

The Oceana County Planning Commission meeting was called to order by Chairperson McKeen on Thursday, February 1, 2024, at 1:00 pm, in the Oceana County Board of Commissioners Room, 100 S. State Street, Hart, Michigan.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair McKeen led the members in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairperson Garry McKeen, Vice-chairperson Gina Loera, Secretary John Stivers, Mr. Al Blohm, Mr. Bryan Broderick, Mr. John Foss, Mr. Phil Morse, and Mr. Scott Rumsey.

Absent: Mr. Paul Cutter.

Also present: Mr. Troy Maloney, Oceana County Emergency Manager.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Approval of the January 4, 2024 minutes of the Oceana County Planning Commission meeting. Moved by Mr. Morse, and seconded by Mr. Rumsey to approve the minutes as presented. Voice vote. All ayes. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA ITEMS OF THE REGULAR MEETING

Moved by Mr. Morse to approve the Agenda for the February 1, 2024 meeting as presented. Seconded by Mr. Rumsey. Voice Vote: All ayes. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

No comments.

INTRODUCE NEW MEMBER

Newly appointed Mr. Broderick was welcomed, with current members providing their personal experience as it relates to the planning commission.

GUEST SPEAKER

Mr. Maloney, who has been County Emergency manager for over two years, gave an overview of his responsibilities. He referenced his strategic plan when he said the two most important things he does is strengthen relationships across the county, and build trust in government. When it comes to fire departments there are seven within the county, all with their own station and equipment, but none staffed with full-time crews. Each needs assistance from at least two other departments just to fight a residential fire. He went on to explain because of the limited role of county government within Michigan, the job of the county Emergency Manager, much like our commission, requires collaboration.

When asked how the planning commission might use his approach, Mr. Maloney replied start out by getting everyone to do "big-picture thinking." He said the OCPC needs to get the officials and board members across the county to see beyond their immediate township. The commissioners asked numerous additional questions on both specific aspects of the position and Mr. Maloney's approach.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Prior to the meeting, the commissioners received the portion of the County revenue and expenditure report for the period ending 12/31/2023, which coincides with the end of the fiscal year. Chair McKeen indicated this report will be reviewed monthly. He pointed out that unused funds “rollover” at the end of one fiscal year to the next. It was noted that the County’s membership in West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) is part of the Planning Commission budget.

CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT

Chair McKeen reported on meetings he had attended during January:

1. County quarterly department heads meeting, which Mr. Morse chairs;
2. Quarterly meeting of the five-county West Michigan Watershed Partners (organized by WMSRDC);
3. Both January County Commissioners’ meetings. At one of these he spoke with Mary Reily, MSU Extension (MSUE), regarding education possibilities for planning and zoning boards at the township level.
4. Monthly 911 meeting, which he said is an ideal venue to building working relationships with the sheriff and other officials across the county. He also made it to one of the Oceana County Road Commission meetings.

His approach, developed when in sales, is that the more contacts you make with customers, the more chances you have to sell the product.

NEW BUSINESS

According to our bylaws, and consistent with the Michigan Open Meetings Act (OMA), the OCPC is to set its meeting dates for the year in January.

Mr. Morse moved that the Planning Commission meet on the first Thursday of each month, yet not in July which is a national holiday. Motion seconded by Mr. Foss. In discussion it was understood that should business warrant, a meeting could be scheduled on another date in July. At the request of the Chair, a roll call vote was held, with all attending members voting to approve.

Chair McKeen reviewed the specific sections of the Planning Commission Bylaws that relate to review of proposed changes of municipal (i.e., city, village, and township) planning and zoning ordinances. He also referenced the MSUE guide *Michigan County Government*, specifically the section on county planning commissions, which delineated the limit authority a county planning commission has over municipal planning and zoning commissions.

The commission discussed its role, each member given the opportunity to provide input. To be effective, the OCPC must be cooperative and find ways to support the twenty or more municipalities, their planning commissions, boards of zoning appeals, and administrators. A major issue for improving this board’s county-wide contribution is developing a way to get all the notices of proposed ordinance changes early enough during the statutory review period so OCPC can evaluate each one from the perspective of the County Master Plan.

Constructive suggestions were offered as to how that cooperation might be earned. One was our continued attendance at the every-other-month Oceana Chapter meetings of the Michigan Township Association (MTA). We need to be on their agenda and deliver our message.

Included in this discussion was the possibility to hold two training sessions for our board and the planning and zoning boards of the municipalities within the county. The Chairperson indicated that Ms. Rielly has given him a proposal to conduct two training sessions, possibly held at the Golden Township Hall where a similar training session was held several years ago. The course titles and suggested times: Zoning Board of Appeals in May, and Reducing Planning and Zoning Risks: 28 Ways to Stay Out of Court in October.

Each commissioner was given the opportunity to provide input. Vice Chair Loera pointed out that an associate of Ms. Reilly's told her MSU Extension webinars. Mr. Morse proposed using a MTA meeting to get buy in for the training sessions to township officials. Mr. Broderick explored means of increased county communications with the townships, in particular to planning and zoning.

Mr. Broderick moved that the OCPC hire MSU Extension, based on the proposal from Mary Rielly, to conduct two training sessions for a class size of 30 designed for municipal planning and zoning officials for a fee of \$361.64. Seconded by Mr. Blohm. Being an expenditure, the Chairperson called for a roll call vote. All members in attendance voted to approve.

The services agreement with MSU Extension for the training sessions will need to be reviewed and signed by County Staff.

Each commissioner was given a copy of the "Open Meetings Act Handbook" which is a quick reference guide to Michigan Law covering the conduct of meetings of public bodies. The OMA is to be discussed at future OCPC meetings.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

March 7 Public Hearing regarding comments on the 5-Year Master Plan. With Stephen Carlson, WMSRDC, Chair McKeen reviewed the comments to the draft Master Plan received on line. One suggested the plan should include recommendations on how to get more H-2A temporary agricultural workers to come to the county. Mr. Blohm said Mike DeRuiter of the Farm Bureau is one of the best qualified to discuss this issue with the OCPC.

On March 7, 2024, at its normal 1:00 PM starting time in the Board of Commissioners Room, the OCPC plans to conduct two meetings back-to-back. The first being the Public Hearing to obtain any final comments on the plan. Following that, the OCPC will need to determine if the comments warrant revision to the plan. If not, it may vote to recommend the adoption of the updated Master Plan by the County Commission.

CORRESPONDENCE

No Correspondence.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

Mr. Morse reported that following Michelle Martins, County Drain Commissioner's presentation to the MTA in January, their Chair Richard Raffaelli suggest the County should

cover the cost to developing the template for townships to use in adopting uniform storm water management regulations across the county.

Mr. Morse reported that the County Commissioners adopted the first draft of the Hazardous Mitigation Plan. Next, he reported the Medical First Responders (MFR) costs are trending high and the next ambulance millage may need to take that into consideration. In an antidotal study done by the Shelby-Benona Fire Department, it was found that ambulances arrived ahead of the fire department two-third of the time.

Chair McKeen circulated a copy of WMSRDC Commission Quarterly that includes stories on their involvement in our master plan update work, instream habitat restoration at Stony Creek (Marshville Dam County Park) and White River. WMSRDC assisted in funding used by the Oceana County Road Commission for culvert replacements in the White River watershed within the County that improve fish passage.

Chair McKeen had spotted in the Oceana's Herald-Journal notices for Rothbury and Hesperia of zoning code changes. No discussion followed.

Mr. Ross indicated that ambulance service is more than just 911 calls. Transfer service paid by the county millage is only available during day-light hours, putting patients in potential jeopardy at night. Trinity Health Shelby is working on developing its own capabilities to augment the situation. Also, coordination delays of "behavioral" transfers of adolescents often force patients to locations in as far away as Ohio.

Mr. Rumsey reported the Oceana County Economic Alliance is taking its message to the municipalities across the county in hopes to gain sustainable funding.

Vice-chair Loera reported that a community input session was schedule for February 1, 5 PM for reuse of the former farmers co-op site at 3 East Main, Hart. Vice-chair Loera also indicates she has been appointed to the Ferry Township Planning Commission and selected as its chair.

To Mr. Blohm's enquiry about the conversion of the former Hart IGA to a shared educational facility. Mr. Morse indicated the project is still alive, but is awaiting results of funding.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Rumsey, with second from Mr. Blohm, moved for adjournment of the meeting at 234 pm. The next meeting will be February 7, 2024, at 1:00 pm in the Oceana County Board of Commissioners Room, 100 S. State Street, Hart, MI 49420.

Respectfully submitted,



Brittany M. Bostrom
On behalf of John Stivers, Secretary
Oceana County Planning Commission