

The Oceana County Planning Commission meeting was called to order by Chairperson McKeen on Thursday, March 7, 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. Paul Cutter (arriving at 1:05 p.m.), Mr. John Foss, Mr. Phil Morse, and Mr. Scott Rumsey.

Absent: None

Also present: Mr. Lee Hyslop, Superintendent of Crystal Township; Stephen Carlson of West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Council (WMSRDC) who is working on the update of the Oceana County Master Plan; Michelle Martin, Oceana County Drain Commissioner.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Approval of the February 1, 2024 Minutes of the Oceana County Planning Commission meeting.

With minor modifications from draft to final format, and with Mr. Morse requesting his report reflect that MFR costs are trending high and the next ambulance millage may need to take that into consideration. Additionally, it was the first draft of the Hazardous Mitigation Plan that the County Commission approved.

Moved by Mr. Rumsey, and seconded by Mr. Blohm to approve the minutes as amended. Voice vote. All ayes. Motion carried.

SUSPENSION OF REGULAR MEETING FOR SPECIAL MEETING TO HEAR PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE 2023 OCEANA COUNTY FIVE YEAR MASTER PLAN.

At 1:05 p.m., moved by Mr. Broderick, and seconded by Mr. Morse to suspend the Regular Oceana County Planning Commission meeting in order to hold a Special Meeting to hear Public Comment on the 2023 Oceana County Five Year Master Plan. Motion carried unanimously.

SPECIAL MEETING TO HEAR PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE 2023 OCEANA COUNTY FIVE YEAR MASTER PLAN.

At 1:06 p.m., moved by Mr. Morse, and second by Mr. Broderick to enter into a Public Hearing regarding Public Comments on the 2023 Oceana County Five Year Master Plan. Motion carried unanimously.

INVITATION FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair McKeen called for public comments, stating that individuals must identify themselves and limit their comments to no more than 5 minutes. The Chair indicated that those making comments should

keep in mind is that this plan is a guideline for the reader to gain a better understanding of the county's future goals for growth.

No public comments were made at the Special Meeting.

PUBLIC READING ALOUD OF CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED.

Chair McKeen indicated that two email correspondences were received. He then read the one from Richard Raffiella, Chief Operating Officer, Peterson Farms, Shelby, MI 49455, dated January 16, 2024.

Good Morning

I won't be able to join the meeting so here is my feedback

1. The housing study is fairly clear on where our gap is in housing and future years. I would have hoped in this category the planning commission would have more specific measurable actions to address
2. In the farming section. Migrant labor is reducing drastically and H2A labor is taking its place. The average rate of H2A is increasing approximately 18% a year which is a challenge for farmers. Essentially a plan to re-attract the migrant labor back to Oceana County
3. Section regarding Roadways.... the information regarding the speed control is incorrect. The Road commission does not have the authority to reduce speeds nor does the local unit of government. A speed study must be completed by the State police for this to happen
4. I would also showing the rating by Township, village and city so the County can identify where the specific problem areas are
5. I would add specific data where city/ village water and sewage is available in the County to ensure longer term plans are in place for older infrastructure
6. Peterson data is incorrect 1040 employees
7. Under the building permits section. Shelby Township built 12 new apartments in two buildings in 2022. The reason your group didn't pick it up is because it was built under a MDARD permit versus an Oceana County permit. Agriculture based housing is regulated by the state Thanks and let me know if you have any questions

Chairperson McKeen next read the letter received from Mr. Lee Hyslop, Superintendent of Crystal Township

(transcribed from Mr. McKeen's reading of the correspondence)

Interesting read, it wouldn't be me if I didn't have a comment or two.

Page 24. *(pg ref to pdf, not report pagination)* Prime Farm Map. While I agree with what is presented, I spent several days going through Crystal Township soil maps and highlighting three soil types as defined by Soils Conservation. My intent then was to work with solar, wind, battery issues. It's a nice map. Regardless, If you include with the important the solar-friendly portion, it gets quite small. We are on the right track, but unfortunately the engineer of the train is now in Lansing.

Page 34. Rivers and lakes are attractive. I agree, and that is but one reason that we have put so much energy into saving our historic Crystal Dam and Pond in the County Park.

Page 39. I would still like a definition of the location of hydrogen-sulfide well.

Page 41. The direct map from the Northeast Quadrant may be our Oceana County Road Commission – Crystal Valley Township revitalization may help. Maybe this report could be used as support of some sort.

Page 42. I've spend volumes of hours recently on data on the road project and can't help but notice that there are food processors listed as manufacturers. I don't know GHSP, but if you convert Arbre Farms, Peterson Farms, Gray & Company (Seneca Farms), and Great Lakes Packing to Ag, you now have 1,541 people working in Ag out of 2,303. I think investing in a stronger ag community might make good sense.

Nicely done. I see plenty of negatives in the response. Perhaps a water-down version of Pure Michigan style PR might help. Also, and more importantly, I've discovered that our (Crystal Township) Planning Commission knew nothing about this report. While attending as an observer, I mentioned the website and thought they would enjoy it.

We will announce a new chairperson next week, and the current chair will remain on the board. Another younger citizen stepping up. Hey. Our Board members are also not aware, but maybe you could give some feedback.

In Grand Rapids I sat on the Affordable Housing Committee. There were some big shooters on the committee – Eastbrook Homes, Depree Homes, etc. -- The key I learned there was if you want to build many new homes you must be near and part of a very good school. The better the school, the greater the success in solving the blight issue. And we will set records with new home sales.

CALL TO CONCLUDE THE PUBLIC HEARING

Having read both letters received and receiving no additional public comments from the audience, the Chair called for a motion to conclude the Public Hearing on the 2023 Oceana County Five Year Master Plan. At 1:11 p.m., motion to close the Public Hearing was made by Mr. Cutter with second from Ms. Loera. All votes in the affirmative. The Public Hearing was closed.

CALL FOR MOTION TO REINSTATE THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE OCEANA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

At 1:12 p.m., motion to reinstate the regular meeting of the Planning Commission was made by Mr. Stivers with second from Mr. Cutter. All votes in the affirmative.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA ITEMS OF THE REGULAR MEETING

To the proposed agenda was added under New Business a review of the template for County Municipalities to use in zoning ordinance adoption of common Stormwater regulations to be administered by the Oceana County Drain Commissioner.

Mr. Rumsey moved to approval the amended Agenda for the March 7, 2024 meeting. Seconded by Mr. Foss. By voice vote: All ayes. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

No public comments.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Prior to the meeting, the commissioners received the portion of the County revenue and expenditure report for the period ending 1/31/2024. There is a \$9,000 balance. Approximately \$200 to advertise the Master Plan Public Meeting is expected to appear in the next report.

CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Chair McKeen reported on meetings he had attended between the February and March Planning Commission Meetings:

- a. Attended two County Commissioner's meetings.
- b. Attended the Grant Township monthly meeting.
- c. Attended two Oceana Road Commission meetings.
- d. Zoom call from the Oceana Conservation District with Sen. Jon Bumstead, who is on the State Senate Appropriations Committee, regarding impacts of MDARD's proposed restructure of the MEAP program resulting in reductions in the Oceana Conservation District staff and funding.
- e. Met with the Stony Creek/Marshville Dam fifteen partners (engineers, contractors, funders) for a preconstruction walk thru. Construction is scheduled to start in early April.
- f. Set a time and date for the Township Planning Education class with Mary Reilly.
- g. Attended the 911 board meeting. Those attending discussed alternate ways for funding; currently the program is funded via a surcharge per phone line, but with the loss of land lines at most of the seasonal residences, an alternative property tax may be the solution for funding 911 Center in Oceana and Mason Counties.

NEW BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion of Public Comments from the Five-Year Master Plan.

The objective of this portion of the meeting was for the Planning Commission to evaluate new input from Public Comments; with none provided during the Public Hearing, the discussion was limited to the communications from Mr. Raffielli and Mr. Hyslop. Mr. Carlson pointed out that both would be included in the final Plan document with all the other comments received.

Each commissioner was given the opportunity to comment on each point raised in the two. At the initiation of Chair McKeen, Mr. Hyslop, who was in the audience, was also called upon to respond to a few specific aspects of his. Point by point the Commission determined if any warranted a revision to the Five-Year Master Plan.

Many were found not to warrant a revision, but that decision was reached with the knowledge the comment would be recorded as part of the Plan.

Some would require minor edits to the Plan, to which Mr. Carlson felt could be made without delaying final adoption.

None were found to justify a major revision in either approach or text to the Plan. However, some commissioners suggested a few for potential future exploration by the Planning Commission.

Point-by-point discussion summary.

From Richard Raffielli:

- 1. ... housing study... Development of Master Plan update was done concurrently with the 2023 Oceana County Housing Needs Assessment. A link to that report is to be included in the Master Plan. Representation from the post housing study group who are also on the Planning Commission will relay this recommendation. Minor Edit.
- 2. ... Migrant labor is reducing drastically ... Several commissioners felt the Planning Commission might be a place for future discussion of this topic, but also agreed that without significant additional study could not be addressed knowledgeably. Mr. Carlson is to add to the Economic Development section of the Master Plan that there is a need to increase access to affordable labor. Minor Edit.
- 3. ... Roadways... and 4. ... rating by Township ... Commissioners accepted comments as current fact, but feel Master Plan reflects a bona fide concern and common approach to address the issue. No Revision.
- 5. ... city/ village water and sewage ... Commissioners agree that such a study would be beneficial, but beyond the scope of the Master Plan update. Mr. Carlson is to add to the Infrastructure section of the Master Plan support for conducting an inventory of the public infrastructure. Minor edit.
- 6. Peterson ... The employment level information (table on pg. 37 of Master Plan) is from an Oceana County Economic Alliance report but of unknown date. Mr. Carlson will see if the date is available. Because updating the entire table would be beyond the scope of the Master Plan, and in deference to the other employers included in the table, the level for Peterson Farms will remain unchanged. Minor Edit. This public comment will still appear in Master Plan Appendix: Public Comment.
- 7. ... 12 new apartments in two buildings in 2022... Representation from the post housing study group who are also on the Planning Commission will relay this information. No Revision.

From Lee Hylsop:

- Prime Farm Map. ... solar, wind, battery issues... Commissioners who commented agreed with input. No Revision.
- historic Crystal Valley Dam and Pond in the County Park... Planning Commission expressed appreciation for the input. No Revision.
- location of hydrogen-sulfide well. Mr. Hylsop and Mr. Carlson, both in attendance, reviewed the issue to their mutual satisfaction. No Revision.

- ...map from the Northeast Quadrant ... Mr. Hyslop explained that ag operations, including the processing operations, need better roads; Crystal Township is considering US DoT RAISE grant funding. Planning Commission expressed appreciation for the input. No Revision.
- ... stronger ag community ... This comment concerned the same table on Employment Levels also included in Mr. Raffielli's comments. The same explanation provided it applies to Mr. Hyslop's. No Revision.
- The better the school, the greater the success in solving the blight issue. Planning Commission expressed appreciation for the input. No Revision.

The Commission considered the need to develop a more formal reply to the input received from the two individuals, either to be included as part of Appendix B, or prepared and sent to the respected individuals. It was determined that these minutes would serve that purpose.

Mr. Blohm asked that his comments be consider as haven been given solely in the interest of the public good.

Mr. Hyslop offered that the County Master Plan is important and that he welcomes means of overcoming the disconnect between the County Planning Commission and the township boards and their planning and zoning boards. Chair McKeen acknowledged appreciation and looks forward to the two training sessions open to all.

- B. Motion of Approve the Five-Year Plan as presented or alter as discussed. A motion from Mr. Cutter with second from Mr. Rumsey to approve the Oceana County Five-Year Master Plan with discussed revisions. On a roll call vote, the motion was adopted unanimously.
- C. Motion to recommend adaption of the plan at the March 28th meeting of the Oceana County Commissioners. So, moved by Mr. Foss with second from Ms. Loera. Motion approved.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

- A. Michelle Martin, Oceana County Drain Commissioner, took the commissioners through the legal template that has been developed which allows the numerous municipalities to formally adopt their specific county stormwater ordinance that uses the common regulations which are to be administration by the Drain Commissioner's Office.

The Commissioners and the Drain Commissioner discussed the adoption procedure and provisions of the ordinance. While eight townships have recognized the underlying regulations, without the adoption steps outline in the new template, their enforcement could be subject to legal challenge. The common template will save each government unit duplicate legal fees.

Single-family residential building permits will not need to obtain stormwater approval. The Drain Commissioner can withhold soil erosion permits if the storm water design is not provided and approved.

Currently the attorney fee is yet to be paid, with the Drain Commissioner's hope that either the Planning Commission or County Commission could pay for it. Mr. McKeen offered to pay for

it personally. Many of the commissioners expressed appreciation for the Drain Commissioner's work on this initiative, confirmed a willingness to help get more of the townships to adopt it.

With a motion from Mr. Morse with second from Mr. Broderick, the Oceana County Planning Commission endorsed the Site Development Rules – Stormwater Review Zoning Ordinance Template. All voted in support.

- B. Joint Planning and Zoning Training. Commissioners reviewed the flyer and email for the Thursday May 16th training session starting at 6:30 pm at the County Annex building 844 S. Griswold St., Hart. Township Clerks were identified as the best recipient; Mr. Morse proposed each planning commissioner adopt a township, reaching out to encourage participation.

CORRESPONDENCE

No Correspondence.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

- A. Mr. Cutter reported on a planning retreat conducted for the City of Hart recently held at the West Central Michigan Research and Extension Center.
- B. Mr. Cutter provided an update on the electric grid connections of solar stations along Oceana Drive to start Spring 2025.
- C. Mr. Cutter provided an update on the sewer plant and stated that the expansion will start this month and take roughly a year and a half to two years to complete.
- D. Mr. Morse had a wonderful article in the Oceana's Herald-Journal, Conversation and connection: County Commissioner Phil Morse seeks knowledge to 'build bridges.'
- E. Mr. McKeen reported that the Conservation District Dinner is at the Resource Center on March 18th, 2024. The guest speaker is Mark Tonello, a Fisheries Habitat Biologist with the DNR.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. McKeen adjourned the meeting at 2:50 pm. The next meeting will be April 4, 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