

**ALLENDALE CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

*February 1, 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: Greg Ransford  
Other Guests Present: Kelli Bulthouse, Maddie Buckler, Juliet Dragos, Matt Jaworowski, Cathy, Margaret, Marie, Paul O, Sarah, Kelli McGovern, Lora Richmond, Peter Walsh, WXMI Fox 17, WOOD
3. Received for information: no information received.
4. Motion by Schut to approve the January 4, 2021 meeting minutes with revisions. Seconded by Westerling. **Approval 7-0** with the following corrections:
  - a. On page 6, in the motion by Zeinstra on the second bullet point, correction should be made to “applicant shall provide a performance bond in lieu of the township”.
  - b. Clarify bullet point below that to “the sidewalk to the east side of the parking lot will be deferred pending the work.”
5. Motion by Schut to approve the January 18, 2021 meeting minutes. Seconded by Zeinstra. **Approval 7-0**
6. Motion by Longcore to approve the February 1, 2021 Planning Commission Agenda as presented. Seconded by Kelley. **Approval 7-0**
7. Public Comments for *non-public hearing items*:  
*Chairperson Longcore opened the public comment section for non-public hearing items. Kelli McGovern facilitated the public comments beginning with the callers, then proceeding to participants using the web or app After all comments were finished, Chairperson Longcore thanked those who participated and closed the public comment section.*
  1. Aaron Southwick, Allendale – Streetlights on Wild Duck Lane
  2. Cathy, Allendale – Comments regarding Commissioner Kelley
  3. Maddie Buckler – Comments regarding Commissioner Kelley
  4. Matt Jaworowski, WOOD TV – Comments regarding Commissioner Kelley
  5. A member of the public, undisclosed name and resident information – Comments regarding Commissioner Kelley
8. Public Hearings: no public hearings were scheduled.
9. Site Plan Review: no site plans were scheduled for review.
10. Old Business: no old business to review
11. New Business
  - a. Work Program – Tree Preservation Language  
Planner Ransford summarized an ordinance adopted by Park Township in Ottawa County which has also been reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

Mr. Schut raised concerns about potentially telling an owner they might be prohibited from cutting trees on their lot.

Mr. Zeinstra agreed with Mr. Schut. He added that the quality of the tree should be considered, along with the idea of adding a tree to replace older trees with the goal of saving trees along the street without specifying certain roads.

Mr. Westerling agreed that the quality of the tree should determine if it needed to be brought down and explained that the area has differences from Waukazoo Woods.

Mr. Kelley was in general agreement and raised concerns about clear-cutting.

Chairperson Longcore asked Mr. Ransford if an applicant would be able to come in and address the Commission to seek relief.

Planner Ransford explained that in his opinion they could do so and that there was language that the applicant “provides sufficient evidence of the deceased or dying tree.” He also explained that it was more advantageous to handle it at the Planning Commission level/site planning review level.

Chairperson Longcore agreed and explained that there were similar sections where applicants have come before the Commission with evidence that they do not necessarily need to get a traffic study, as an example, and would like the Commission to be able to allow a deviation.

Mr. Adams inquired about whether it was necessary to have language about the reforestation plan by a forester and if a landscaper would be sufficient.

Mr. Kelley concurred with Mr. Adams and asked about a management plan for an entire development and what that would look like, while agreeing that a landscaper may be able suitable to handle it.

Planner Ransford explained that the idea behind the forester was that as the trees were replaced there may be impact to the wildlife and the ecosystem.

Chairperson Longcore asked Mr. Zeinstra for further input.

Mr. Zeinstra explained that Landscape Architecture had a wide range of different things that could be handled including wildlife, depending on the individual and what they are comfortable doing. He also explained that it was similar for a forester who may or not be in tune with wildlife and recommended changing the language to “the professional doing the determination” or similar language.

Chairperson Longcore pointed out that Allendale does not have designated wildlife corridors at this time and so adding language might complicate matters further.

Mr. Zeinstra agreed and added that they had a plan for pathways along the public drains.

Mr. Adams suggested making a distinction and clarified that he was thinking about the M-45 corridor and the businesses or developments that might occur along M-45 versus off roads of M-45 where there might be more residential areas. In the residential areas an arborist might be more suited and suggested possibly basing it on acreage.

Bruce Zeinstra agreed that the acreage idea might be a good idea while keeping in mind the difference between Park and Allendale.

Chairperson Longcore recommended that they move ahead with some tree preservation language that did not necessarily tie in with wildlife corridors, and then maybe as a future work plan item, add in consideration of wildlife corridors and where they might be located as he provided several location examples like Dewpoint.

Mr. Schut said he would like to retain verbiage of “restoring, maintaining, or building” in thinking of Trader’s View.

Chairperson Longcore raised the question of how to determine what a wildlife corridor is.

Mr. Zeinstra recommended redefining it to “existing natural areas” which is supposed to be shown on the site analysis plan. He also suggested making sure that a developer did not cut everything down before submitting plans to the Planning Commission. This would allow the Commission to decide what should be kept and what should be removed while not tying everyone’s hands as previously mentioned.

Mr. Schut stated that behind Family Farm & Home there was a significant wildlife corridor right next to the condos where people often see deer and wanted to make sure that was maintained.

Chairperson Longcore talked about the need for a better definition of a Wildlife Corridor.

Planner Ransford provided a detailed explanation of the wildlife corridor research conducted in Kent County and how they had reached the language chosen to allow a case-by-case review based on the local plant and animal population.

Chairperson Longcore requested that Planner Ransford develop a revision based on the comments provided tonight to present to the Commission.

b. Section 24.06H – Standards for Approval of Waste Disposal Facilities

Planner Ransford recapped the need to reexamine the language regarding dumpster enclosures and to have a certain width regarding whether or not it contained one or two dumpsters, as well as an aesthetic enclosure matching the building. He explained the current language requiring a drive approach of a certain length for the truck to service it

and an all-enclosure in the rear side yard. Concerns have been raised to the Commission over time and the discussion has come about to re-examine and see if any changes are necessary.

Chairperson Longcore discussed a question that has recently come up regarding maintenance or replacement since a couple of older structures have fallen apart and asked if there was any current language that would allow the Commission to ensure compliance.

Planner Ransford asked if the Chairman was referring to the current language or prior.

Chairperson Longcore asked about prior language while considering a wood structure that fell apart and had essentially resulted in a dumpster in the front yard.

Planner Ransford essentially outlined that an enclosure that is gone would technically be a violation of the approved site which would require it to be replaced, but it wouldn't necessarily have to be replaced under current language. The basis for enforcement would involve the site plan. If it were just a chain-link fence, they would only be required to replace it with a chain-link fence. The current language does not give the authority to require masonry block or some type of other wall or solid fence unless the applicant was coming in for site plan approval on something else within the site. If that were the case, they would be required to make these kinds of corrections.

Chairperson Longcore asked if they would legally be able to add language that would require that.

Planner Ransford explained that non-conformities could trigger it, and he would need to verify with Township Counsel if that was something that could be done.

Mr. Westerling asked if the Commission said they were going to enforce new standards or maintain current standards would that encourage people to maintain their current enclosure.

Chairperson Longcore agreed that it might become an incentive to maintain their current out of compliance dumpster enclosure rather than update it, but it would hinge on whether that language could be added or not.

Mr. Schut compared it to a sign being redone or replaced if it falls over. It would then need to meet the new ordinance requiring a permit to be pulled, and he recommended language that if it gets destroyed it would need to meet the current ordinance, but if it is maintained, it would not.

Chairperson Longcore asked Mr. Schut, due to his profession, if there was anything in the current language that should be amended that might include best practices for how enclosures are designed.

Mr. Schut recommended not requiring protected bumper posts because they interfere with the gates and would like to remove the portion of Section 2c that states “and shall be protected with steel bump guard posts at the front entrance area.” He also provided possible language on pipe bollards and a minimum of 10’ clearance for gates as well as a side pedestrian gate so that individuals do not have to open the heavy gates to enter the enclosure to dispose of trash. Appropriate hardware to secure the gate when opened was also recommended to avoid the gate blowing open or closed in the wind.

Mr. Westering and Mr. Schut suggested adding “proper hardware” or “heavy duty,” sufficient to hold the gate since cables would not work for the winter.

Mr. Kelley asked about language on site planning that had previously been approved that may have fallen apart for section 2A “the material matching the principal structure.” For some older buildings an applicant might not have the exact same material, or it might look a little different. He raised the question of what do we have for language that addresses older approved site plans and bringing it up to code? Do they match it up as close as they can or does the material have to be exact?

Chairperson Longcore explained that we have a good track record currently of materials or comps. Staff would be able to approve that, and it is all contingent on whether or not that verbiage was allowed.

Mr. Zeinstra asked to expand the language to include material similar or complementary to the building and that it be made of long-lasting materials. He suggested that it may be up to Planning Commission discretion. He also suggested that if the opening to the dumpster enclosure is not visible to the public or the general public from the area, would an exception be made that gates are not necessary?

Chairperson Longcore added that the Commission had not been requiring the exact same materials for enclosures. They had allowed for similar in appearance type materials, in order to update the language to match what was being done. He remained open on whether the dumpster enclosures needed a gate or not depending on how planning for future development should be considered in the event someone builds behind a site that makes the opening visible to the public due to a new development.

Mr. Zeinstra suggested language to indicate if it is screened from view from neighboring properties and the general public area. Regarding language on materials, he encouraged the option of something that looks good and is long-lasting, citing not using wood posts that can rot out as an example.

Mr. Kelley preferred the words “complement” and “durable” for any possible change and wanted to keep gates as a requirement.

Chairperson Longcore spoke about a unique example with a specific plan and asked whether they should plan to the exception.

Mr. Zuniga thought they would be open to an exception if it spelled out what the areas were around it, how it was going to develop, and what was there.

Mr. Schut opposed the idea of exceptions.

Mr. Westerling agreed to a gate built to a standard.

Mr. Adams agreed in getting a steel guard and calling out a minimum 4" cement filled bollard. He also would like to see something more specific than "durable."

Mr. Ransford was not familiar with specific language on dumpster enclosure durability specifically but suggested it could fall under the site plan and offered to investigate what could be done regarding making the product last the same as the building.

Mr. Schut expressed concern about opening the whole thing up because chain link fence with slats were the very thing that was to hopefully be avoided, but would seem to be allowed as defined by a durable product. He liked the idea of using the same materials as used in the building, as it gave options tied to the building.

Mr. Longcore clarified that the materials needed to be similar aesthetically to the building or complementary. He cited the example of using sheet metal on awnings, but not using those on the dumpster enclosures.

Mr. Schut pointed out he was not opposed to sheet metal or vinyl siding in a residential area if it fit the site. He also asked that it be documented if the site plan would not be including an enclosure.

Consensus was reached to direct Ransford to revise the language based on comments provided and return with a draft for consideration by the Planning Commission.

c. Section 24.06 J. Standards of Approval on Building Appearance.

Mr. Ransford explained that Section 24.06J has certain minimum requirements for commercial and industrial architecture, as well as multi-family developments. The Planning Commission had made a note in months past to this work program about the maximum of 40% glass for a commercial building, which is a current provision in the zoning ordinance. Some recent site plans have used Spandrel glass or similar material that is not a genuine window that you would typically see, so the question was raised if aesthetically proper buildings could be achieved with more than 40% glass, and some clarity might be needed in how the current language reads.

Mr. Longcore asked for Mr. Schut and Mr. Westerling to start with their comments after explaining that the language was likely originally used to prevent the large sheet glass frontages seen in some commercial areas. With material and design advancements there was a need to update the language for those types of materials.

Mr. Schut did not see a need to have a maximum on glass, or if necessary, there should be a clarification of whether windows or glass, however he did not have any concern about glass. As far as any code, it would still be required to meet the stricter energy code.

Mr. Westerling spoke favorably of glass buildings and said that he would like to see 100% glass.

Mr. Longcore asked if they would be opposed to some type of language regarding the percentage of windows versus glass.

Mr. Schut did not see a need to restrict it and recommended that they leave the last sentence of item 1. Mr. Westerling concurred.

Mr. Kelley inquired if a minimum was needed to avoid having no windows.

Mr. Schut stated that they did not have the ability to have a minimum in the first paragraph. He noted an instance with a gas station that was denied because of a low-grade appearance. He reiterated that there was flexibility to get windows in the verbiage if they did not like the look without it.

Chairperson Longcore asked Mr. Ransford to discuss the situation with the gas station having two road fronts. They were going to essentially have two store fronts on that building but had been allowed to deviate from that.

Mr. Ransford confirmed they had frontage on 48<sup>th</sup> and Lake Michigan Drive that complied with the language, but the Commissioner had found the west side to be somewhat bare of the character that is intended by Section 24.06 when is compared to Lake Michigan Drive side. Going from memory, he thought the Commission had not deviated and wanted them to have more character so the entirety of all the elevations blended.

Mr. Schut and Mr. Zeinstra agreed.

Mr. Ransford explained the minimum percentage of glass that Tallmadge Township adopted probably four or five years ago, at 20% as the minimum for commercial--a common number in the county. He also thought Jamestown Township and Grand Haven Township had the same type of language. What Tallmadge had done with the 48<sup>th</sup> and Lake Michigan Drive property--not only being a minimum of 20% glass but had followed "the secondary street side shall also contain the same amount of glass that was placed on the main street side." Mr. Ransford gave the example, that if they ended up with 30% glass on Lake Michigan Drive, they would have the same amount of glass on the other elevation as well, so it had the same type of character. It did not have to be the same location or same elevation design, so long as the percentage was the same from ground to roofline.

Chairperson Longcore asked how the number was determined.

Mr. Ransford explained that for Tallmadge there had been reviews of Grand Haven and Jamestown Townships language. The resulting buildings seemed to have the character that the community wanted. It was a slightly different number for industrial, and the glass was treated differently due to being a different type of construction.

Andrew Longcore asked if anyone objected to a 20% minimum on road front.

Mr. Ransford added that in Tallmadge's example, they required the glass on road frontage and areas that are basically adjacent to where the public would be, for example, a parking lot. So, taking the same corner for example, of whoever's parking on the north side of the building, that would also be subject to where the glass was required.

Mr. Schut raised a concern about what the Commission had already approved and stated that the gas station would not fit those parameters and would like to see others that had been approved.

Chairperson Longcore stated going forward the intention was to be able to foster better design, not necessarily fit with the current language.

Mr. Schut clarified that the question pertained to glass percentages.

Mr. Ransford offered to gather information regarding the most recent six commercial buildings with the calculation of glass percentages for each.

Mr. Schut expressed concern about requiring a minimum glass percentage on two sides due to how it might affect the floor plan for example and additionally pointed out a typo in the current language that needed correction.

Mr. Ransford asked for consensus on the "no maximum," but some type of minimum, not necessarily to draft the formal language but to provide samples to the Commission.

Chairperson Longcore confirmed Mr. Ransford's clarification and requested when working on the proposed draft that both examples be included for future review in order to streamline the process.

## 12. Second Public Comment

*Chairperson Longcore opened the public comment section for non-public hearing items. Kelli McGovern facilitated the public comments, beginning with the callers, then proceeding to participants using the web or app. After all comments were finished, Chairperson Longcore closed the second public comment section.*

1. Cathy, Allendale – Comments regarding Commissioner Kelley
2. Cathy, Allendale – Comments regarding Commissioner Kelley

3. A member of the public, undisclosed name and resident information – Comments regarding Commissioner Kelley
  4. A member of the public, undisclosed name and resident information – Comments regarding Commissioner Kelley
13. Township Board Reports  
Bruce Zeinstra reviewed the Township Board Reports and advised that they discussed the board member appointments to different committees and departments. They also had updates from the department heads and discussed business registration for new businesses that move into town to ensure they meet any zoning requirements, along with the fire department and water and sewer departments.
14. Commissioner and Staff Comments  
No comments were made.
15. Chairperson Longcore adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

*Planning Commission Minutes respectfully submitted by Lora Richmond*