

**ALLEDALE CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

*January 04, 2021*

*7:00 p.m.*

*Via GoToMeeting Software*

1. Meeting called to order.
2. Roll Call  
Present: Westerling, Adams, Zuniga, Schut, Kelley, Zeinstra, Longcore  
Staff Present: Lindsey Mohr, Kevin Yeoman
3. Received for Information: Email from Brian Sikema regarding the Metro Health project
4. Motion by Schut to approve the December 21, 2020 Planning Commission Minutes as presented. Seconded by Westerling. **Approval 7-0.**
5. Motion by Longcore to approve the January 4, 2021 Planning Commission Agenda as presented. Seconded by Zeinstra. **Approval 7-0.**
6. Public comments for *non-public hearing items*:

*Chairperson Longcore opened and closed the public comment section for non-public hearing items due to no comments.*

7. Public Hearings:

- A. Metro Health – 4830 Becker Drive

Planner Mohr introduced the Metro Health public hearing pursuant to the direction provided by the Planning Commission at the project's December 7, 2020 site plan review, citing that the applicant followed that direction. Ms. Mohr further advised the commissioners discuss two items of concern: 1) the ambiguous information on duration and frequency of the mammogram trailer and 2) compliance of proposed sidewalks.

Following Ms. Mohr's introduction, Steve Witte, representing the developer, reiterated on the project's description before detailing site plan changes and requests for five items of note, which the Planning Commission proceeded to discuss after the public comment section. Additionally, he confirmed for Mr. Longcore the location of the fire hydrant and the approval received from the Fire Department and Township Engineer.

*Chairperson Longcore opened the public hearing comment section:*

Brian Sikema, the developer, elaborated on the reasoning behind the sidewalk deferment request previously mentioned by Mr. Witte.

Bret Butler, the Metro Health Director of Facilities, explained the intent behind the mammogram trailer: a temporary, mobile fixture designed to flexibly meet demands as part of their mobile diagnostic units. He added that due to the specialized use of the units, the applicant preferred to avoid limiting the particular days the units could be on-site. Additionally, he added on to Mr. Witte's sidewalk connection

concerns by expressing concern for patient privacy, as the applicant was uncomfortable allowing any foot traffic to pass by the front of the building.

*Chairperson Longcore closed the public hearing comment section due to no additional comments.*

Mr. Longcore directed the commissioner and staff discussion through the items described by Mr. Witte:

### **1) Bench and bike rack addition**

The commissioners discussed how the current proposed location of the bench and bike rack may or may not be appropriate for the use of the site and the spirit of the PUD ordinance. Mr. Schut felt the location was inadequate and expressed uncertainty about the intention behind the placement. Mr. Witte stressed that client privacy was a priority for the applicant; furthermore, he noted that the bench was added to benefit the pedestrian-oriented nature of the PUD.

Mr. Longcore and Mr. Kelley felt the placement fit their expectations, and Mr. Adams and Mr. Witte briefly discussed tying the bench to a bus stop, though this suggestion may be unlikely due to a nearby existing bus shelter. However, Mr. Adams agreed with Mr. Schut that a better location for the bench should exist. Additionally, Mr. Westerling liked the bench being by a light pole, noting that the bench should be well lit.

Though the commissioners initially had a mixed reactions, the Planning Commission agreed that since the bench was added as a PUD item, the proposed bench and bike rack location would suffice as is.

### **2) Information on mammogram trailer**

Mr. Longcore discussed with Mr. Witte the optimal language for the operational duration of the trailer. Mr. Witte and Mr. Butler preferred language that provided the applicant with flexibility for when and how long the trailer occupied the site. Mr. Longcore proposed language that limits the presence of the trailer to two days per week.

The commissioners largely agreed with this proposal, with Mr. Westerling noting that two days was agreeable due to the trailer's important health services. Mr. Schut added that measures should be taken to ensure the trailer does not occupy the space for longer than permitted.

Afterward, Mr. Adams asked if screening could be required should the vehicle need to occupy the site for longer than two days. This question prompted a discussion on a mechanism for the applicant to return and request approval from the Township should the applicant find that the number of days on-site needs to increase or be altered. Ms. Mohr advised the applicant to reach out to the zoning administrator to determine that the change is a major or minor amendment through staff; if the amendment is major, then the applicant would return to the Planning Commission to amend the PUD.

The Planning Commission agreed with this language.

### **3) Sidewalk along 48th Avenue**

In his introduction, Mr. Witte had asked for a deferral of approximately two years to allow Metro Health the opportunity gain a Certificate of Occupancy

while the required sidewalk is under design. This deferral is desired, Mr. Witte explained, because of the significant hurdles involved in installing a sidewalk, which would have to contend with unfavorable natural site features.

Mr. Adams did not see a reason to defer construction of the sidewalk, observing that the area had only one significant contour difference which could be amended by constructing a small retaining wall. In response, Mr. Witte noted that he personally visited the site, sent photos to Mr. Ransford, and determined that the complexity of constructing the sidewalk would require a structural engineer. He added that the applicant wanted to start construction as soon as possible and did not want the sidewalk to hold up occupancy.

At Mr. Longcore's prompting, Mr. Butler provided March 2022 as the applicant's anticipated date of construction completion.

The commissioners began to discuss routes to accommodate the applicant's request, such as a performance bond or letter of credit. Connecting completion of the sidewalk to the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) funding was also discussed, with staff member Kevin Yeoman presenting concerns with the possibility of DDA funding falling through and the completion of the sidewalk remaining uncertain.

Mr. Longcore expressed preference for a performance bond to maintain pressure on all stakeholders regarding the sidewalk. Mr. Yeoman also described the bond as essentially an insurance policy to hold the contractor accountable for satisfactory completion of the sidewalk; should the contractor not complete the required sidewalk installation, the Township can refuse to issue a Final Certificate of Occupancy, and therefore a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy would be issued until the sidewalk installation is complete.

The Planning Commission reached a consensus on the use of a performance bond to give the developer opportunity to begin work on the project before finalizing sidewalk specifications and installation.

#### **4) Sidewalk connection concerns**

Mr. Witte, during his earlier introduction, had requested that the Planning Commission not require the sidewalk connection from 48th Avenue to the front of building despite the requirements of the zoning ordinance. This request is because the applicant feels that the sidewalk is an unnecessary expense that will see little use, in addition to natural site difficulties and privacy concerns for patients.

Mr. Zeinstra opined that the sidewalk was not critical given the use of the proposed facility but that constructing the connection is still preferred. Mr. Adams and Mr. Schut expressed shared desire for the connection.

After initial commissioner comments, Mr. Butler stated that most visitors to the facility would arrive by vehicle rather than foot.

This comment prompted discussion among the applicant and commissioners about whether or not foot traffic was an important enough consideration for the site to require the sidewalk. Mr. Longcore observed the proximity of the clinic to student housing, pointing out that students frequently walk and bike and therefore would benefit from the sidewalk connection. Mr. Butler pushed back

by referring to the on-campus Metro Health clinic, suggesting that those students are more likely to visit the on-campus clinic rather than the proposed facility.

Afterwards, Mr. Schut asked to hear the specific language of the applicable ordinance. Ms. Mohr complied: "In the commercial and office zoning district and for such uses in the PUD zoning district, a sidewalk shall be provided from the principle building to the sidewalk within any public right of way abiding the site. Such sidewalk shall be a minimum of eight feet wide in order to serve as a recognizable entrance point to the public. The Planning Commission may allow for modification to this requirement if in the opinion of the commission such sidewalk is impractical due to the type of business, the likelihood of pedestrian use, design of the building, the distance to the entrance of the sidewalk, or practical difficulty due to natural site features."

Then, Mr. Zuniga asked Mr. Witte to describe the parking lot situation to see if it would be possible to subtract spots; Mr. Witte explained that Metro Health construction requires seven spaces per one thousand feet due to previous experiences with under-parking even when meeting the ordinance specifications. Mr. Witte went on to draw attention to the last part of the ordinance, noting how the site's natural impracticalities would apply to this project.

Mr. Schut asked if one of the two entrances can be subtracted, but Mr. Witte explained that Metro Health prefers two entrances to provide visitors with options and for safety reasons to ensure a proper flow of traffic.

Mr. Kelley and Mr. Westerling opined that the current proposed sidewalk connection sufficed as is, while Mr. Adams believed there would be enough foot traffic from the university to justify the requirement.

Mr. Longcore said that they should at least meet the spirit of the ordinance. Mr. Zuniga noted that the Commission has required businesses to install a sidewalk whether it was walkable or not.

Mr. Schut agreed with Mr. Zuniga, stating that the Township wants to ensure visitors are able to walk up to each business. Mr. Witte reiterated the applicant's opposition to a sidewalk cutting through the middle of the site, particularly due to safety and that the ordinance does not specify exactly where the sidewalk must go.

Mr. Adams pointed out that the ordinance does mention following a direct route; additionally, he suggested that the sidewalk connection benefited the proposed land use, particularly if a different use is proposed at a later time.

Mr. Longcore offered the suggestion of creating a sidewalk that mirrors the east and west side of the property, though the applicant continued to disagree with the necessity regardless as Mr. Butler referred to experience with their facilities at more walkable communities still not seeing much foot traffic. Mr. Longcore asked for data to support the statement for the commissioners to consider, but Mr. Butler replied that they do not keep statistical counts and that the information came from staff observations. He went on to state that should visitors begin crossing the facilities' lawn in a way that's creating a hazard, Metro Health would add the sidewalk for the safety of its visitors.

At Mr. Butler's suggestion, Mr. Longcore prompted discussion on the feasibility of deferring the sidewalk connection dependent on need, enforcing it as necessary based on complaints. Ms. Mohr noted that such an option is available, though quantifying complaints may be tricky.

The Planning Commission agreed that such a deferment was satisfactory.

## **5) Signage details**

Mr. Witte described the ideal signage package: four wall signs—one per each four sides of the building—and three freestanding signs, one on Lake Michigan Drive, one at the corner of Becker Drive and 48th Avenue, and the last one at the western drive entrance. He then described how the sign proposals do not meet the ordinance, as 1) the western wall sign would be 240 square feet whereas the ordinance restricts size at 230 square feet and 2) three freestanding signs are proposed despite the ordinance restricting this count to one per lot. To deal with this, the applicant wants to either apply for a PUD amendment from the Planning Commission or acquire a variance—if either are possible.

Mr. Butler added to Mr. Witte's description of the request, explaining that the main purpose of Metro Health signage is not marketing but rather wayfinding. He provided an example of their facility in the City of Wyoming, which needed to expand its signage as visitors still struggled to locate the property.

The commissioners discussed an openness with reviewing the signage and asked further questions on the intent behind the excess signs.

Mr. Schut, though amenable to looking into the ordinance, would rather the applicant apply for a variance to avoid setting a precedent. Furthermore, he pointed out that marketing plays just as much a role in the signs as wayfinding.

Mr. Zuniga agreed with Mr. Schut and remarked that the amount of signage seems to be more a variance issue.

Mr. Longcore joined the two commissioners in agreement. He did not want to open the PUD to allow for such a number of many signs, especially since it may prompt other businesses to make similar requests. He told the applicant that the Planning Commission would need to look at the plans and consider the ordinance before making a determination.

After discussing the applicant's items, Mr. Longcore opened discussion to other comments.

Mr. Schut inquired about building material, confirming with the site's architect in attendance that the glass calculations apply only to the vision glass and not the spandrel glass, which is being treated as a wall. The architect went on to explain that the roof screening is not a composite but rather a standard metal panel to resemble the building. Mr. Schut requested the applicant to define the roof top screening material on the plans.

Motion by Zeinstra to approve the Metro Health site plan with the following conditions:

- Note on site plan that mammogram trailer not to occupy site for more than two days per week; if additional time required, applicant must seek approval from the Township

- Sidewalk along 48th Avenue to be added by request for certification of occupancy; if not installed by such time, ~~Township will issue performance bond~~ applicant shall provide a performance bond in lieu of the Township.
- Sidewalk to east of site will be deferred pending ~~need~~ the work.
- Signage not included in this approval
- Material of rooftop screening to be noted on site plan and reviewed by staff

Seconded by Westerling. **Approval 7-0.**

8. Site Plan Review:

A. Taco Bell – 4989 Lake Michigan Drive – Minor Amendment

Ms. Mohr described the Taco Bell project as a 230-square-foot walk-in freezer addition to the northwest end of the existing building. During the last meeting, the Planning Commission determined that the addition required a minor amendment to the special land use permit. Additionally, the Planning Commission had directed the planners to confer with the zoning administration in case the existing building and site required updating to be in compliance with the zoning ordinance. The Planning Commission also requested additional details regarding the proposed façade of the freezer addition, to ensure it was in compliance with the remainder of the building. It was confirmed by the zoning administration that the site and existing building were in compliance with the zoning ordinance.

Then, Mike Kurskey, representing the applicant, recalled Mr. Ransford's main concern being that the addition's exterior matched the rest of the building. Mr. Kurskey assured the commissioners that the applicant intends to match building colors and materials.

After Mr. Longcore opened commissioner and staff comments, Mr. Zeinstra asked about the location of the condenser. Mr. Kurskey explained that the old freezer equipment will be removed and replaced with new equipment that will match the current units in size.

Mr. Zuniga then queried Ms. Mohr about if it was intentional that a written inspection report from the zoning administrator was not made. Ms. Mohr explained that a report is typically only made if issues are found, then asked if she should request something in writing from PCI, the building code inspections company. Mr. Longcore responded that it would not be necessary, as the meeting's minutes will suffice. He then discussed with Ms. Mohr that, should an issue arise, a written report will be received.

Motion by Schut to approve the Taco Bell walk-in freezer addition as presented. Seconded by Zuniga. **Approval 7-0.**

9. Old Business: None

10. New Business:

A. Annual Work Program – Updated

Ms. Mohr introduced the section by describing minor updates to the language since the last meeting, notably that Section 24.06J for the Maximum Glass Provision was added, and that items 7 and 9 were moved down the list.

The Planning Commission had no further discussion on the project.

Motion by Zeinstra to approve the 2021 Annual Work Program as presented.

Seconded by Westerling. **Approval 7-0.**

11. Public Comments:

*Chairperson Longcore opened and closed the public comment section due to no public comments.*

12. Township Board Reports:

Trustee Zeinstra reported that the Township Board passed new ordinance for the water and updated construction standards.

13. Commissioner and Staff Comments:

Mr. Yeoman updated the commissioners regarding meeting changes regarding Covid-19 restrictions.

14. Chairperson Longcore adjourned at 9:29 p.m.

**Next meeting Monday, January 18, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.**