

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

Monday, May 2, 2011  
2009 Township Drive  
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

**CALL TO ORDER:** Tom Jones, sitting as Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**ROLL CALL:** Present: Tom Jones, Vice Chairperson  
Brian Winkler, Secretary  
Bill McKeever  
Debra Kirkwood  
Jay James  
Absent: Larry Haber, Chairperson (excused)  
Dave Spencer (excused)  
Also Present: Kathleen Jackson, Planning Director

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION** by Kirkwood, supported by McKeever, to approve the Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of April 4, 2011, with the following changes:

1. Page 1, add (excused) for those absent
2. Relocate Motion from Page 4 to Page 2 for SP10-25-11 Dunkin Donuts as it was removed from the table prior to concurrent discussion
3. Page 5, correct Motion at bottom of page for Comcast Addition site plan from Item "SU 10-10-07" to "SP 10-10-17"

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**UPDATE OF ACTIVITIES**

Debra Kirkwood – Township Board of Trustees

- There was a special discussion meeting last week.
- The Township Board met with the Library Advisory Board to discuss whether to renovate the current library building or look for new property.
- There was an open position in the Building Department for which there were two applicants. Jay James was appointed at an hourly rate as a contract person. I have nothing against Jay, but I did express my concerns as the union employee who was previously laid off was not recalled.
- There is consideration of going to a 4-day work week, at 37.5 hours. Days are hours are yet undetermined, but 37.5 will coincide with the union contract.

Bill McKeever – Zoning Board of Appeals

- One variance was denied to build a pavilion off of Commerce Lake.
- A second item was tabled.

Kathleen Jackson – There will be a special Zoning Board of Appeals meeting on May 19<sup>th</sup> at 5pm.

## Planning Commission Meeting

**PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

None

**ITEM I: Z10-02 – COMMERCE TOWNSHIP – TEXT AMENDMENT – Tabled from 12-6-10**

An amendment to the Commerce Township Zoning Ordinance No. 3.000, Article XXVI, to add a Section entitled, Wind Energy Conversion Systems (WECS), to establish procedures and standards for the installation and operation of such.

**MOTION** by Kirkwood, supported by James, to remove Item Z10-02 from the table.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Kathleen Jackson gave a review. This is basically the same ordinance as presented back in October. Lisa Spaugh was here to speak to the Commission in March. This ordinance attempts to provide for small and medium type WECS. These are limited to tower and building mounted. Large WECS were eliminated as they are unlikely, and they do not fit with the vision for the Township. This will provide for what is likely or possible in Commerce and is a proactive approach. It remains to be seen if this will even be probable. The request is for a recommendation to the Township Board for Introduction of this text amendment if the Commission sees fit.

**Commission Comments:**

Kirkwood –

- I still have misgivings on it.
- I'm wondering if we will get several others who want to install but will be unable to without an amendment.

Kathleen Jackson – About a year ago, we had a lot of inquiries, but not a lot of installations; and, since then, the requests have diminished. At this stage, my feelings are that we need to be more restrictive than lenient. We can change the text if applicants can not meet these requirements.

James –

- So a residential parcel with a 2 acre lot can have a tower at 60', but if they have 5 acres they can exceed 60'.
- If they have 3 acres, can they only go to 60' or less?

Kathleen Jackson clarified that 120' is the maximum height permitted to the top of the blade. The tower can be over 60' if it's on a 5 acre parcel, but they still have to maintain the 20' clearance from the ground to the bottom of the blade.

With the minimum clearance, setbacks, etc., I think we have a relatively safe comfort level established and we're not likely to see a windmill falling into someone's yard.

With this text, you have the discretion under Special Land Use and site plan review provisions. This process protects us, but it is ultimately up to the Planning Commission to make a recommendation to the Township Board, and the Township Board to approve or deny.

**ITEM I: Z10-02 – COMMERCE TOWNSHIP – TEXT AMENDMENT – Tabled from 12-6-10**

As technology changes, this could be moot. Funding and advancements can affect this significantly, so we will keep up with the changes proactively.

Winkler –

- I agree with Kathleen. This is going to be a work in progress that develops over time.
- I assume this text also applies to any of the barrel type WECS? (Yes, because those are also building mounted.)
- The barrels may be desirable, more for their aesthetics than for their power generation qualities.
- I also agree with Kathleen that we should be more restrictive now. It will be easier to loosen the requirements later versus attempting to tighten them.

**MOTION** by James, supported by Kirkwood, that the Planning Commission recommend for consideration of Introduction, to the Commerce Township Board of Trustees, Item Z10-02, an amendment to the Commerce Township Zoning Ordinance No. 3.000, Article XXVI, to add a Section entitled, Wind Energy Conversion Systems (WECS), to establish procedures and standards for the installation and operation of such.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**ITEM II: Z10-03 – COMMERCE TOWNSHIP – TEXT AMENDMENT – Tabled from 12-6-10**

An amendment to the Commerce Township Zoning Ordinance No. 3.000, Article XXXIII, Section 33.02, to establish new language for all types of fences on both street and waterfront required yards.

**MOTION** by McKeever, supported by Kirkwood, to remove Item Z10-03 from the table.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Kathleen Jackson gave a review. There are lots of requests for fences. Residents want protection, privacy and separation. This needs to be done in a manner that does not obscure the view.

One addition remains to be made on the report under Article 33, Item A. 1. a.: add to the end of the paragraph after “...*overall design of the principal structure.*” A definition was also added for “ornamental”.

**MOTION** by Kirkwood, supported by James, that the Planning Commission recommend for consideration of Introduction, to the Commerce Township Board of Trustees, Item Z10-03, an amendment to the Commerce Township Zoning Ordinance No. 3.000, Article XXXIII, Section 33.02, to establish new language for all types of fences on both street and waterfront required yards.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Planning Commission Meeting**

**ITEM III: Z11-01 – COMMERCE TOWNSHIP – TEXT AMENDMENT – PUBLIC HEARING**

Charter Township of Commerce is requesting an amendment to the Commerce Township Zoning Ordinance No. 3.000, Article XXX, to amend wall signs with respect to buildings with parking lot rear entrances.

Chairperson Jones opened the public hearing

No comments.

Chairperson Jones closed the public hearing as there were no additional questions or comments.

Kathleen Jackson gave a review. The Zoning Ordinance only provides for 1 sq. ft. of signage per lineal foot of frontage. In the adopted overlay districts, we encourage placing buildings closer to the road, with parking in the rear; therefore, the rear entrances now serve as a secondary or primary entrance as opposed to just a service entrance but the Ordinance only provides for a 2 square foot sign on the rear.

At the January Planning Commission meeting, the consensus was to provide 1 sq. ft. per lineal foot of frontage for front signage, and .5 sq. ft. for the rear signage. .5 should be sufficient as motorists are not traveling more than 5-10mph in these parking areas behind the buildings. Language was also added to account for signage being displayed on canopies or awnings.

**Commission Comments:**

James – Is there a maximum total size?

Kathleen Jackson – 200 sq. ft. on the front, but no maximum on the rear. We could add a maximum of 100 sq. ft. for rear signage.

Kirkwood – The Haggerty Shoppes do look a lot better. The area is cleaned up and the change of signs made a big difference. It is very busy there now.

**MOTION** by Kirkwood, supported by James, that the Planning Commission recommend for consideration of Introduction, to the Commerce Township Board of Trustees, Item Z11-01, an amendment to the Commerce Township Zoning Ordinance No. 3.000, Article XXX, to amend wall signs with respect to buildings with parking lot rear entrances.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**OTHER MATTERS TO COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION**

**Comcast Site: Landscaping**

Kathleen Jackson distributed handouts to the Commissioners regarding landscaping for the Comcast site approved at the last meeting.

**Planning Commission Meeting**

**OTHER MATTERS TO COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION (cont.)**

They are planning to plant around the portion that is visible from the road and nearby house. They will tear up the area and make it nice, as currently there is a 5' section by the fence that consists of scrub and weeds.

Kirkwood – The residents will appreciate that.

Winkler – If by some chance, the Arbor Vitae don't flourish and die, do we have safeguards in place to ensure it is replanted accordingly?

Kathleen Jackson – There is a 2-year bond for that.

Open discussions took place regarding progress at various sites throughout the Township as follows:

**Corner of Pontiac Trail & Welch Roads –**

- In for permits, but may not have all approvals
- Kathleen Jackson will email Commissioners with an update

**DDA Roundabout –**

- Construction is expected to be mobilized June 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>
- A Groundbreaking Grand Opening Event will be held on May 20<sup>th</sup> at the end of Martin Parkway. Invitations will be sent out to board members and Commissioners.

**Village Gas Station –**

- Work was reported to have taken place
- No permits were issued so this is under investigation

Kathleen Jackson discussed the community breakfast scheduled for May 17<sup>th</sup>.

**The next Planning Commission meeting will be Monday, June 6, 2011 at 7:00pm.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** by Kirkwood, supported by Jones, to adjourn the meeting at 7:51pm.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

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Brian Winkler, Secretary