

FINAL
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE
***SPECIAL* PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**
***OPEN HOUSE* 4:30pm TO 6:30pm**
Monday, June 26, 2023
2009 Township Drive
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

A. CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Parel called the meeting to order at 4:36pm.

ROLL CALL: Present: Brian Parel, Chairperson
Brian Winkler, Vice Chairperson
George Weber
Brady Phillips
Absent: Sam Karim (excused)
Bill McKeever (excused)
Joe Loskill (excused)
Also Present: Dave Campbell, Township Planning Director
Paula Lankford, Planner
Larry Gray, Township Supervisor
Debbie Watson, DDA Director
Jill Bahm, Partner, Giffels Webster (exited at 6:08pm)
Julia Upfal, Planner, Giffels Webster
Rose Kim, Staff Planner, Giffels Webster

B. MASTER LAND USE PLAN REVIEW – OPEN HOUSE

Chairperson Parel welcomed everyone to the Open House. He explained the Master Plan Update process that the Planning Commission has been working through with Giffels Webster.

Jill Bahm stated that the purpose of the Open House is to receive commentary on the work that the Planning Commission has been doing as they review the vision for the future, and what needs to be done to achieve that vision. Some of what needs to be done can be done by the community on its own, through public investments, but a lot of what needs to be done is going to happen through private investment. That is regulated through zoning standards and other regulatory functions for building and development of property.

Jill explained that it all starts with the Master Plan. She discussed the maps on display throughout the room, which show the future land use along with the corresponding aeriels. The existing Future Land Use Map information is available along with the proposed changes. The changes aren't dramatic. They are largely meant to be consistent either with what's developed now, or what the properties are zoned as. There are a couple cases where a new designation has been created, but those tend to be in areas of interest.

Jill posed the question, *How does this layout?* It starts at the beginning. At the beginning of this process, the Planning Commission looked at goals for the future, along with corresponding guiding principles. The goals and objectives articulate what the future vision is for the community and what needs to be done to get there. There are opportunities for participants to make comments on each of the different categories. The descriptions offer information on the categories and what is envisioned for the area. The photos give an idea of what is there now and what it is envisioned to look like in the future.

When looking at the whole Township, the Planning Commission realized that there were certain areas that were identified as opportunity sites, and these are areas that the Township knows are going to be redeveloped in the short-term, or that are anticipated to be redeveloped and are of a significant size that a plan should be developed for. It could be many years down the road.

When the Planning Commission looked at those sites, they thought it didn't make sense to have them just standing on their own. They should be thought of as part of the larger group of connected properties, and the impacts upon other properties should be considered. One thing heard consistently throughout this process is the importance of a nonmotorized transportation network. Therefore, on the maps, the nonmotorized sidewalks and pathways are shown, which tie everything together. The areas are divided into two; the North End which is up near Union Lake and going into Commerce Village and west from there, and the South End, the commercial area, which is in the area of the Township Hall and further south.

Jill reiterated the opportunities available at each map/poster for participants to share their thoughts regarding the ideas presented and future visions for the community.

Participant 1 – Are the opportunity sites currently owned by the Township?

Jill Bahm – All are privately owned, with the exception of the Walled Lake Schools property.

Participant 1 – Are they on the market, or how did you identify them as opportunities?

Jill Bahm – Once you see them, I think you'll understand what they are. These are properties that people have come into the Township to inquire about with potential projects, or they might be underway. Some properties are available, some are held and will someday be available. We are trying to think ahead.

Weber – Specifically, there is a property owned by Beaumont Hospital at M-5 and Maple Road which is roughly 30 acres. It is presently zoned Hospital, but it's actively on the market. Concurrent to that, across the street to the south, is the Williams International property and they are moving to Pontiac. The Williams site is larger than Beaumont. At some point in time, we expect to see that property go up for sale.

Jill Bahm – Thank you. Yes, sir?

Participant 2 – I'm a 23-year resident of Commerce Township. You talk about having a downtown in Commerce. Is there an actual plan to make it happen, or is it still in the proposition stage?

Jill Bahm – Well, what you'll see on some of these boards are some of the concepts and things we want to see in the downtown area. We have this area, the 5 & Main commercial area, which we would think of as a larger, more regional attraction, but also thinking about Commerce Village as the downtown historic area of Commerce. It has a different feel, more locally serving and a little bit more unique. Once we get past this stage, The Planning Commission will wrap up the plan by putting into place some action strategies. There will be a public hearing on all of that in late summer or early fall. After the plan is adopted, then implementation starts.

Dave Campbell – When we talk about the downtown Commerce that we’re all hoping to achieve, what a lot of us are talking about is the northeast corner of M-5 or Martin Parkway and Pontiac Trail, to the west of the Walmart site. That’s the 5 & Main development that the developer is actively working on. We will potentially be taking action on some of the approvals to get that going as they want to turn dirt as soon as this fall. There are several steps to get through this summer to achieve that goal of the accelerated approval schedule.

Weber – That includes residential, and what is the square footage of the retail?

Dave Campbell – 300,000 square feet.

Weber – There is a plan that we are trying to execute.

Dave Campbell – It continues to be a moving target, but we’re hoping to get them their approvals at the July and August Planning Commission and Township Board meetings.

Participant 2 – Excellent.

Jill Bahm – That effort is largely the Commerce Township Downtown Development Authority. They have been working on that specific plan. We’re not rewriting that plan. This Master Plan process is really looking at what we can do to support those efforts and what we can do around it to make it successful.

Chairperson Parel and Jill Bahm invited everyone to circulate and review the maps and posters on display throughout the room. Participants were encouraged to provide their feedback at each poster regarding the areas of interest and future land uses. Residents, developers and staff engaged in small group discussions, reviewing each of the posters and providing their input, feedback and commentary.

The Giffels Webster team will compile data from the input received during the Master Plan Open House. The information presented at the Open House is also available online at the link below, with an opportunity to submit feedback by July 14, 2023.

<https://engage.giffelswebster.com/commerce-township/june-2023-open-house>

Next Regular Meeting Date: July 10, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

D. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Phillips, supported by Winkler, to adjourn the meeting at 6:30pm.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Joe Loskill, Secretary