

FINAL
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE
****SPECIAL** PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**
Monday, October 3, 2022
2009 Township Drive
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

A. CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Parel called the meeting to order at 5:36pm.

ROLL CALL: Present:

Brian Parel, Chairperson
Brian Winkler, Vice Chairperson
Joe Loskill, Secretary
Bill McKeever
George Weber
Brady Phillips

Absent:

Sam Karim

Also Present:

Dave Campbell, Township Planning Director
Paula Lankford, Planner
Jill Bahm, Partner, Giffels Webster
Rose Kim, Planner, Giffels Webster
Julia Upfal, Planner, Giffels Webster

B. APPROVAL OF THE SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

MOTION by Winkler, supported by Loskill, to approve the Planning Commission Special Meeting Agenda of October 3, 2022, as presented.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

C. MASTER LAND USE PLAN REVIEW

Work session of the 2015 Master Land Use Plan update.

For the benefit of the new Planning Commissioner, Brady Phillips, Jill Bahm introduced the team and gave a brief recap of the progress thus far on the Master Plan update.

Phillips – I have read through the meeting minutes and I do have questions.

Jill Bahm – Over the last couple meetings, we have been working with the Planning Commission to go through the process. We talked a little bit about the guiding principles. At our last meeting, we were talking more about public engagement. That's something that the Planning Commission and Township Board really want to focus on for the update, because the most substantial public input that was provided last was in 2004, so it's time for a refresh.

Today, we wanted to wrap up our conversation about the goals of the past Master Plan, and getting through a couple of things that we may be wanting to tweak. We are not finalizing these yet, but just getting food for thought going. We also want to talk about some of the engagement. We brought along a couple of the meeting Toolkits, which was something we talked about last time. We will also have a little bit more on our "Picture This" platform to show you, and then we'll talk about the Open House that we have coming up. We also wanted to summarize the Visioning Session that we had with the Township staff.

Phillips – Things like student engagement, “Picture This, and the different input processes; I think they’re great ideas and I really like the approach.

Jill Bahm – Good. We’re excited about it. I think we will start with the Township Visioning Session summary from Rose.

Rose Kim – On the morning of September 15th, we held a workshop with some of Commerce Township’s key staff members, department leaders, Parks & Recreation, Maintenance, the Library, to discuss strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as part of this process. First and foremost, thank you to Paula and Dave for putting that together. I think it was a really productive conversation and we got a lot of really helpful answers.

I don't think you'll be very surprised to hear that there was a lot of agreement in terms of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that we discussed with the Commission, as well as with the Township Board. Some of the obvious strengths are the parks and the natural features, and that was definitely the emphasis of our conversations. Weaknesses were, of course, the traffic and some of the downtown needs.

That really shaped the second part of the workshop which was more of a small group discussion. Staff were split into groups of 3-4 people. There were a couple of surprising things that came out of that conversation. The biggest thing was the need for a dedicated marketing or public relations professional on the Township staff.

Weber – You said that came from Township employees, that was one of the biggest things that we need was this position?

Rose Kim – Yes.

Weber – Okay.

Rose Kim – It was one of the things that all three groups came back with after the break out. I think it was motivated in part by some of the weaknesses that were discussed. It was something that came out of that. Other things along those same lines were increased communication, between the Township internally with staff, but also increased communication with the public and any important partners, whether that is the RCOC or others outside the Township.

Phillips – If that position is pursued, who has the responsibility to define that role, the goals, responsibilities and content of that job?

Weber – It would probably start with Supervisor Gray, and then it would be up to the Township Board to ultimately approve the position, the budget, the role and the responsibilities.

Jill Bahm – That’s something that would likely end up as an implementation strategy, and it’s probably part of a larger economic development type marketing and branding position, which are conversations about other things that we will probably talk about over the next couple of months as well.

Loskill – I have contacts who know I'm on the Planning Commission that ask me if we have somebody in that position, because they're looking for help with marketing their buildings in Commerce Township. There are people asking for that.

Rose Kim – As to threats, similarly it plays off the strengths, being the natural features and open space in Commerce Township. I think everyone would agree that overdevelopment or oversaturation could become an issue, and growth would certainly impact that.

We also saw some discussion about emerging issues or trends. Housing affordability was something that was discussed, and how to best serve the aging population in Commerce Township. Then some other things were brought up like new technologies, changes in consumer habits, and the need for sustainable development.

Weber – On the housing topic; we just got information today that the average taxable value of residential property in Commerce is around \$132,000, which would be a sale price of about \$260,000. I can't tell you how that's moved over the years, but it has obviously gone up, and obviously everything we've seen is probably a minimum of ... What's the lowest? We've got to be pushing \$500,000.

Paula Lankford – Yes, some are in the high \$400's.

Weber – Even Rock Ridge, was that the new one that started out at \$275,000, but it's now at \$400,000?

Paula Lankford – Yes.

Weber – So affordable is a relative term.

Rose Kim – So just to wrap things up, it was very consistent with what we've been discussing here with all of you. It was a really informative session.

Phillips – From a growth perspective, is there a capacity and workload model to try to predict what services and additional hires would need to be made?

Jill Bahm – For staff?

Phillips – For staff, when you talk about stressing the support.

Jill Bahm – Yes, it's beyond the scope of our Master Plan update, but I think it's probably something that should be shared with the Township Board. I think that is something that folks were concerned about; current staffing, but also long-term staffing needs. That was an interesting perspective that I think is worth noting in the Master Plan. As we plan for additional facilities, or expand facilities or land uses, and housing opportunities, to be mindful of capacity issues and also traffic concerns, but also thinking about public safety, our Library and our Parks & Recreation departments, to make sure that we are keeping up with the demands of new residents. I think they also noted that too, that the more services we offer, the more services are expected. Somebody made the comment about a person moving in from another community. They said they were glad that they moved because the taxes were higher in the other community, but then they went on to say all the services that they were also expecting

to have here. The staff person made that connection between what the taxes are and the services that are available. I think that's probably always been a struggle over the years, as more people have moved to this community and had those expectations of different services, and more services, when compared to the places that they came from. There's a balance there for sure. Dave and Paula, did either of you have anything to add on the staff visioning session?

Dave Campbell – I think we all agreed that it was a really productive exercise. I'm glad we did it. Paula and I live in a bubble sometimes, and to have these conversations with our colleagues was good for all of us.

Jill Bahm – That's one of the other reasons why we do it. We think that's important too.

Weber inquired about staff representation at the visioning session. Dave Campbell noted that one of Giffels' rules was that only non-elected officials participate, although staff from their departments were invited. The Clerk's and Building departments did not have representation due to scheduling issues, however the Parks & Recreation Director was present, along with the Fire Chief, Library Director, IT Director, and the DDA Director. Paula Lankford added that it was just the directors of the departments. The deputy was invited if the department director was an elected official.

Jill Bahm – At this point, we will get through the remaining goals. Last time we talked about the Residential, Commercial and Office, and I think Industrial.

Phillips – Relative to the goals and objectives from the prior plan, are there metrics or is there an assessment on how we performed?

Jill Bahm – Part of what we did for the Township at the end of the last year was to prepare a review of the last Master Plan. In there is some discussion about the goals and really looking at areas in which the next Master Plan might tap into some of the emerging issues that we've talked about, such as aging population, transportation, and health and wellness in the community. Those were the bigger topics that we were looking at. One of the things that we will be doing with this Master Plan, when we get to the implementation items and action items, is also including some metrics. So, in the next 5-year review of the Master Plan, how will we know how we're doing? Some of those things might be looking at data that is readily available. There also might be things, looking more along the lines of customer satisfaction, where we develop a survey that we do periodically, or in conjunction with that Master Plan as a gauge to evaluate where we are.

Phillips – I noticed some things dropped off, for example in Recreation. Previously, it said; *We want to preserve our golf courses for the next generation.* That's not on there. Was that a conscious decision?

Loskill and Phillips discussed financial issues with golf courses, and the potential for the golf courses to be sold and redeveloped.

Jill Bahm – Let's look at Transportation. The goal from the last Master Plan; *Encourage a process that provides or manages access to land development, while simultaneously preserving the safety, capacity, speed and flow of traffic on the surrounding road*

system. Work with various community groups, including the Four Towns group, the Road Commission for Oakland County, and neighboring communities.

Was there ever, in the last 5-10 years, work with Four Towns?

Weber – What is the Four Towns?

Dave Campbell – The four corners of Commerce, White Lake, Waterford and West Bloomfield, up at Cooley Lake Road and Union Lake Road. There has not been a meeting of Four Towns that I've ever been invited to, nor have I ever taken it upon myself to schedule such a meeting. We are in regular communication with one another, but there has never been a meeting specifically to look at that area, at least in my almost 7-year tenure.

Debbie Watson – In my 17 years here, I'm not aware of any meetings taking place. Jim Gotts could tell us about the history and the beginning of the group. It could be 20 years since they've met.

Dave Campbell – One of the major items for such a group would be this idea of expanding Union Lake Road and essentially making it a corridor from I-96, via M-5 and Union Lake Road, all the way up to M-59, and expanding Union Lake Road, and probably Williams Lake Road, through Waterford Township as part of that. I know that Township Supervisor Gray has at least brought that up in casual conversations with his peers in White Lake and Waterford, and there's differing opinions of whether that is something that all of our municipalities would want to pursue. There are big picture conversations, but as far as getting together as the Four Towns group, that has not been something we have done.

Phillips – How would the Oakland County Transportation millage impact this, if it goes through?

Jill Bahm – Well, it depends on the end result.

Weber – I don't think it will have any impact.

Phillips – It's clear that we're not going to get anything out of it, other than we're going to give money for other people to benefit. The question is, do we maintain the strategy we presently have, with the services we provide currently, and the .95 mills from Oakland County is just an all out hit, with no benefit?

Weber – We are working to try to get our existing supplier within the fold. We use People's Express, and so does Wixom, Milford and Lyon Township. Our budget for 2022 is \$140,000, and it is serving all of our needs. It might go to \$180,000 if we wanted to increase it. There is work being done behind the scenes to try to get People's Express as an approved supplier within the new structure, whatever that might look like. It's unknown.

Phillips – If that happens, that service gets covered within the Oakland County millage?

Weber – Right now, it would come out of our general fund. It would not be covered by the new millage today. We're trying to get it covered by the millage.

Phillips – What's the impact of the .95 millage on all of Commerce Township? How much money is going out, versus them covering our needs of \$180,000?

Weber – The cost to Commerce is \$2.4 million, and there is no plan right now for how they're going to use the \$700 million over 10 years.

Phillips – Any chance that won't pass?

Weber – It's slim.

Phillips – Because the populated areas that get the service have more votes.

Jill Bahm – I don't know that I would necessarily be so sure of that. We've been talking to a lot of the townships on this side of town and there does not seem to be a lot of support from them.

If we can shift away a little bit, because what you raise is an important point. This is something that we've talked about with the Planning Commission over a couple of months; the idea of transportation being important. I'm sure we will find this as we go through the public engagement process too. One of the things that you would like to see improved in the community is traffic. Why is that? Because everybody has to drive everywhere. So looking at alternative opportunities for transportation, like our nonmotorized transportation.

That's an aspect of this Master Plan update, as identified primarily and originally through the Parks & Recreation Master Plan, but including that in here to recognize that nonmotorized transportation is transportation, in addition to being a recreational amenity, which I think is a lot of the ways in which we think that functions currently. It's more than just providing pathways and trails. It's making sure that there are destinations to which people can walk. That's another aspect of the Master Plan that we want to be thinking about. Then further, thinking about where there is transit, how do we get people to it? Where People's Express runs, how do people access that? Are there other ways in which the Township could support that? Those will be some of the things that we talk about as we move ahead.

Four Towns is something that we mentioned in the Master Plan review as an area – people think of it as an area of congestion right now, but there's really some potentially interesting opportunities to connect and work with those adjacent communities. Are there any other comments about transportation? I think transportation needs to be expanded to really make this goal also reflect the nonmotorized aspect of it.

Next are Environmental Issues. *Protect, preserve and enhance wherever possible the unique and desirable existing natural amenities of Commerce Township and to provide additional recreational facilities or sites.* It is interesting that in environmental, we do talk about protecting and preserving, but then it does seem like there is a focus on the recreational perspective associated with that. It's only interesting because there is also a recreation goal. I wonder if there's a higher level of concern that should be paid to environmental concerns in the Master Plan goals, recognizing that it is an opportunity for recreation, but there may be other environmental concerns that go beyond our participatory enjoyment of them. Does that make sense?

Weber – Just so I understand, in addition to greenspace, parks and trailways, you're speaking to greenhouse effects? Is that where you're going?

Jill Bahm – I think so. I think protection of water and protection of critical habitat. Mitigating the impacts of development on those natural features. Certainly there are opportunities to provide recreation, whether it's passive or active, while we're conserving, but there may be things, as the private sector develops land, that we're doing that doesn't have anything to do with recreation, but could have an impact on the environment. Just wondering if this is adequate. Do you feel like this is sufficient for the amount of attention that the Master Plan will put to environmental issues?

Phillips – In reviewing the land use, I didn't see anything on protected wetlands, or anything that would say that this is actually a restricted area that can't be utilized, just based on zoning. Is that something we consider?

Weber – A couple meetings ago, we were using maps for this round that were created by Giffels which showed parks, lakes, greenspace and wetlands in a graphic, with color mapping, to be able to show those areas. There are maps and there are areas that are identified, not only as legally defined wetlands, but also greenspace that can't be built on, as well as greenspace that the Township owns that we choose not to divest.

Vice Chairperson Winkler – That would fall under environmental issues. We talked about the wetlands and we expanded on that.

Phillips – Part of it is preserving them, but I know I drive past areas where you see a For Sale sign, and you think; *Who is going to buy that? It's a wetland.* It seems like there's zoning for properties where you might have some portions you could utilize, and others that are really not buildable. It's hard to see those with this.

Jill Bahm – I think your point is a good one where you say; *Who is going to buy that?* Somebody already owns it, so what are they doing with it. Are there trade-offs that could be explored where you are not building in a certain area? You're building to certain standards, but maybe you're allowed to do something a little bit different in some of those locations. It could be things that we explore.

Dave Campbell – It would be a struggle to try to zone based on suitability for development, and especially on a lot-by-lot basis. We would have to do some sort of wetlands delineation for effectively every property. As far as protecting the wetlands, the State of Michigan kind of takes the lead in that, and they swing a bigger hammer than what Commerce Township could swing.

A recent example is Union Lake Road and Farrant, which you will probably see here soon enough. The Planning Commission is familiar with it; there is a gentleman who wants to do a lakeside bar/restaurant right there. I was just in a meeting at that site with representatives from EGLE. Just being a part of that meeting reinforced in me the level to which the State of Michigan protects the regulated wetlands and the layers of approval that one has to go through before they could ever put a shovel into those regulated wetlands.

Phillips – Are there wetlands that are zoned where they could be developed, but where Commerce Township would say, we prefer that to be greenspace and protect the wetlands?

Dave Campbell – I would have to look at a zoning map to answer that question better. Every piece of property has a zoning designation to it. We don't necessarily have a zoning designation that says, "Protected Wetlands, Hands Off". I would suspect that much of our regulated wetlands probably falls in our single-family zoning designation, because that is what most of the Township is zoned. I would have to do an overlay of our zoning map and our wetlands map to get a sense of which zoning district a lot of our wetland areas fall into. A lot of it falls into property that the Township currently owns, or more so, the State Department of Natural Resources owns, in the form of Proud Lake State Recreation Area. That's where a lot of wetland areas are. There's a big wetland adjacent to the Commerce Crossing development, where Costco and Home Depot are located, on the south side. Paula is reminding me, that is called the Black Spruce Bog. That is probably zoned commercial, but underneath that zoning is a State-regulated wetland.

Phillips – Okay.

Jill Bahm brought up a map on the overhead. She explained that this map was prepared by Giffels and it shows Development Limitations. It indicates which are publicly owned lands; parks, whether owned by the State, or by the Township, along with educational facilities, which are mostly Walled Lake Schools, with Huron Valley on the west side, and then wetlands, which are shown in a seafoam green color. In addition, in the bottom corner of the map, there is a delineation between the Rouge Watershed and the Huron Watershed. Commerce is largely in a watershed and there are considerations that should be made for that. The green areas are the larger wetland areas. Giffels prepared this map because it helps with thinking about future land uses and regulations that may come up as a result of the Master Plan process.

Weber – The only struggle I have, since we have EGLE, I'm just not sure what more we could effectively add to that. It's balance between bureaucracy and what we're trying to do. How do we manage it, over and above, or adjacent to what EGLE does?

Jill Bahm – We don't necessarily have to jump to how we're going to do it at this point. We're still talking about it.

Weber – If we're going to add priority to it in the discussion, then we need to figure out where it fits with some of these others so maybe we have more ability to affect ...

Jill Bahm – Right. So it might not come down to simple regulation of wetlands. It might go to other things, like making sure that folks have the ability to provide solar power in their homes if they like. That we're planning ahead for EV charging stations. That we're looking at our parking standards and making sure they're not too high, such that we are over-paving sites with development. Also looking at alternative surfacing that we might use, and other things that we would incorporate to reduce impervious surfaces. Other strategies that we might do; we talked about tree canopy cover before, and where that might be appropriate. There are other things that we can be thinking about as we go through the process.

Weber – That's very helpful.

Dave Campbell – Another example is what might be sitting on my desk right now, which is the first draft of a tree protection ordinance, which the Township Attorney drafted at the direction of the Township Supervisor. Effectively when someone comes to the Planning Commission looking for site plan approval, for every tree they're taking down, they would have to replace so many, depending on the size of the trees that they're taking down. That would be another example of working toward these environmental goals.

Jill Bahm – Right. And there were challenges to tree protection ordinances within the last year or two.

Dave Campbell – It can be a sensitive topic.

Jill Bahm – It can be. There was a case from Canton Township. The decision was not in favor of the Township, but it wasn't to say that you can't regulate tree removal, but that you really need to make sure you're clear about why you're doing it, and there needs to be evidence. This is the time where we build the evidence into the Master Plan. It may be on the early side, but if that's something that the Township is interested in doing, and we've talked about tree canopy cover, and we have a map that shows that, and we can be talking about it through this plan and the environmental goals, how we might be using that as a tool to strengthen your case.

Vice Chairperson Winkler – In recent years, we've talked about promoting sustainable design, net zero development and things like that. That should be in that same heading of environmental issues.

Jill Bahm – Yes. The next one is Community and Public Facilities; *To create a sustainable community that provides a wide variety of services for residents and visitors alike.* Are there any comments that anyone has about those?

Loskill – It's non-specific.

Jill Bahm – It's pretty vague.

Vice Chairperson Winkler – EV charging stations.

Dave Campbell – Jill, would you say pathway facilities fall into that category, or are they more in the transportation category?

Jill Bahm – I think probably more transportation, but they certainly could be there. We also have infrastructure, which is the one that follows. This may be one that we put a pin in. Do we need it, or does it become something else? It could still be in there as community facilities if we're talking about public services. It could incorporate the Library as well as the Senior Center. It could be broader if we were interested in expanding that to be clearer on what it means.

Loskill – It's pretty broad. It needs to be more specific.

Jill Bahm – You're right. Does that make sense for civic uses?

Loskill – Yes, you could bring in the Library, the Senior Center and other things, and we look at what services we are providing for the community right now. That would give it more teeth, or more meat on the bone.

Jill Bahm – It actually does tie in then with the feedback of the Township staff, about ensuring that there are sufficient resources for those.

Dave Campbell – I think they want more pickle ball courts.

Weber – I think it needs to be broad here, because Parks has their own Master Plan that gets into the details.

Jill Bahm – Okay. Then the last one is Infrastructure; *Maintain and improve the Township's existing infrastructure. Township residents also want to establish high-tech infrastructure in the community to make Commerce an attractive place for high-tech businesses.*

Weber – The only question I had on that was, what's the definition of high-tech, other than 5G?

Jill Bahm – Good question. I wonder about broadband, if that's included with sufficient access and connectivity.

Weber – I'm not aware of any connectivity issues within Commerce.

Phillips – There was a comment on charging stations. Is that included as high-tech infrastructure?

Jill Bahm – I think it would be.

McKeever – Are we talking about at Township facilities?

Jill Bahm – I think in general, throughout the Township.

McKeever – As far as requiring developers to provide?

Jill Bahm – EV charging, it depends. We can talk about it as we get into those conversations, but most communities right now are suggesting or requiring that new developments at least put in the conduit so they're prepared for EV charging.

McKeever – What's the rationale for making private citizens responsible for providing charging stations?

Jill Bahm – Because it's less expensive to do it now than it will be in the future. If someone is building a parking lot now, particularly for something like an office building where people will be there, or multi-family residential, where people may likely have electric vehicles in the future within the next few years, to go back in and deconstruct a parking lot to then run the conduit through ...

McKeever – There's all sorts of ways to do it that don't involve deconstructing the parking lot. I'm just saying, we don't require them to have a fueling station in their parking lots. Why would we put the burden on them to have electric charging stations?

Jill Bahm – It depends.

Dave Campbell – There's probably a number of things that we as a Township and as a Planning Commission require a developer to do that they wouldn't otherwise volunteer to do. Think about building materials, landscaping, and parking. We dictate how many parking spaces have to be installed as opposed to the building owner saying how many parking spaces he needs. I could see an argument that this is another example of the Township trying to guide development, to the betterment of the community, rather than just the betterment of that one property or one business.

Weber – Maybe a different take on it with the high-tech infrastructure is DTE's capability of providing enough electricity to handle the future demand. We are already seeing that at Five & Main where there's not enough, and I think that's an ongoing DTE power grid discussion.

Dave Campbell – Looking to Paula a little bit, I think there are still areas of the Township where Comcast and the cable companies don't provide service.

Paula Lankford – Correct.

Dave Campbell – It's the minority, but there are still some areas where you're having to look elsewhere for high-speed internet.

Julia Upfal – I was thinking with respect to infrastructure goals, you might also want to consider low-impact development techniques and green infrastructure because that's a really important component of stormwater management that communities are turning towards, and may also be a consideration as you're discussing goals for infrastructure.

Weber – What would an example be?

Julia Upfal – A bioswale, a rain garden, water storage devices, pervious surfaces.

Dave Campbell – If we decided to go that way, that would have to translate into our engineering design standards, which the engineering arm of Giffels looks at for us. They do their calculations of how much a detention pond has to hold to account for two 100-year storms. But, if we move in another direction with some of these more green facilities, that changes what we would require of a new development, and it would change the way our engineers would evaluate it.

Jill Bahm – I think also looking at water and sewer capacity, if there are any service issues, and understanding what those are.

Weber – We are set for all water and sewer. I think even with where we are, we're at 25% capacity. We're at a very low number.

Dave Campbell – For our sanitary sewer, yes, our sewage treatment plant is at about 25% capacity.

Weber – I think water and sewer are not an issue. It was designed to handle maximum potential population in Commerce if all residentially zoned properties were developed.

Dave Campbell – I don't know that there's a capacity concern necessarily, but I do think there might be concerns in some of the areas, particularly our developed lakefront areas that are still on septic. I think getting sanitary sewer to those properties remains important.

Weber – Agreed. The capacity is there ...

Dave Campbell – We just need to get the pipes in the ground, and pipes are really expensive right now too, by the way.

Loskill – Everything is really expensive right now.

Jill Bahm – That wraps up the overview of the goals. That will be something that we will revisit again after we get some of the public input collected. For our next topic, we had the opportunity to talk with Dave and Paula last week about some of our plans for public input. We have talked about the Art Contest and strategies to get that out to the schools. Then we talked more about the meeting Toolkits and where those would go. Did you want to talk about that, Julia?

Julia Upfal – Sure. The meeting Toolkits are a really great way to engage the community without us having to be at every single meeting, and making it a more widespread reach, while keeping meetings small and intimate to get really good feedback that we want from them. How they work is that we have a Toolkit prepared for a facilitator which has all of the instructions and materials, everything they will need to host a meeting. We give them a good set of directions, not only on how to facilitate the meeting, but how to plan and set up the meeting to begin with.

We're hoping to get feedback from a number of different groups, whether that's just a group of soccer moms whose kids play together, or an organization nonprofit community center. These meetings can happen in somebody's living room or backyard, wherever it makes sense. We really want them to be creative and make them accessible, and make them feel like a small meeting, getting together with friends to talk about the future of Commerce Township.

In the meeting Toolkits, we have a few different exercises focused on the community currently, and the future strategies for development in the Township. To begin, attendees discuss the strengths and weaknesses. They're going to break out into two groups and each group is going to get an 11x17 to discuss strengths and weaknesses. At the end, the attendees will reach consensus by circling the Top 5 strengths and weaknesses that were discussed.

The second exercise discusses strategies that they want to see the Township pursue to build on the strengths and improvements that may address the weaknesses or potential challenges coming their way. The group will be encouraged to look at a reference map, which is also going to be included in the meeting Toolkit. It's going to highlight the focus areas within the Township so that their attention is pulled to the commercial center and

also to the north end. That way, we're getting feedback on the whole Township, but we can really have a focused discussion on the key areas as well.

After discussion of strategies, they have everybody bring the Top 5 strategies back to the large poster sheets to present on the wall, and then they're going to draw a check mark next to their Top 3 strategies so that everybody gets 3 votes. At the end, they'll be able to identify which strategies surfaced as being the best and would make the biggest impact on the future of the Township.

Here we brought an example of the meeting Toolkit. Everything needed is in a folder that looks like a toolbox. We have flyers for the upcoming Open House, which I think we'll talk about shortly. We have the exercises with the 11x17 report outs on the strengths and weaknesses. We have a sign-in sheet, and then directions for the facilitator.

Jill Bahm – It has an overview for the facilitator, a sheet on what's included in the packet, and then the directions they can read. One of the things that we talked about doing is a short video to explain the process and get people through it. It's pretty straightforward and we're trying to build on some of the questions that we've talked about with the Planning Commission, the Township Board and also staff. We'd like people to really be thinking about those two focus areas of the north end and the commercial center area, so that when we have our Open House, we have a little bit to work with there. We're hoping to get these Toolkits to some of the neighborhood associations, the Senior Center, and the Library. We've talked about some of the apartment complexes, mobile home parks, high schools, and the fire department. We wanted to present that to you to see if you had any questions or comments about that before we print. We will probably do 10-12 based on what we talked about.

Dave Campbell – In your mind, is there a perfect number, or a threshold of how many returned Toolkits we would want to get back?

Jill Bahm – We would love to get them all. If we can get 8-10, I think that would be really nice.

Julia Upfal – One thing to recommend to facilitators is if anybody in the group might be interested in facilitating another meeting, that's a good way to pass it on.

Dave Campbell – And the goal is to get these done in the month of October.

Jill Bahm – Yes, by November 18th I think we said.

Discussion continued regarding Toolkit sessions.

Jill Bahm – On November 14th, our next study session, instead of doing the work session, we thought we would do an Open House. That would be our first Open House, focusing on exploring the vision for the north end and the commercial center areas. These are to be really focused more on what the community would like to see in those areas.

Phillips – Where is the north end?

Jill Bahm approached and explained that early on, the Planning Commission discussed areas that had potential for development or redevelopment. Instead of looking at individual parcels, the Planning Commission talked about grouping the properties together and the way that made sense was to look at the north end. She defined the north end and the commercial center on the map for Phillips. There could be opportunities in the area of Commerce Village and other parcels to enhance connectivity, as well as provide land uses that might be compatible with each other. Those are some of the items to discuss with the community at the Open House.

Weber – So we can get it on our calendars, we are talking about Monday, November 14th?

Jill Bahm – Yes, but did we say ...

Dave Campbell – Didn't we say we're going to try to do two? One is with the property owners and/or developers?

Jill Bahm – Yes, I think we said 3:30-4:30pm for the property owners.

Paula Lankford – Right.

Jill Bahm – We're going to have special invitations for the property owners with those available parcels.

Dave Campbell – Let's use Bay Pointe Golf Course as an example because that's one of our properties. The hope would be that the owner, or some representative of the owner, would be able to join us for an hour. That's the 3:30 meeting, correct?

Jill Bahm – Correct, 3:30. It's the same Open House, it's just a preview for those folks. We have found that property owners or developers, and possibly realtors, feel more comfortable sharing their feedback when they're not surrounded by residents. Public would attend the next meeting, and we said 4:30-6:30pm to give you a little gap before the Planning Commission meeting.

Vice Chairperson Winkler – Randy Thomas might be a good candidate for that.

Dave Campbell – Not only as a realtor, but also as the owner of the Commerce Drive-in property, owner with his siblings.

Jill Bahm – This is the last thing we wanted to show you. This is "Picture This", the app that we've been developing. There will be questions associated with this that will lead people to talk about what they love about Commerce Township and what they think is missing. This is just an example. You can click this, see more information and the comments made by the person who posted it. This one shows, "accessible play area". You can zoom in and out, and when you zoom in to detail, it changes over to an aerial. Photos can also be included with comments.

Chairperson Parel – People don't have to register for this site?

Jill Bahm – No, we can add feedback if you'd like. We will ask them for the title of what they want to put in, any description they have, any comments they want to make about it. They can put in a photo if they have one, but if they don't, they don't need to. It is also accessible from your phone. We'll have a link to it from our project website.

Julia Upfal – From Springfield, I have all of the directions for how to leave a comment.

Chairperson Parel – Is somebody monitoring this?

Jill Bahm – We will be monitoring it, twice a day at least.

Julia reviewed the directions for "Picture This" on the overhead. She explained the form that people will fill out when they upload a photo, including title and description. When you add something on the map, it asks if you want to give your location. If you hit allow, it will put the pin right where you are at that moment, which is helpful if you're taking a picture of something at your current location. You can also find locations manually. It's user-friendly. Email addresses are optional and it's not necessary to create an account.

Chairperson Parel – How will we review the final product?

Jill Bahm – You can go on it anytime and you'll be able to see what's happening.

Chairperson Parel – Does it make sense, and does the timing align, where we would review it at one of these meetings?

Jill Bahm – Yes, we would review it at our December meeting. That will be part of the public input. We can also use it later in the process if there are other questions we want to ask. We could roll out another series.

Weber – The advertising of this would primarily be through the Township website and the Township Facebook pages?

Jill Bahm – Right.

Weber – When would those links be available?

Jill Bahm – By the end of this week, or beginning of next. This is another alternative. It's intended to give another group of folks the opportunity to engage.

D. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Loskill, supported by Phillips, to adjourn the meeting at 6:45pm.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Joe Loskill, Secretary