everything that was done before this isn't valid anymore, because there's still a lot of good stuff in there.

Chairperson Parel – Dave, you mentioned that we've had some modifications to the plan. Is that true?

Dave Campbell – No, we haven't made any amendments since 2015.

Chairperson Parel – So this would be the five-year, halfway through technically.

Dave Campbell – Five-year clause. In 2015, just for context for those who weren't here for it, and Paula correct me if I'm wrong, but that's when the Township created the Technology and Light Manufacturing (TLM), both land use category on the future land use map and then correspondingly, the zoning district that went along with it.

Chairperson Parel – In 2010 or 2015?

Dave Campbell – In 2015.

Chairperson Parel – Would that have been a change to the master plan, or is that the zoning plan?

Dave Campbell – In 2015, we created TLM future land use designation, and then correspondingly, we amended the zoning map to incorporate TLM, the vision and goals of the master plan update that included the TLM category. The Township wanted to have a different vision for this area, up through Martin Parkway / Haggerty corridor.

Chairperson Parel – So I don't know if we have to decide today, but I think we have to think about, what do we want to implement, if we want to implement anything for modifications on this five-year point, and then what are we going to start thinking about now and maybe meet to put together ideas and plans for another five years from now. Actually, it will probably be three years from now when we really kick it off.

Dave Campbell – And it takes a year to do it.

Chairperson Parel – So two years from now. We've been trying to get this meeting on the docket for a while.

Dave Campbell – Mr. Weber, do you know the dates of the quarterly discussions?

Weber – I'm guessing they would be January, April, July, October.

Dave Campbell – I keep glancing at the clock because I know one of you has to catch a flight. Would it be worthwhile for each Planning Commission member to, on their own, come up with what they think should be the guiding principles of our master plan? I'm going to steal Mr. Weber's term, the guiding principles. We could bring those back to the Planning Commission meeting in December and see what sort of consensus there is. If we can take those guiding principles from seven individuals and bring them together. My thought would then be to take that to the Township Board at a quarterly discussion meeting and see if those guiding principles of the Planning Commission mesh with what the Township Board sees.

Weber – When was the last time we had a joint meeting?

Dave Campbell – Between Planning Commission and Township Board, it was probably 2016.

Chairperson Parel – I was not a member of the Planning Commission back then.

Weber – Okay, then let's make that happen for the January discussion meeting, a joint Board with Planning Commission. I don't think anybody has served something up yet for that. We're overdue to have a joint meeting anyway, and this could be a meeting topic. It's a tight time frame with the holidays.

Chairperson Parel – We do have one more meeting in December, so we can take Dave's advice and come back with ideas on guiding principles. George is already writing some stuff down. I don't think everybody has to come with the full plan. If you have ideas, just bring a sentence or an idea and we'll mesh it together. We'll prepare for a January if not February meeting.

Weber – Usually the December meeting is fairly light for the Planning Commission.

Dave Campbell – We have an addition to a dental office, and we have a concept plan for bar/restaurant at Union Lake and Farrant.

Karim – Maybe we should have a special meeting just for this. I'm serious about it. Can we get a map in here with the main routes? I don't see it in here.

Ms. Bahm – Like a transportation map?

Karim – Yes, it should be included in the master plan somehow.

Loskill – There is a traffic study in there with road counts.

Chairperson Parel – But not in this package.

Karim – That's what I'm saying, it should be a part of the master plan.

Ms. Bahm – We can do a quick map on that. The one that was in there was from 2015.

Chairperson Parel – It just did not make it into this packet.

Loskill – As the newest member of the Planning Commission, I'm probably the most recent one to have gone through that master plan.

Dave Campbell – This was one of the questions I wanted to ask. Obviously, we're leading into the holidays so the answer might be a little different in the near term. As we're going down this road, looking at our master plan and deciding what we want to do with it, do you feel it's something that should be done as part of our regular Planning Commission meeting schedule? Or, does it warrant special meetings outside of our regular business to dedicate specifically to the master plan? If we're going to have special meetings, then obviously that's dedicating another evening out of your schedules.

Weber – We have not had many light Planning Commission meetings lately, but if we have a lighter meeting, let's fold it in. If we're overbooked and we have deadlines that we need to hit ... and with some of this, we need to put a timeline together that we need to hold ourselves accountable to, right? We need to have some milestones. If we can achieve that with regularly scheduled meetings, great. If not, then we will have to ...

Chairperson Parel – Does it have to be a special meeting if we got together like an hour early before a meeting?

Paula Lankford – It would have to be posted as such, but we could do that. It would still be a special meeting.

Chairperson Parel – But at least it's on the same evening and you're taking one extra hour instead of everybody racing from work. I would be up for that. Before our next meeting, we try to get together an hour early to sort out some of this stuff. Then maybe if we feel like we need to formalize it in the meeting, we can. I don't know if that's necessary.

Karim – I think that's a good idea. I would love to have that at a round table.

Chairperson Parel – It would be easier.

Weber – I'm trying to think. We can't meet ...

Chairperson Parel – It would have to be another special meeting right before?

Weber – In theory, we could have this over at Kickstands, right?

Ms. Bahm – Well, that would be awesome, but I don't think we can do that from a public meeting standpoint.

Weber – Not from a public meeting standpoint, but if we wanted to kick ideas around on visioning or whatever else, that would be fine, right? Does the entire process of the master plan have to be done in a public setting?

Ms. Bahm – Any meeting in which decisions are being made does need to be open to the public. But there's no reason why you couldn't hold a visioning meeting at Kickstands.

Chairperson Parel – It would have to be considered a special meeting.

Ms. Bahm – Probably one of the best open houses I've ever run was at a distillery.

Weber – It is a special meeting that has costs associated with it.

Chairperson Parel – I'm just saying, I don't think we can make decisions or have this meeting unless it's formalized into a special meeting, or our regularly scheduled meeting.

Ms. Bahm – You certainly can hold a study session immediately prior to your meeting. A lot of communities do that, whether it is an hour or an hour and a half before. It's noticed and people can come in if they want to.

Chairperson Parel – That seems like a ...

Weber – Yes, that's the point I was trying to get to.

Dave Campbell – It's still a public meeting. It still has to be properly noticed.

Ms. Bahm – Right, it's a study session meeting, but it's open to the public, it's noticed and posted.

Chairperson Parel – My concern is if we notice the community that there's going to be an open meeting to speak on the future land use and master plan, there may be a lot of people that show up ...

Ms. Bahm – That would be a wonderful problem to have.

Chairperson Parel – That's a good point. It's going to be study session, and that doesn't sound exciting.

Weber – I like the idea and the terminology of the study session prior to a Planning Commission meeting.

Paula Lankford – What we did in the past is they would have a table where you sat around the table talking to each other, and the public came in and was allowed to sit behind you, if public came in. We did that with a joint meeting one time. We had a few people come in and they just sat behind the big round table. The Planning Commission was able to do the study session, and we had a separate workshop for the public to come in and actually speak.

Chairperson Parel – I think it helps us derive our guiding principles for this master plan. Sam and Brian were talking about involving the community more in the decision making, and I think it makes sense.

Dave Campbell – Looking ahead to our December 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, it sounds like it's going to be a light agenda.

Paula Lankford – Yes, two items.

Dave Campbell – At least for that meeting, do we want to have a separate study session ahead of time, or do we want to continue this conversation as part of the regular meeting agenda?

Chairperson Parel – I don't have a preference. George, you mentioned having a joint meeting with the Board of Trustees.

Dave Campbell – If we're talking about having a joint meeting in January with the Board of Trustees, I'd love to go to that joint meeting with this cohesive vision of the Planning Commission.

Chairperson Parel – If that's the case, and we're going to do it then, then we have to have the study session prior to our next regularly scheduled meeting.

Weber – We will have two meetings prior to that joint meeting. We will have December and January. Dave gave us our homework assignment, to put some thoughts together that we can send to him so he can collate them. Then, in our December 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, we can come in an hour early to have the discussion on this topic prior to the regular meeting.

Chairperson Parel – Okay, so on December 13<sup>th</sup>, we have a study session prior to our regularly scheduled meeting. Then during the meeting, we formalize our thoughts?

Weber – Well, at least we capture what they have, and then we will have time at our January meeting to formalize it prior to the end of January joint meeting with the Board.

Chairperson Parel – Is it one week later or two?

Weber – It's usually two weeks later; it's usually the last Tuesday of the month.

Paula Lankford – Yes, I think it's the last Tuesday.

Dave Campbell – For the joint meeting?

Weber – Yes, probably on January 25<sup>th</sup>. Our Planning Commission meeting will be on January 10<sup>th</sup>.

Paula Lankford – Yes, the 10<sup>th</sup>.

Dave Campbell – Okay, so December 13<sup>th</sup> will be here before we know it. We will have a study session at 6:00pm, prior to the regular 7:00pm Planning Commission meeting.

Chairperson Parel – I think that's what we're saying.

Dave Campbell – During that study session, I will already have received, from all of you, what you personally believe to be our guiding principles. And then during that one hour, we will take seven sets of guiding principles and try to mesh them.

Weber – Why don't we say that our responsibility is to get our comments to you, Dave, by December 8<sup>th</sup>. That is the Wednesday before our meeting.

Chairperson Parel – Dave, I think we could probably use an email from you to the group for the request because we have a few members missing.

Dave Campbell – Yes.

Paula Lankford – If you email anything to Dave, please copy me. Thank you.

Chairperson Parel – Will do. Thank you guys for coming in. I thought that was really informative. It sparked the conversation and I think we've got a plan to proceed.

Dave Campbell – Jill, we will certainly be in touch to coordinate with your office on how we can keep this moving in the right direction. I know we just threw out a lot of dates and I don't know how those dates work with your schedule, but we will figure it out.

Ms. Bahm – Okay, that sounds good. Great conversation, thank you so much for all of your insightful comments. I look forward to working with all of you.

Chairperson Parel – Excellent, thank you for coming. We appreciate it.

**J: OTHER MATTERS TO COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION:**

None.

**K: PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

- The Planning Director's Report was deferred until the December meeting.
- **A Special Planning Commission Study Session will be held at 6:00PM on Monday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, to discuss guiding principles and visioning for the Master Plan update.**
- **NEXT REGULAR MEETING DATE: MONDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2021 @ 7:00PM.**

**L: ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** by Weber, supported by Karim, to adjourn the meeting at 7:01pm.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

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Brian Winkler, Secretary