



CHARLEVOIX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

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Approved Meeting Minutes February 4, 2016

I. Call to Order

Chairman Jason called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. in the Commissioners' Room at the Charlevoix County Building.

Members present: Patrick Howard, Larry Levengood, Dennis Jason, and Bob Draves

Members absent: Ron Van Zee, Bob Tidmore, and Michael Buttigieg (all excused)

Others present: Ron Reinhardt (County Commissioner Liaison), Kiersten Stark (Planning Coordinator), Kevin Clements (Administrative Services Assistant), and Elizabeth Calcutt (Networks Northwest)

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Bob Draves led the Planning Commission in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Approval of Agenda

The Planning Commission approved the tentative agenda by consensus.

IV. Public Comments Unrelated to Agenda Items

None

V. County Business Items

Approval of Minutes of January 14, 2016 Meeting

MOTION by Bob Draves to approve the minutes of the January 14, 2016 meeting as presented. Patrick Howard seconded the motion. Voice vote: all in favor. Motion passed.

Correspondence and Communications

Kiersten reviewed the following correspondence and communications:

- 2016 Planning Commission Membership List
- 2016 Planning Commission Meeting Schedule
- Flyer for Planners Education Network program on “New Urbanism in Michigan” by Robert Gibbs on February 12, 2016 in Traverse City
- Michigan Association of Planning’s Capital Improvements Program Workshop on February 24, 2016 in Traverse City

Planning Commission Comments

Patrick Howard – The Top of Michigan Trails Council is starting a new event this year, which will be a marathon on the Little Traverse Wheelway on May 28, 2016. The race will start in Charlevoix and end in Harbor Springs. Proceeds from the event will go to the Top of Michigan Trails Council. They’re expecting 150 participants at this event.

Larry Levengood – Provided two handouts to Commission members and Staff. He attended a Local Emergency Planning Committee meeting. The Committee discussed the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan. The Charlevoix-Cheboygan-Emmet County Office of Emergency Management hired a person for 10 hours a week to work on the plan. One of the purposes of the plan is for the County to be eligible for grant funding for natural hazard mitigation (handout). Levengood also attended the local chapter of the Michigan Townships Association Leadership Summit. The featured speaker was Sarah Lucas from Networks Northwest who spoke about the Charlevoix County Target Market Analysis regarding housing. This presentation touched on population figures and housing trends (handout). Also at the event, officials from each community provided an update on current events in their community. One of the townships reported that they had an issue with a few of their checks being “washed”.

Bob Draves – Also attended the Michigan Townships Association Leadership Summit. He spoke about other communities in the region that have also had issues with their checks being “washed”.

Dennis Jason – Team Elmer’s had the low bid for construction of Phase 1 of the Boyne City to Charlevoix Trail. The Project Engineer is working with Team Elmer’s to further reduce the construction costs for Phase 1. Bid letting for Phase 2 of the Trail is anticipated in March.

County Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Reinhardt said he would like to see the trail project get done, but not at greater expense to the County in the form of higher long term maintenance costs. Reinhardt reported that East Deer Lake Road, Korthase Road, and Ellsworth Road will be improved this year. The Road Commission will open the construction bids for these projects at the end of February. The improvements to Korthase Road will be bid as a single project, even though the road extends into Antrim County. Antrim County will pay for their part in improving Korthase Road. Commissioner Reinhardt also reported that the County will be purchasing the lumber yard building on Beaver Island for use by the Road Commission, Sheriff’s Office, and County Transit. Sharing the building will help keep costs down. The building is close to the existing Road Commission property, so the Road Commission will be able to continue using their existing fuel tanks. There will not be a lot of remodeling needed on the building. Commissioner Reinhardt also reported that the County Board is looking for an alternative location for use as a meeting hall for evening meetings held by the County Board and other County committees.

Staff Comments

Kiersten reported on the following Planning Department activities in January:

- Attended Parks Committee meeting on January 18th
 - Status update on Boyne City to Charlevoix Non-motorized Trail project
 - **Phase 1** – Elmer’s Crane & Dozer will be the contractor; Tree cutting will take place in March to accommodate the Northern Long-Eared Bat, which was placed on the federal Threatened Species list last year; Construction scheduled to begin in April and be complete by July 31st; Based on the construction bid and engineering estimate, the project will be over-budget by about 6%; The Project Engineer will work with the contractor to further reduce the construction cost; Confirmed that even though the cost of the project continues to be trimmed down since it was first bid last fall, the trail will comply with government standards; Staff may seek additional grants and will ask for County Board approval to use Parks Department funds to help off-set the cost overage; Staff also met with the County Board’s Internal Government Committee and the Building & Grounds Committee to give them a status update on Phase 1 of the Trail
 - **Phase 2** – Final revised construction plans and bid documents for Phase 2 of the Trail were submitted to the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) in preparation for construction bidding; Staff distributed permanent and temporary (grading) easement forms to several property owners along the trail route, and we’ve received almost all of the completed forms back; All of the permanent easements need to be signed by the Road Commission and then the Project Engineer will submit these to MDOT to complete the construction bid package; The anticipated bid letting date is March 4th, but it’s possible it may be April 1st
- Attended Planners Review & Advisory Committee meeting on January 22nd; The Committee discussed the success of the Planners Education Network (PEN) and decided on a tentative schedule for this year; programs will be scheduled in Feb, April, June, Sept, Nov, and possibly Dec on the 2nd Friday of the month, each for 2 hours from late morning to early afternoon; presentation topics will tie in with the chapters in the Regional Prosperity Plan (“Framework for our Future”); The Committee will also invite Andrea Brown, Executive Director of the Michigan Association of Planning, to give a presentation at one of the PEN programs
- Attended the Northwest Michigan Planners Forum on January 28th; A Planner from Michigan State University’s Land Policy Institute gave a presentation on the 2014 Northwest Michigan Seasonal Population Study, which estimated the permanent, seasonal, and transient population in the region over the last 2 decades; The speaker also discussed how the study was conducted compared to previous studies, the data sources used, and challenges in the data collection process; The speaker also gave a brief presentation on the new Regional Service Provision Recommendation Report, which the Land Policy Institute has been working on for the Networks Northwest Board of Directors; the report looks at the various services provided in the region and has

recommendations for ways to further improve services to meet needs; the report will be available this spring

- Working with Networks Northwest Planners and the GIS Department on the Future Land Use Plan Update
- Prepared materials for tonight's meeting

Future Land Use Plan Update – Review of Preliminary Draft of County Overview

The Planning Commission and Staff reviewed and discussed the preliminary draft of the County Overview section of the Future Land Use Plan presented by Elizabeth Calcutt, Regional Planner, from Networks Northwest. Elizabeth also presented a list of the graphs and maps to be included in the County Overview. The following suggested changes to the County Overview were discussed:

Page 1, first line under Land Use Trends and Settlement Patterns – Verify the accuracy (check data sources) of the updated area figure (square miles) for Charlevoix County

Page 2, under Trends, 2nd bullet – The second sentence regarding new seasonal housing units may need to be a separate bullet point or moved to the section on Population and Housing, which begins on page 15

Page 5

- First bullet point under Green Infrastructure/Our Resources – Need to clarify named vs. unnamed lakes in the County and the area they cover
- 6th bullet point under Green Infrastructure/Our Resources – List the seven (7) federally listed threatened, endangered or special concern species in the County

Page 6

- Second bullet point from the top of the page – Include the area of land in other watersheds (in addition to the Lake Charlevoix Watershed), and include a watershed map of the County
- Second bullet point in the middle section of the page, pertaining to the Beaver Island Archipelago – Insert the word “also” before the word “home” in the second sentence to read “It is also home to many threatened and special concern plant and animal species.”

Page 6/7

- Add a bullet point under Trends to address the different types of invasive species and treatment efforts in the County

Page 8

- First bullet point on the page – According to the Census of Agriculture, there were 37,540 acres in agriculture in 2012; what is included in this acreage figure?
- In reference to “What do we grow?” – it was noted that Charlevoix County is #1 in the state for guinea-fowl
- First bullet point under “What do we grow?” – it was noted that Charlevoix County is in the top 20 counties in the state for fruit and nut trees

Page 9

- Under “What are the trends?” – Include graphs showing some of the trends in agriculture over time
- Also under “What are the trends?” – Add information regarding value-added agriculture

Pages 10-14 “Public Facilities”

- Add trends after each of the subsections, rather than combining all of the trends to follow the Transportation section
- Add a section for Broadband – current efforts to expand broadband availability in the county
- Add a section for Alternative Energy – comment on the types of alternative energy of interest in the county (i.e., wind, solar, outdoor wood-fired boilers, etc.)

Page 11, 4th bullet point under “County Facilities” – Include the size (acres) of each County park

Page 13

- 5th bullet point – Replace the last two sentences with the following: The Beaver Island Transportation Authority of St. James Township is responsible for the operation of the ferry service to Beaver Island. The ferry “Emerald Isle” is owned by the State of Michigan and the Authority contracts with the Beaver Island Boat Company to operate the vessel. The “Beaver Islander” is owned by the Beaver Island Boat Company and serves as a back-up to the Emerald Isle and for operation during the peak tourist season. Funding for half of the fuel for the Beaver Islander is provided by the Transportation Authority. The ferry service is available from mid-April through mid-December.
- 6th bullet point – Include the locations of the four (4) deep water ports (Ironton, Round Lake, St. Marys Cement Co., and St. James Harbor)
- Add a bullet point regarding the increasing senior population

Page 14

- Add a bullet point (above Trends) regarding the increasing popularity of bicycling events and other sporting events in the county (i.e., Michigan Mountain Mayhem, Dal-Mack event, marathon events that utilize our trail system, etc.)

Page 15

- 2nd bullet point – Move the second sentence regarding the declining population in the cities to the end of the first bullet point
- Second to the last bullet point on the page – End the first sentence after the word “increase” in the second line, and delete the remainder of the sentence. Reword the next sentence to read as follows: “Some of this growth reflects young families leaving the area as well as natural age increases, as Baby Boomers begin to reach retirement age; while some growth can be accounted for by new residents that moved to the area following retirement.”

Page 16

- 5th bullet point – Add the state and national averages for educational attainment (national average is 30%)

Pages 16/17

- Insert graph illustrating educational attainment
- Insert graph illustrating school enrollment and possibly a map showing school district boundaries in the county; it was noted that the current plan does not have a section on Schools

Page 18

- Under “What does it mean?” – Include information regarding the effect of the aging population on demand for land-use related services in the community (primarily housing and transportation)

Page 21

- In the table on “Top Charlevoix County Employers” – East Jordan Iron Works Inc. should be changed to EJ; Northwest Michigan Community Health Agency serves four (4) counties, but is based in Charlevoix County; Charlevoix Area Hospital should be changed to Munson Healthcare – Charlevoix Hospital (if applicable, depending on the date this information was obtained); Boyne USA Inc. owns facilities in several locations – Is the number of employees listed only for Boyne Mountain Resort?; Need to include the date with this table

Networks Northwest will have a preliminary draft of the Goals and Objectives section of the plan for review at the next Commission meeting. Elizabeth anticipated possibly having a preliminary draft of the entire plan ready for review at the April meeting.

VI. Townships, Cities, MDEQ & Corps of Engineers Items

Melrose Township Proposed Rezone (Benz)

The Planning Commission and Staff reviewed the proposed rezoning of two parcels totaling 21.95 acres, owned by Lee and Claire Benz, and located on the east side of Old State Road in Section 30 of Melrose Township, from Agricultural to Rural Residential Conservation Design. Larry Levensgood asked about the Melrose Township Planning Commission’s review of the proposed rezoning. Kiersten said the Township Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval of the rezoning. Kiersten explained that Randy Frykberg (Melrose Township Planner/Zoning Administrator) had prepared a detailed memo describing the proposed rezoning, so her Staff Review was scaled back to include primarily supplemental information, such as an aerial map of the subject properties, the Township Zoning Map, and the Township Future Land Use Map.

Larry Levensgood asked about putting model homes on the property when there is already an existing home on one of the parcels. Kiersten wasn’t sure of the property owner’s plans for placement of the model homes. Levensgood also asked about the minimum lot size in the Rural Residential Conservation Design district. Kiersten noted that the goal in this district is to cluster homes and leave ample open space.

MOTION by Larry Levensgood to concur with the Melrose Township Planning Commission and recommend approval of the proposed rezoning. Bob Draves seconded the motion. Voice vote: all in favor. Motion passed.

MDEQ Public Notice (Road Commission) – South Arm Township

The Planning Commission and Staff reviewed the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) Public Notice for the proposed project by the Charlevoix County Road Commission to replace an existing culvert at the Ellsworth Road crossing of St. Clair Creek in South Arm Township. Kiersten noted this is part of a larger project to improve Ellsworth Road this year. Commissioner Reinhardt explained that concrete box culverts last longer than the corrugated steel culverts, and the DEQ prefers the box culverts because they're seated in the ground in a way that provides an easier passage for fish.

MOTION by Larry Levensgood to send a letter of support for this project to the MDEQ because it is in the public interest. Dennis Jason seconded the motion. Voice vote: All in favor. Motion passed.

VII. Any Unfinished County Business

None

VIII. Adjournment

MOTION by Bob Draves to adjourn the meeting. All members were in favor of the motion. Motion passed.

Chairman Jason adjourned the meeting at 9:42 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted By,

Robert L. Tidmore
Secretary

RLT/kc