

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING

The Planning and Environmental Services Committee Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Morse on Thursday, March 24, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.

Roll was called. Present: Ms. Meyette, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Erickson, Mr. Beggs, Mr. Christians, Mr. Walker, and Mr. Morse.

Also present: Dr. Sobie, Oceana County Administrator; Ms. Anderson, Oceana County Clerk; Ms. Lisa Kaspriak, Mid-Michigan Medical Examiner Group; Mr. James Kelly, MSU Extension Director; Ms. Tammy Carey, Oceana County Economic Alliance Chairperson; Ms. Mishelle Comstock, Oceana County Economic Alliance Board Member; Ms. Peggy Wittman, Hart City resident; Mr. Garry McKeen, Golden Township resident; Mr. Elisha den Engelse, Elbridge Township resident; and John Cavanagh, Oceana's Herald-Journal correspondent.

Moved by Mr. Hardy and seconded by Mr. Christians to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2021, Planning & Environmental Services Committee as presented.

Voice vote. Motion carried.

Moved by Mr. Christians and seconded by Mr. Walker to approve the agenda as presented.

Voice vote. Motion carried.

Public Comment

Ms. Peggy Wittman, Hart City resident, prayed for the government.

Ms. Lisa Kaspriak, Mid-Michigan Medical Examiner Group, provided an annual report from the Mid-Michigan Examiners Group. There are now 13 counties in the group which will allow a wide variety of accessible resources. She reported that there was more than 100% increase in suicides last year. She noted that a contributing factor to this increase is the availability of drugs. Ms. Kaspriak also noted that she would like to be involved in discussions regarding drug problems and mental health. She highlighted various statistics and indicated that all were in line with jurisdictional averages.

Mr. James Kelly, MSU Extension (MSUE) Director, provided an annual report from MSU Extension. He provided a review of the efforts made during the Covid-19 pandemic. He indicated that participation was decreased somewhat and felt that it was due to online/virtual burnout. The programs that were led by Oceana county staff reached approximately 3,500 individuals. Of those participants, 873 were adults and 295 were youth from Oceana. There were 147 programs offered. The largest program participation was the Asparagus program where there were 128 participants. He highlighted many of the programs and services offered.

Dr. Sobie began discussion regarding strengthening the partnership with the Oceana County Economic Alliance (OCEA). He stated that last year, the County created a full-time position to help the ARPA Funding Advisory Board with economic development initiatives. The Oceana County Economic Alliance also had discussion with The Right Place about a new partnership agreement that would provide a full-time Executive Director position to the Oceana Economic Alliance. Neither party was aware the other was attempting to establish a similar position. He stated that there is concern regarding overlapping duties. Dr. Sobie

suggested that the Board re-evaluate this position and determine whether to eliminate or repurpose. He also reminded the Board that this position was created prior to the final release of the guidelines for use of the ARPA funds which included significant changes. Dr. Sobie requested the Board to determine the direction they would like to go and let him know.

Ms. Tammy Carey, OCEA Chairperson and Ms. Mishelle Comstock, OCEA Board Member were invited to provide an update on the OCEA. Ms. Carey began with her appreciation of the County Board for their partnership. She informed the Board that Mr. Ron Maynard has been hired by The Right Place to work on behalf of Oceana County.

Public comment

Ms. Peggy Wittman, Hart City resident, shared her concerns regarding public comment and the lack of information provided to the public.

Mr. Garry McKeen, Golden Township resident, applauded the MSUE programs that are provided and stated that he has been able to apply this knowledge to his role with the Parks and Recreation Commission. He also questioned the relevance of Ms. Wittman's prayer as it had nothing to do with the agenda.

Mr. Elijah den Engelse, Elbridge Township resident, wondered if meetings could be held at alternate times as it is difficult for working people to make it to the meetings without having to take a day off of work.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Morse adjourned the Planning and Environmental Services meeting at 11:23 a.m.

Respectfully,

Amy L. Anderson
Oceana County Clerk