

MINUTES BIG RAPIDS CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Tuesday, June 11, 2019 --- 7:30 p.m.

Big Rapids Township Hall, 14212 Northland Drive, Big Rapids, MI 49307

I. CALL TO ORDER: 7:30 P.M.

Chairman Amanda Wethington called the regular meeting of the Big Rapids Charter Township Planning Commission to order at the township hall on Tuesday, June 11, 2019 at 7:30 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL:

Present: Mary Davis, Gordon Oliver, Mark Sweppenheiser, Carman Bean and Amanda Wethington. Zach Cook and Bob Hampson are excused. The record shows there is a quorum. Also Present: Zoning Administrator and Recording Secretary, Brent Mason.

III. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

Mrs. Wethington asked if any of the Commission members had known conflicts of interest with any of the items on the agenda for this meeting. No one indicated that a conflict of interest existed.

IV. MINUTES:

Mrs. Wethington asked the Commission members to review the minutes of the May 14, 2019 regular meeting. Mr. Bean made a motion to approve the May 14, 2019 minutes as submitted. Mr. Oliver supported the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion passed unanimously with five ayes.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS:

Mr. Mason presented the members with copies of the required information for current compliance needed for inclusion in the 2020 Draft Master Plan and highlighted the areas of concern that he has with the draft. He will publish a notice of intent to review the Master Land Use Plan and notify the adjoining communities and utilities that provide service to the township.

Mrs. Wethington asked Mr. Stanek about Dave Bee from the West Michigan Regional Planning Consortium, and wondered if he should be invited to a Planning Commission Meeting to share his knowledge with the members. Mr. Stanek mentioned that the cost to the Township would be minimal. Mr. Bee happened to drop in at the Township Offices last week, but Mr. Mason wasn't in, so a copy of our present plan wasn't passed on to Mr. Bee. Mrs. Wethington stated that she would like to get his impression of our plan and the direction that we should go in preparing the next plan. Mr. Sweppenheiser mentioned that Mr. Bee essentially wrote the City's Master Plan.

Mr. Mason and Mr. Stanek covered the recent history of our current plan and how it came to be. Mr. Stanek will be seeing Mr. Bee later in the week and will attempt to schedule a date for him to meet with the Planning Commission to go over the master plan process. There was discussion about how detailed the plan may need to be as long as it covers all the required information and sometimes, the simpler it is, the easier it will be to work with.

Mr. Mason told the members that he does feel that our area will become a regional retail and service hub as more people choose to live away from Grand Rapids and are looking for rural living with retail and service facilities nearby.

Mr. Mason mentioned the soon to be adopted Township marijuana ordinance which opts out of the provisions for recreational marijuana. Mr. Bean expounded on the information that the Board used in pursuing this course of action. Since the State of Michigan still doesn't have everything figured out yet, the Township Board is choosing to opt out at this time and will be able to reconsider if they choose, once more information becomes available.

Mr. Mason presented other information about the Complete Streets initiative and form-based zoning for community centers so that everyone would at least have some background on the subjects. Mr. Mason advised that we are trying to implement some of the concepts during the Road Commission's rebuild of 15 Mile Road near the Big Rapids High School.

Mr. Stanek asked if the notice of intent to review the Big Rapids Township Master Plan has been sent out. Mr. Mason stated that he was waiting until there was a document to review. Mr. Bean mentioned that at the training he recently attended he believes that there are several times when notices need to be made during the master plan process. Mr. Stanek will check with Mr. Bee and ask him to attend our next meeting.

The Master Plan is posted on the website. Mr. Mason stated that all the information provided during the review process would be available on the Township website. Mr. Mason is hoping that he will receive some interest from the local residents and the airport expansion effort.

Mr. Mason reviewed an upcoming training opportunity at Shanty Creek in Bellaire next month, put on by the Michigan Township Association. He would like to attend the Township Planning and Zoning Team retreat on July 9 & 10. This would provide needed information that could be beneficial during the Master Plan review process. July 9th is the night of the next scheduled Planning Commission meeting, so we may need to reschedule that meeting.

Mr. Mason reported about the current enforcement actions that are occurring in the township on N. State Street, 190th Avenue and 15 Mile Road. Mrs. Davis asked about the property at the corner of 12 Mile and 215th Avenue. Mr. Mason said he was actually pleased with the condition of that particular property as it was much better than it had been in years past.

Mr. Stanek mentioned that a new tenant (Edward Jones) would be moving into the building in front of the Township Hall. Mr. Mason mentioned that D.P. Tire has broken ground and Ludington Self Storage and Four Seasons Rental have both started site prep work. Other discussion occurred about the changes that are occurring in the local commercial districts.

VII. ADJOURNMENT:

Hearing no further business for the Planning Commission, Mrs. Wethington adjourned the meeting at 8:04p.m.

Motion to approve the Planning Commission minutes of June 11, 2019 by: Mr. Cook. Seconded by: Mrs. Davis. Roll call vote carried with six ayes.

Brent R. Mason, Recording Secretary
BIG RAPIDS CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION

August 13, 2019
Date Approved