

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE
JOINT QUARTERLY MEETING OF THE
TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES
AND THE PLANNING COMMISSION
2009 Township Drive
Commerce Township, MI 48390
Tuesday, July 25, 2023, 7:00 p.m.**

CALL TO ORDER: Supervisor Gray called the Township Board of Trustees Quarterly Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Township Board of Trustees:

ROLL CALL: Present: Larry Gray, Supervisor
Melissa Creech, Clerk
Molly Phillips, Treasurer
Rick Sovel, Trustee
George Weber, Trustee
Bob Berkheiser, Trustee
Vanessa Magner, Trustee

Planning Commission:

ROLL CALL: Present: Brian Winkler, Vice Chairperson
Brady Phillips
Bill McKeever
Joe Loskill

Absent: Brian Parel, Chairperson (excused)
Sam Karim (excused)

Also Present: Dave Campbell, Planning Director
Paula Lankford, Planner
Jim Dundas, Fire Chief
Jill Bahm, Giffels Webster
Rose Kim, Giffels Webster

MOTION by McKeever, supported by Phillips, to open the Planning Commission meeting.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 1: Public Comments

Supervisor Gray opened Public Comments.

Robert Long, 1342 E. Commerce Road, spoke against the proposed tree ordinance which he finds very offensive.

Joseph Rimarcik, 4945 Wavewood, spoke in favor of a noise ordinance. There's a resident in the Lake Sherwood neighborhood who often has very loud parties that last very late. The Oakland County Sheriff is often called and unable to do anything because the Township does not have a noise ordinance. He recommends establishing a noise ordinance similar to that of the Charter Township of Oakland.

Linda Tucker, 5131 Surfwood, spoke in favor of having hazardous waste disposal available to residents more than once a year. She says it needs to be at the county level and available on a monthly basis to keep our environment safe and clean.

Andy Sarkisian, 3398 Tiquewood, says the Board needs to preserve the semi-rural environment of the northwestern part of the Township while also improving infrastructure such as preserving waterways by increasing septic inspections, increasing competition for sewer hook-ups, internet and cable, establishing more bike paths, and limiting short-term rentals and traffic lights.

Jim Galbraith, Developer, spoke against the proposed tree ordinance as it will add costs to developers and homeowners and he feels the Trustees have the tools within current ordinances. He will make himself available to explore other options in further detail.

Randy Thomas, 3797 Carrie Lane, spoke against the proposed tree ordinance and was concerned over the impact on property values and increased developer costs, which are passed on to the purchaser. In addition, how do you plan to manage this? The Board needs to explore better options and incentives to preserve trees.

Sandra Taylor, 4944 Oakwood Court, spoke regarding a wooden shade pavilion built behind her home at the edge of the lake. She was told that she must remove the pavilion. She asked the Board to change the ordinance to allow shade structures that are semi-permanent to protect residents from skin cancer and allow for entertaining lake-side in the shade.

Karen Adams, 4539 Ravinewood, spoke in favor of the proposed tree ordinance. Removing all the trees from a property impacts the surrounding properties. As you know, in that quarry development, we have a big mess. Huge mudslides came into our neighborhood and into people's basements, went into the lake and is all over Sleeth Road. If you hadn't allowed them to cut down every tree, this wouldn't have happened. We need full-time code enforcement officers. Why do you have ordinances if you're not going to bother to enforce the ordinances. The Township offices should be open

ITEM 1: Public Comments (continued)

on Fridays, it's not 2008 anymore and we can afford it. Sewer hook-ups need to be looked at. Many people are having problems with their hook-ups and you make a huge profit from them. We need competition and who do you want to protect? Residents or contractors?

Kathy Sawicki, 5089 Ledgewood, she supports some of the things Andy said about septic hook-ups and Wi-Fi. The Township needs good internet infrastructure and lower costs. It's difficult to do business here. We need to hook up to the sewers, we have a lot of 50-year old septic systems. A lot of people would like to hook up but it's cost prohibitive and we need competition. We need a better financing system. The other thing is we have a whole system of drains not being maintained and it's polluting the lake causing algae blooms and creating sink holes. The Road Commission says they own the drains but can't maintain them. Those drains are dangerous and it doesn't make sense to have public drains that aren't maintained.

Supervisor Gray closed Public Comments.

ITEM 2: Township Master Plan Update

Planning Director Dave Campbell summarized the actions by the Planning Commission since Spring of 2022 when the Planning Commission decided a Master Plan update was warranted. The Planning Commission has held regular monthly workshop meetings prior to their regularly scheduled monthly meetings, held a public open house, and gave residents the opportunity to participate in a virtual open house. Jill Bahm and Rose Kim from Giffels Webster are present tonight to update the Board.

Jill Bahm presented the Master Plan as the 10-, 15-, 20-year vision for the Township. The Master Plan Guiding Themes are: Growth Management, Community Character, Traffic Mitigation, Development of Large Sites, Sustainability and Resiliency, Community Health, Complete Non-Motorized Transportation Network, and Economic Development.

Jill Bahm indicated that staff, consultants, the Planning Commission and the public have participated in a number of visioning and public input opportunities. This included 2 open houses, 3 in-person class discussions at all 3 local high schools, an art contest, and meeting tool kits for facilitating small group visioning sessions.

A few consistent themes emerged from the feedback regarding the Township's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and emerging trends. Using this information, the Master Plan includes goals that are general guidelines that explain what the community wants to achieve. Objectives are also included and they will answer how the goals will be implemented. Action Items are more specific and define the steps needed to accomplish objectives and goals. Finally, Performance Indicators which help the Township evaluate progress towards meeting objectives.

ITEM 2: Township Master Plan Update (continued)

Jill Bahm and the Trustees discussed issues of density, affordability, future land use, walkability and barriers to it, the Commerce Village area, 5 and Main, and preserving Commerce Township as a rural community with a downtown feel.

ITEM 3: Tree Replacement Ordinance

Planning Director Dave Campbell said this evolved a couple of different ways. There were some conversations with Supervisor Gray and the Township Attorney to try to find some methodology to address what was concerning to some folks when they would see large pieces of property developed and they would see the vegetation and the trees being removed. There was also a desire from the Planning Commission to see some standards put in place and a better methodology for how trees and other vegetation are removed as part of a new development. It's proposed that this ordinance would be a part of Article 29 of the Zoning ordinance and be a part of our landscaping standards.

A discussion followed regarding what do the boards want to accomplish, protect existing trees or replace trees? Many Trustees agreed the proposed draft went too far, property owners have the right to do what they want, within the confines of the law, on their own property, including cutting down trees. How would the Township hold owners and developers accountable? The Trustees agreed they need a better way to preserve the look and feel of the Township. Supervisor Gray was in favor of the proposed tree ordinance but confirmed that the other Trustees were not interested in moving forward with the proposed tree ordinance. Supervisor Gray proposed the creation of a work group to arrive at a better solution. The Trustees agreed the basic intent of the ordinance was good but it needs to be flexible. Supervisor Gray said he would reach out to residents, developers, and stakeholders to form a work group.

MOTION by Loskill, supported by Phillips, to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 8:58 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Discussion:

Trustee Weber said at a future meeting the Board needs to look at increasing the percentage approval needed for SAD's from 51% to something larger. He feels 51% is too small a threshold.

Trustee Berkheiser said we had a discussion at the last meeting and as we look at distributing money to Walled Lake Schools and Huron Valley Schools, it's about 75% and 25% of residents who attend those schools. So keep that in mind when we're splitting funds.


Supervisor Gray said the Ordinance Department finished doing the rounds of looking at Township property with encroachments and sent out letters to all the residents who are encroaching on our property and there's been a lot of unhappy people. There's been a

Discussion (continued)

lot of social media discussion and we've had a lot of calls from unhappy people. I think we'll have this on the agenda next month

MOTION by Phillips, supported by Berkheiser, to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY



Melissa Creech, Clerk
Charter Township of Commerce