

FINAL
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE
****SPECIAL** PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

Monday, March 6, 2023
2009 Township Drive
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

A. CALL TO ORDER: Vice Chairperson Winkler called the meeting to order at 5:31pm.

ROLL CALL: Present: Brian Winkler, Vice Chairperson
Bill McKeever
George Weber
Joe Loskill
Brady Phillips
Absent: Brian Parel, Chairperson (excused)
Sam Karim (excused)
Also Present: Dave Campbell, Township Planning Director
Paula Lankford, Township Planner
Mark Gall, Township Fire Marshal
Jill Bahm, Partner, Giffels Webster
Rose Kim, Staff Planner, Giffels Webster
Julia Upfal, Planner, Giffels Webster

B. APPROVAL OF THE SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

MOTION by Loskill, supported by McKeever, to approve the Planning Commission Regular Meeting Agenda of March 6, 2023, as presented.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

C. MASTER LAND USE PLAN REVIEW

Work session of the 2015 Master Land Use Plan update focusing on the Commercial Center area.

Jill Bahm – Thank you for those of you who did participate in our survey and sent the email of wants and don't wants. We will summarize to show you how that ended up. Most of the time, you are all on the same page, but there's a few things where we really diverge. Part of that tonight is let's bring that together. The ultimate goal is to be able to take a look at the commercial center area and come up with some big picture ideas of the direction that we want to go, and then some of the framework of land uses, building form, connectivity, and general impact for opportunity sites. Then we can move up to discussion on the north end in a bit more detail. There, we are less tuned into each site and what would be developed there, but sort of a bigger picture of what we see in this area. Largely, we've all identified it as primarily being residential, except for a couple sites that have larger road frontage that maybe we can see in other ways.

Discussions took place regarding the survey results provided in the packet and the data within the presentation that was being brought up on the screen.

Rose Kim – As Jill said, we're hoping to reach some amount of consensus today and reconcile some of the differences that we saw between the Commissioners. For the

Commercial Center, actually the results were not as dissimilar as they are in the north end.

A lot of the strengths, as you can see, have to do with high visibility, access to M-5, and the potential for the Five & Main Development. There was some agreement on expanding nonmotorized connections. In terms of weaknesses, there are challenges due to the traffic congestion. In terms of types of development, regional destination uses are important to complement Five & Main, which we discussed at our last meeting. Then minimizing traffic impacts, and potentially also having a business, educational or medical campus or headquarters that is a job generator.

What was “not wanted” included convenience or auto-oriented uses; things that would generate high traffic, multi-family apartment buildings, rentals, outdoor storage, environmentally risky industrial operations, and different uses that would compete with Five & Main.

We will be going through the north end later, but I’ll just introduce it. The top assets and strengths are the strong residential neighborhoods and opportunities to enjoy parks and recreation in the area. As for top challenges and weaknesses; conflicting residential land uses, improvements needed in Commerce Village to help foster a sense of identity, and then just some opportunities with nonmotorized transportation connections. And even still managing the threat of over-development and increasing traffic.

Phillips – When we talk about improved pedestrian safety, have we had incidents or is that just a comment that people say they don’t want to walk because they’re concerned about their safety?

Jill Bahm – We can look it up on SEMCOG to see what the traffic safety data is, if there's traffic crash data and provide that.

Phillips – But is that comment because people have said they just don’t feel good walking along the road?

Jill Bahm – Right, and I think it’s anecdotal too. Do you feel like you can walk safely or ride your bike?

Phillips – It depends on where I’m going. I can understand that. I was just curious.

Dave Campbell – We do hear from folks, particularly along Union Lake Road, especially where the road passes Union Lake, that there is no safe way to walk along that stretch, whether it be the shoulder or anything else.

Phillips – Also as a driver, I notice people wearing black clothing with no reflectors of any kind.

Jill Bahm – Yes, absolutely.

Weber – I think Union Lake Road, Bogie Lake Road, Commerce Road; we’ve had comments that kids can’t walk to the Library, or they can’t come down Bogie Lake Road because it’s 50mph.

Paula Lankford – And people are texting and veering off the road.

Dave Campbell – We heard from the students at the session at Walled Lake Northern; even if they wanted to walk or ride their bikes to school, there's no real safe route to do so. Part of that is because the school chose that location. If you think about getting from Walled Lake Northern to the Commerce Village, there's no real safe way to do so, on foot or on a bike.

Jill Bahm – Especially when think about the early mornings and sending kids out in the dark on Wise Road, Carroll Lake Road or Cooley Lake Road.

Loskill – I live immediately adjacent to the high school in the Hills of Bogie Lake and we know not to go out half an hour before school starts because it's just a traffic jam. There's no way kids can get there besides being dropped off or the buses coming in.

Dave Campbell – Or driving themselves.

Phillips – So what is the cost per mile for a bike or walking path?

Weber – More than a million.

Dave Campbell – Obviously it is relative. Around here, it can get expensive when you're contending with lakes and wetlands, which we have an abundance of. A million dollars a mile is not unreasonable.

Weber – We keep hearing it is. Now I don't know whether that is for concrete, industrial grade, 5' wide, or if that's an asphalt path.

Dave Campbell – Not to get too far off track, but we just talked to one of our new State Representatives, we have three now, and he asked us what project he should advocate for to get it into the State budget. We said we want to get a safe way from our new Commerce Library to and across the intersection of Commerce and Carroll Lake Roads, and to do so, our engineer estimated that would be a million dollar project. It's maybe 1,000 feet.

Jill Bahm – There is some boardwalk there.

Dave Campbell – Yes, and maybe that's not a fair example because that would have a lot of boardwalk, but there's a lot of places where we would have to have boardwalk to get across the wetland and that's where it gets really expensive.

Jill Bahm – Right. And the idea between sidewalks and pathways; bicyclists can't use a 5' wide sidewalk. You're putting pedestrians at risk then. Those are best served for areas that cyclists comfortable on the roads, which tend to be in our residential neighborhoods. Some subdivisions do have that.

Rose Kim – Pathways were part of the vision that the Commission agreed upon. Neighborhood small town commercial development would be a possibility in the north end. And then generally, low density residential. Not wanted would be higher intensity uses, larger commercial or industrial uses, and auto-oriented uses.

On here, the red text is where there is some disagreement between the Commissioners. The green text shows where there is generally some consensus. The image to the right, if you did the exercise, shows the percent residential that a Commissioner might have selected for any given site, and the X axis would be amount of density from low to high. For Commerce and Carey, there was a bit of disagreement on how intense or how much density the residential components might look like for Long Farm. Similarly, there was a bit of disagreement about low versus high density, and some interest in continuing the use as agricultural compared to residential.

For the Walled Lake School property adjacent to Commerce Elementary, similar to Long Farm, there was some advocacy for greenspace, but some Commission members were open to suburban or medium density residential.

I think with Commerce Village, we tended to see a fair amount of consensus there in terms of what that might look like. Then there is less agreement here at the Walled Lake Schools property adjacent to Victory Park.

Phillips – So the red is where this group didn't really agree on the content?

Rose Kim – Yes, correct. With that Walled Lake Schools property, some Commissioners were open to keeping that vacant, or with a strong parks or greenspace component. Others thought it might be a spot for single-family residential. There was however some agreement with it being incompatible for higher volume uses. With the golf courses, similarly, some Commissioners were open to keeping that as is, while others would be open to single-family residential. With the drive-in site, there were a lot of potential ways that could go. Martin Parkway being extended was mentioned twice, but others were open to it being residential or less environmentally risky light manufacturing or technology uses.

Dave Campbell – Some of you may already know this; an update on the Bay Pointe site. There is a buyer, and a purchase agreement has been made between Bay Pointe and the Chaldean Catholic Church. The Church's intent is to plant another church on the Bay Pointe property. They're looking at either repurposing the existing clubhouse and using that as a church, or if they find that the clubhouse can't be repurposed because of it's size and configuration, building a new church on the property. That is their priority. In the near term, they want to keep it as an 18-hole golf course. In the not so near term, they're thinking they would keep 9 holes in the swampier area, and the more high and dry 9 holes would probably be developed with some form of residential. They don't know what that would be yet. They've talked about having it be senior living, targeted toward members of the Chaldean Church so they can walk to their church and to activities. I've invited their reps to come to our meeting in April to talk to us more about their intent.

Loskill and Dave Campbell discussed pricing of the Bay Pointe property.

Phillips – Going back to your assessment of the input, in areas where you had feedback and we don't have a consensus. What is our process to talk about our different opinions and what we think is the right use of the land? How do we get to some resolution on what we want to do for the future?

Jill Bahm – I think we're getting to that point. We always like to throw in our guiding principles here, but as we get to those sites ... We're going to start with the Commercial Center, and when we get to the North End, it's going to be discussion for all of you on those comments and reasoning.

Julia Upfal – We do have some activities to help guide you through that as we move through the presentation. To set the tone, these are the guiding themes that frame the decision-making throughout the master planning process. We talked before about what an area plan is and why we're focusing on the area plans. Today, we are looking for consensus with land use, transportation, and the general intent for the opportunity sites. At the last meeting, when we talked about the commercial center, the Planning Commission talked about destination or anchor uses and how to consider the appropriate ancillary uses that would surround them, and how to complement Five & Main and not detract from its success.

In order to develop new uses that have a reduced focus on the automobile, it's imperative to provide access for users without a vehicle. Some key considerations of that are proximity to residential land uses, proximity to business or office land uses, and nonmotorized transportation facilities. Mixed use developments that include a residential component help bolster foot traffic and reduce auto dependency.

I have a few case studies of some different mixed use developments throughout the country.

Julia reviewed mixed use developments in Orland Park, Illinois, Glendale Wisconsin, Easton, which is in the Columbus suburbs, and Avalon in Alpharetta, Georgia. She presented demographic changes related to each development.

Jill Bahm – Those are our Five & Main type developments. We wanted to study those to see what they did around those communities, and the short answer is not much. As we were looking at Google street views and aerials, what they did is a lot of standalone big box retail, and very auto-oriented everywhere else. That's not exactly what we've talked about here.

Weber – I'm familiar with Avalon. I've been there several times. I'm familiar with Columbus. It's like you said, they put in their version of a Five & Main, and then everybody latched on around it; car washes, drive-throughs and anybody that could latch onto the traffic that was going there. To be honest, it's just not nice. I think we need to protect against that, and I think we are because we're landlocked a little bit more than those were.

Julia Upfal – If you look around Easton, I thought one interesting thing was that there were more high-end luxury uses. You had Whole Foods, the Sax office, and the Jaguar, Land Rover, Mercedes dealers. They were all around that, but they were still very auto-oriented and had these huge surface lots.

Vice Chairperson Winkler – That brings to mind two things. The most recent development you referenced is from 2014. Have there been any similar, large scale developments since then, or has that been a victim of the demise of retail?

Julia Upfal – No, the focus of my research was that I was trying to look for developments where we could see some of the impact, so I didn't want to choose something more recent, but I do think that retail's decline has had a big effect everywhere. I think this is the kind of development that retail is moving toward. If it is going to be successful, it needs to have that walkable, small scale feel that attracts people so that they want to go there and not the enclosed mall. I think those days are gone.

Vice Chairperson Winkler – And residential is part every development.

Julia Upfal – Yes.

Loskill – The idea is to build in your customer base. That's the whole idea, to have uses that everybody will use every day. You're taking a neighborhood and combining it into a single structure. That's what they've been doing, and that's the next generation of where retail is going.

Jill Bahm – And it's not just to have your customers baked into your development, but it's also to promote that around the clock activity. We were just talking about another community this morning and I said, every time I drive through that little downtown, it seems empty to me. There's nobody around during the day and that's probably because there aren't a lot of people who live right there.

Julia Upfal – I provided some visual examples of different types of destination development. The first few slides are campus type developments, medical, headquarters, R&D, academics. It's all kind of in that same scope of what we'd like the look and feel to be. These are examples of what a mixed-use campus would look like. This is what we're calling a natural beauty campus with native plantings, taking advantage of wetlands and really focusing on the landscaping, open spaces and trails. Then there is the more traditional campus layout where you drive in and the first thing you see is available parking. The silent architecture is more traditional office style. I think there is a range of what we can do here, and the appropriate zoning regulation will ensure that we develop the type of uses that look the way the Planning Commission wants them to look.

We also talked about connections on campuses. I know we had mentioned a pedestrian tunnel or the United Wholesale pedestrian bridge in Pontiac. Just adding some trails and walking paths throughout a development like this allows employees to enjoy their afternoon walking around and also make connections more easily and safely. And having wayfinding to make sure that the pathways are accessible ensures that people will use them and take full advantage.

The other segment of destination uses we will talk about are amusement; entertainment and recreation uses. The images here are an event center, a legacy center, Emagine and Top Golf. There are some important considerations that come with these uses. We're going to think about excessive service parking, what is the seasonality of the use, how often does it operate? Is the use accommodating the needs of residents or visitors? What is the potential for economic impact? And, what is the spillover effect for the rest of the community? Are people going to go there and then drive straight home, or are they going to go there and spend time here in Commerce Township?

When we are talking about ancillary land uses that would complement the destination uses, there are some important considerations and some strategies that we can employ. We can use some strategies to reduce auto dependency by including housing and hotels for employees and visitors, limits on parking and drive-throughs in the front or side, limits on standalone drive-throughs, making sure that drive-throughs are in buildings that have more than one business in them, potential to implement form-based code or design standards, seek out uses that are complementary to Five & Main, and consider the future shifts in population and demand. The 65+ segment is going to increase by 46%, and I think an important caveat there is to also consider how you retain a multigenerational community when you know that segment will grow so much. How do you continue to accommodate residents while attracting and retaining younger populations?

That brings us to our activity. You all have stickers in front of you and the board behind Paula has two columns; one for campuses and one for attractions, and then different uses that we might see as ancillary uses on a site surrounding that. With each of your stickers, green would be permitted, yellow would be permitted with conditions, and red would not be permitted at all. Vote for what you think should or should not be permitted as an ancillary use for the different types of destinations.

Weber – Getting to Brady’s question, when this evening will we have a discussion on the look and feel of what we want? You said it was coming later. Is it now?

Jill Bahm – I think two things. One, that can be the objective with this exercise. Also, I do think we need to talk about what we mean by townhouses and apartments because density is something that came up on both sides of that. We can have that conversation first if you’d rather do that.

Weber – I think we need to know some kind of a definition.

Jill Bahm – I thought we might need to talk about that before you can put dots on there, at least the housing part of it. Any kind of housing that we’re talking about here, I think it’s first helpful to understand, whether we’re talking headquarters, academic, R&D, medical campus type developments, which I think was primarily the vision for the Beaumont and Williams International sites, right. If we think about that, that’s a different kind of housing. We’re talking about the kind of people who might want to live near there and the kinds of goods and services that they might need around there. Whereas the event centers, amusement and recreational, those might be things that are closer in. I don’t know if that’s Rock Road either, but if we go to the maps we can look at that in more detail as well. Are there any styles or did any images up here resonate with you either way, good or bad?

Weber – We almost have to talk about each of those properties separately. What is Williams zoned right now?

Dave Campbell – Industrial.

Weber – And it’s industrial manufacturing. Are we talking about changing that significantly from an industrial manufacturing TLM area to mixed-use?

Jill Bahm – That’s the question. When we say mixed-used, I think the overall implication is that there is a major overall use, and the other mixing in of uses are truly ancillary.

Weber – The mixing in is residential?

Jill Bahm – Or it could be commercial business services for people who work there or nearby. Does that make sense there in those locations?

Weber – I’m kind of torn. In reading the discussion, I thought you had a great discussion last month, and in reading Dave’s infamous interview in Public Notice Weekly. Our first topic on our guiding principles was keeping the community vibe and feel that Commerce is, which is the most important and the first priority. When I’m hearing on what we’ve evolved to, and in what the communities around us are evolving to, our residents now would be happy ... It’s everybody, not in my backyard, nobody wants anything new in their backyard. But, every community around us is jamming in high-density residential. That’s Walled Lake, Wixom, Milford, White Lake, Bloomfield Hills, Novi. It’s an explosion of 3 to 4-story apartments, lots of high density. I see and I’ve been reading that there is a national need for this.

I’ll go back to my mousetrap; just because you have a better mousetrap, doesn’t mean you need another mousetrap. Maybe we can be different by not moving in that direction. Maybe we can be the community that really limits. We already have 1,200 rental homes. We’ve added 1,000 apartments in the last 5 years, or approved over 1,000. Some are built and some will be built. We have three large assisted living, which I view as apartments, on top of those. Then when I see this, as we’re talking mixed-use, with adding additional residential on top of that ... Joe and Brady were having somewhat of a debate, at least I got that out of the meeting minutes. That just opened my eyes on saying, do we want to go down this path?

I’m the one who was voting that Walled Lake should be kept greenspace, because I see this explosion of apartments and high-density housing, and maybe it’s an opportunity for us to be different, and therefore we can be a destination or a choice for those that actually want more single-family residential. I see that as we are shaping these discussions, and maybe because I’m blind to it, I never even would have thought about adding some of those mixed-uses to Williams International. Not that it’s wrong, I was just oblivious to that, versus some kind of a corporate office setting and something that could really be a jobs creator for people that are living here to find a good wage of employment.

Loskill – On the slide before us, what I’d like to see at Five & Main, I wouldn’t mind a mixed-use development like this as something there as a hub for activity. I see the two sites out on 15 and M-5 as something completely different. They shouldn’t be primarily retail focused. We’ve got plenty of that. They need to be like the technology campus, or light manufacturing, something that has a high-end presence visually with the building, and can be a job magnet, not just an entertainment magnet. That’s what I think would be the most beneficial use of those two sites, because they’ve got great access to the expressway systems, and you’re getting people in before we get to the traffic congestion. It’s a great place to develop something where you’re not really affecting what’s happening north of there. I don’t really think adding retail is a good component at that location. Now you may add it as part of the overall development, but I wouldn’t make it the primary focus because I think retail is so hard to deal with right now and you

don't know where it's going to be in 20 years. Most of those may be gone. Malls may be gone completely.

Weber – Dave, do we have extra copies of Aikens book that he put together on Five & Main? I don't know if everybody has seen that.

Loskill – Just send us the download.

Weber – I think that would be helpful for people if they haven't seen what the vision is.

Dave Campbell – Yes, we can do that. Keep in mind, it has been 5 or 6 years since that vision was approved, and it's constantly evolving in the mind of Aikens and everybody he's trying to work with.

Loskill – Well he's having the same problems that every other developer has had in the country. You've got an overabundance of retail space, while retail is contracting. New markets are coming out and new people are getting into retail because they find it's helpful to have a bricks and mortar presence in some spots, but retail is going to be completely different in 5 years than it was 5 years ago. While I think it's great at Five & Main and that's a good location for it, I'd like to see something besides that at the other two.

Weber – When we're talking about the commercial center, it's three properties. For myself, I've just always viewed them as three distinct properties and very different uses for all three of them.

Loskill – I can see the Beaumont and Williams properties, if somebody came in with an overarching program that could utilize the two sides there, that would be remarkable. Rock Road, I don't see that as a really viable site. The length and width on that is just ridiculous. I may not have gotten my responses to you, I goofed something up, but what I see for Rock Road as its highest, best use, would be some sort of a public connector between the two big trail systems. You could put in parking, restrooms, a bicycle repair shop, a couple of food truck pods.

You could do something that would be a small draw onto itself, but serve the two other public functions it's adjacent to. I don't see that as really tying into the other two properties. I think that needs to find its own use. Unless you combine it with the Homedics property, I don't think you're going to get somebody to come in and buy it because it has very little view, it has no presence on any major road. You can't really see it and advertise it from M-5, but it would make a great connector and mini park between the two trail systems.

Vice Chairperson Winkler – I agree with you about the Rock Road property. It's almost like an orphan up there and has been for many years. I'm always a devil's advocate here. George, you talked about the residential component, being multi-family, and not advantageous or desired in Commerce Township, but as we found out with Five & Main, Aikens can't get financing without the residential component, so that's what's driving all of these.

Then you talk about possibly Williams International being some kind of corporate campus. We talked about retail going down, and now they're talking about how office

space is becoming a lot less valuable than it has been. At my company, we're only in the office two days per week, and I go in one day a week. For the other three days, depending on where people live, some people walk to work simply to get out of the house. But I think Randy Thomas would tell us that the office space market is really changing to the negative and I don't see that changing any time soon. I like the idea of one of those spaces being a corporate campus, but I'm not sure what the demand is right now. Unless there is a company that is humongous that wants to downsize into a smaller campus. What's really underutilized, depending on soils, is Williams International property to Robert Long Park. That site, at least part of it, might be better suited to residential, single-family, or maybe condos, but the proximity to the park is way under-utilized. It lends itself to both a corporate campus that's focused that way, or to residential.

Loskill – I don't think single-family homes would be a mistake anywhere here. I would be more in favor of single-family residential than apartments, because of the proliferation of apartments we've already got. I'd like to be more restrictive as to what we approve, because I don't think we need to let every developer come in here with a max development scheme. We need to start looking at making our sites a little bit more environmentally friendly. Maybe we can look at updating the building code to reduce some of the density in some of these spots so as George said, we become a higher-end product rather than just another mass marketer. We have a great spot here, at the end of M-5, off 696. We half an hour access to Ann Arbor and Detroit. You've got an opportunity to be the high-end alternate to the mass market surrounding us.

Vice Chairperson Winkler – You bring to mind something, and George you might remember this. About 3 or 4 years ago, there was a survey done about people coming to Michigan from the far east for auto companies. When they talked the two places that they'd like to settle, the first was Ann Arbor, and the second was Commerce Township. They talked about Commerce Township being very appealing to that particular market segment. I'd like to make a suggestion that we do your rating and then finish up with any other thoughts you might have. We want to button this up by 6:45

Jill Bahm – I think that's good. What I'm hearing so far, that's sounding like it's emerging as a consensus, even though some of you haven't said anything yet; job center, job creation, office.

Loskill – Non-retail job creation.

Jill Bahm – Right, good, well-paying jobs to be located in this area. I think that's a fit for this location for all the reasons you've highlighted. I think it's consistent with what's around it and it doesn't compete with Five & Main, which as we said is really one of our goals. But then the next question is, where are those people going to live that work at those high-paying jobs, that don't want to be in their cars because that's why they want to work from home.

Loskill – I'm not opposed to having a residential component to a development.

Weber – We have 500 apartments being built within a half a mile of that location. We've got 300 coming into Five & Main. We've got 187 at Midtown.

Dave Campbell – Not anytime soon.

Loskill – Barrington.

Weber – Okay, well Pontiac Trail and Decker, there's a couple hundred that have just have been built that are now empty. Across the street at West Bloomfield. There are new apartments and new townhomes within a one-mile radius, there are hundreds that are either open or soon to be.

Jill Bahm – Okay, so those are the target areas where we would say we are now providing the linkages, because we are giving people places to shop and places to work, not having cars out on the road, and not continuing that sprawling environment that everybody else has. Maybe the Master Plan says something to the effect of, we know there's a lot of multi-family residential coming in the next couple of years. At our next 5-year review, we should take a look at how that multi-family has developed and what the demand has been.

Loskill – What are the occupancy rates and rental rates.

Jill Bahm – Right.

Weber – Even if they fill up, it's okay to be different.

Jill Bahm – You're still below everybody else with multi-family in terms of percentage of house. That might just be something to not necessarily have a target for, but I think working with corporate headquarters, offices or manufacturing companies to find out what their workforce needs and what we need to do to bring them here. That's really more of a proactive economic development strategy and program, because if you just sit back and wait ...

Loskill – It's not going to happen.

Jill Bahm – Right, so we're being really intentional about what we're saying is appropriate here, and all of the things that you've talked about are great. I think even the idea of Rock Road being a connection, it certainly can serve that hub. We know it wasn't a spectacular redevelopment site. We'll be thinking more about what the trade-off's could be, maybe some kind of public-private partnership. That's a great hub for the region.

Loskill – It could be because you've got everything right there, with the two trails and Five & Main. You could run shuttles from there over to Five & Main, to the restaurants and shops.

Jill Bahm – Well, people could go on bikes or walk over if we make it safe enough.

Loskill – That could be a bit of a walk for some of the older folks.

Julia Upfal – Does the Township have an understanding of what the Brownfield status is of the three properties, and what will be required to develop all three of them? Have there been any environmental assessments done?

Dave Campbell – The Beaumont property, yes. The Williams International property, not that I've ever seen although I hear urban legends. And, same answer for the Rock Road properties, I don't know that anybody has ever done an environmental assessment there.

Julia Upfal – Would the Township be interested in taking ownership, if it were to be a trailhead? Is that within the realm of things that the Township could do?

Dave Campbell – I don't write the checks for the Township. If we are talking specifically about the Rock Road properties, I think the guy who owns most of those properties has a pretty high price in mind of what his properties are worth, given their proximity to the Five & Main site.

Discussions continued regarding the Rock Road properties.

Jill Bahm – I don't know that we need to do the exercise because we are looking at the time, and we've heard, you don't really want much else there besides what we've talked about. But I think we should talk about building form. I'm sensing this is not a desirable building form necessarily.

Loskill – For Five & Main.

Jill Bahm – Right, but not for a manufacturing campus, office, high-tech.

Weber – Are we talking about Williams property? Not the Beaumont.

Jill Bahm – I think if we said both, it could either be one big one, or it could be two or more.

Loskill – I don't mind the idea of doing that as single-family residential. That would be a great spot on that corner with access to the park and the trails at Williams International. At Beaumont, you could do the corporate office or educational.

Weber – Who owns the property of the businesses that are back in there at Williams?

Paula Lankford – The one that runs parallel to Welch, that's just an individual who owns it and they're individually leased.

Weber – That's a pretty big chunk of land he's got there.

Dave Campbell – I'm looking at the clock while I ask this question. You thought there was a distinction between the three properties and the commercial center. Help me understand that distinction between Beaumont on the north side of Maple and Williams on the south side of Maple.

Weber – I bought your sales pitch on it being a destination site; where people go as a destination, and not as a traffic churner.

Dave Campbell – And you're thinking that only applies to Beaumont?

Weber – I am open to that. I drive past Harmon every day and I think wouldn't that have been cool if that was sitting on the Williams property. While office isn't there, you still have manufacturing and engineering being forced back to the office because productivity has declined as a result of some of those entities. Something along that line, but I don't know how you make that attractive.

Julia Upfal – This is Lake Trust Headquarters on the top right. That's one of my favorite office buildings.

Vice Chairperson Winkler – The Williams site has potential for that.

Loskill – So does Beaumont.

Dave Campbell – Both of those properties lend themselves to a natural beauty campus given the wetlands, and also on the south side you've got Robert Long Park, and on the north side you've got the Michigan Airline Trail which I think is an asset.

Loskill – Absolutely, to be able to tie that in with your corporate culture. You've got access to these trails right there.

Phillips – I made note earlier reviewing this that the natural beauty campus is definitely preferential.

Loskill – But you have to go out and hunt that one down. It's not going to come knocking at your door. You'll have to engage a firm to find somebody to take that site.

Jill Bahm – And communities do that all the time. You can create such a pitch for them that they just can't refuse. There's also potential for an incentive program. That's something to think about. This does get to that idea that people don't want to go into the office anymore, but if they had a nice place to go, maybe it would be really attractive. Are you thinking this is one user for each site, or could it be multiple buildings?

Loskill – I think it could be multiple buildings. I think if we had our fantasy, we'd love to see one overarching use that would create a gateway into Commerce, that would be a natural beauty campus on both sides, create jobs, not a lot of traffic, and not be a competing use with Five & Main. We can walk back from the fantasy a bit to deal with reality.

Phillips – I think nature, natural beauty and open space is a common theme for Commerce Township. I think we should try to include that in everything we do.

Julia Upfal – I think there's consensus there that you want that natural beauty aesthetic, but there are other components of building form that we want to consider. I've listed a few up here, and I didn't know if the Planning Commission had any strong opinions

either way on any of these things. I think if we focus on the natural beauty campus idea and get rid of the other columns, do you have strong feelings about building heights or where it should be in relation to the right of way? At the bottom there are examples of different building frontages. Are there building materials you don't want to see?

Weber – I think if you go back to your pictures a few slides ago.

Loskill – Worrying about this is something to deal with when you have a prospective tenant going in there.

McKeever – Well we will need a lot of those items written into our building code.

Loskill – We're looking for a first-class development. I would do this more in general terms. Something that is going to reflect positively, both in its architecture and its surrounding with the values of Commerce Township and what we want to see.

Julia Upfal – What you're saying is you want to give the developer a lot of freedom with respect to design, which can be a good thing because they can deliver something really innovative, but it can also perhaps create some challenges too if you're not very prescriptive about what you want.

Loskill – We can describe what we want in general terms as to its function, how it operates, and the types of operations, rather than specific parameters. We need to be open at this point because we're not going to get our fantasy. We need describe what we want to see as our vision for these two areas. We want to see natural spaces incorporated into the design. We want to see parking lots that are hidden from view from the major roadways. We don't want to see a lot of drive-through ancillary parcels along with it. By creating this list of things we want to see and things we don't want to see, we can zero in on what the developer needs to do in order to get something that would be acceptable to the Township.

Jill Bahm – Is everybody understanding and agreeing with all that?

Dave Campbell – Correct me if I'm wrong, but I think we would also appreciate that a lot of the value of those properties is their proximity and visibility to M-5. So to tell a developer they have to meet a 500 foot setback from the road would take away from the values.

Loskill – I'm looking for somebody to come in and come up with a creative solution. I don't want to prescribe something that could be on 12 Mile. I want them to come in to see what kind of campus they can create.

Weber – What is the first priority for the site? It's not so much the building, it's the business. If we find the right business, the right corporate partner ... I'm not looking for a developer.

Loskill – We need somebody to go out and aggressively market the site, rather than waiting for something to drop in our laps.

Jill Bahm – And you can certainly do that. I think this has been really helpful. I think we got a lot from you, considering where we started at the beginning. I feel like there was consensus here. It's completely fine that we did not get to the north end. I think we feel like we achieved something today on the commercial center. I'm not sure we will be at the April meeting. We may have to talk to you about a different date.

Phillips – I would be open to a special meeting if we needed to do it. I hate to go in month long increments.

Vice Chairperson Winkler – I think a lot of good ideas have gone back and forth and we will keep chipping away.

Next Regular Meeting Date: March 6, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

D. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Weber, supported by Phillips, to adjourn the meeting at 6:44pm.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Joe Loskill, Secretary