

**ALLENDALE CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

Minutes of a Meeting held May 21, 2018

7:30 p.m.

Allendale Township Public Meeting Room

1. Meeting called to Order

2. Roll Call:

Present: Adams, Knoper, Longcore, Schut, Zeinstra

Absent: Kleinjens, Zuniga

Staff Present: Planner Greg Ransford

3. Received for Information: None

4. Motion by Zeinstra to approve the May 7, 2018 Planning Commission Minutes. Seconded by Schut. **Approved 5-0.**

5. Motion by Longcore to approve the Agenda as presented. Seconded by Zeinstra. **Approved 5-0.**

6. Public comments for *non-public hearing items*:

Chairperson Longcore noted the meeting was a joint session with the Allendale Board of Trustees to hear a presentation on water quality. He mentioned comments and questions would be welcome after the presentation as well. With no other comments received, Chairperson Longcore closed the public comment period.

7. Public Hearings: None

8. Site Plan Review: None

9. Old Business: None

10. New Business:

A. Ottawa County Water Quality presentation

Mr. Alan Vanderberg, Ottawa County Administrator, opened the session with introductions of subject matter experts who were present. He discussed the challenge of groundwater decline in the area and across the nation, and welcomed Mr. Paul Sachs, Planning and Performance Improvement Director with Ottawa County, to the podium.

Mr. Sachs delivered a focused presentation on the use, geology, and challenges of groundwater in Ottawa County and across the State of Michigan.

Explaining the geology of Ottawa County, Mr. Sachs noted the area is facing a depletion of clean water available from glacial sediments, referred to as "static water," in the soils most directly beneath our feet. As that sediment layer is depleted, drilling into the next layer, known as the Marshall Formation, is

delivering less water which is more heavily salinated. The Marshall Formation is the bedrock aquifer for Ottawa County.

Mr. Sachs explained studies conducted through Michigan State University. He noted static water levels dropped approximately 40 feet in the last 50 years.

Key points include:

- Recharge of the static water level has slowed. Draw down, or the pumping out of static water, continues to increase. Static water levels are expected to continue to drop, as much as 10 to 15 feet in the next 20 years.
- Beneath the static water level lies a thick clay deposit. Because clay is not highly porous, it blocks the recharge of water percolating down to the Marshall Formation. Water in the Marshall Formation is being pumped out that cannot be replenished.
- The Marshall Formation is naturally rich in sodium chloride, or brine. Water pumped from the Formation is salty and corrosive. Chloride concerns will increase in Allendale, Blendon, Olive, and Robinson Townships.
- Approximately 4,000 new wells are expected in Allendale in the next 20 years.

Plans to address the growing groundwater challenge in Ottawa County include:

- Ongoing data collection
- Education and outreach at governmental, business, community, and school levels. A new informational website from Ottawa County will be launched in June, 2018.
- Adoption of water conservation strategies to reduce water use, recycle, and retain water are recommended. Techniques may include low-flow consumer and commercial fixtures, attention to lawn irrigation methods and schedules, rain sensors, household water conservation, treated wastewater recycling, improved retention pond design, rain gardens, bio swales, and more.
- County policies and regulations may address local land use, development moratoriums, and changes to zoning ordinances among other strategies.

Brief discussion occurred between the Commissioners and experts who were present concerning the geology and use of water in the Township.

Chairman Longcore opened the session for comments from the public.

Questions concerning sodium chloride as a potential health hazard were heard. A specialist with Ottawa County, Mr. Matt Allen, noted sodium chloride occurs naturally in the Marshall Formation aquifer. He stated sodium chloride is not considered a primary contaminant but does corrode plumbing and could lead to release of contaminants such as lead. Mr. Sachs noted the Ottawa County Health Officer believes it is a consideration, and worthy of more data collection.

There being no further public comments, Chairman Longcore closed the public comment session.

11. Public Comments: None
12. Township Board Reports: No report
13. Commissioner and Staff Comments: No comments

14. Meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Next meeting June 4, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.