

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

Monday, April 11, 2022  
2009 Township Drive  
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

**A. CALL TO ORDER:** Chairperson Parel called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**ROLL CALL:** Present:

Brian Parel, Chairperson  
Brian Winkler, Vice Chairperson  
Chelsea Rebeck, Secretary  
Bill McKeever  
George Weber  
Sam Karim  
Joe Loskill

Also Present:

Dave Campbell, Township Planning Director  
Paula Lankford, Planner  
Jay James, Engineer/Building Official  
Debbie Watson, DDA Director  
Jill Bahm, Partner, Giffels Webster  
Rose Kim, Staff Planner, Giffels Webster

**B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOTION** by Loskill, supported by Rebeck, to approve the Planning Commission Regular Meeting Agenda of April 11, 2022, as presented.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION** by Winkler, supported by Rebeck, to approve the Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes of March 7, 2022, as presented.

Discussion –

Loskill – I will abstain as I was not here for the March meeting.

**AYES: Winkler, Rebeck, McKeever, Weber, Parel, Karim**

**NAYS: None**

**ABSTAIN: Loskill**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**D. UPDATE OF ACTIVITIES**

Brian Winkler – Downtown Development Authority

- We can summarize March 15<sup>th</sup> DDA meeting as follows.
- Insite Commercial Report:
  - Parcel C, at Haggerty and Pontiac Trail: We discussed the proposed conceptual project that was shown to the Planning Commission at our March meeting. We discussed the potential automotive dealership project. We were interested to learn that dealerships are excluded in Commerce Towne Place and would require an amendment to the Master Deed. Dave, do you want to elaborate on the process?

Dave Campbell – I don't want it to be a lengthy process. I want to believe that the process to amend the Commerce Towne Place condominium would require going in front of the Planning Commission and the Township Board, so if we can do those along with the site plan approval process that a dealership would require anyway and run

them concurrently, then we can limit the amount of time and the number of meetings that the process would require.

Winkler – Thank you, David.

- Parcel J, the partial parcel at Oakley Park and Haggerty Road, had interest by a gas station user, but their interest has cooled due to unlikely alcohol sales.
- Parcel L, the Higher Learning project, due diligence continues.
- Director's Report
  - Bruce Aikens was scheduled to provide an update on Five & Main to the DDA in April. That has since been rescheduled to June 7<sup>th</sup> at a special Marketing meeting, after Bruce attends the May ICSC.
  - At the time of the March 15<sup>th</sup> meeting, the DDA had collected \$17,000 out of nearly \$30,000 in outstanding property damage claims. Deb informed me that all of these claims have since been finalized. She and Sandy Bowers, DDA Assistant, have done a great job of recovering that money.
  - Deb, do you want to add anything?

Watson – No, I think you've covered it. Thank you, Brian.

George Weber – Township Board of Trustees

- The last Board meeting was on Tuesday, March 8<sup>th</sup>.
- A few items for this Commission.
- First, Ron Krueger was appointed to the Parks and Recreation Committee for a term ending in May 2024.
- The Township Board adopted two ordinances.
  - The first; 1.059 which speaks to encroachment on Township land, basically giving authority to the ordinance officers to write a ticket if people are encroaching on Township land, as a first step to give notice so that hopefully we wouldn't have to go to court.
  - The second was on our recommendation for 3.054, which was speaking to vinyl siding and EIFS. It was not a majority pass, but it did pass the Township Board.
- The Township is contracting with a firm to be able to provide residents with emergency notifications. If you go on the Township website, you can enter your phone number and/or your email. If there is an emergency, such as a water main break, a tornado, or any sort of emergency, you would get an immediate notification. I encourage everybody to sign up for that.
- Finally, the Valvoline Instant Oil Change Conditional Rezoning at 600 Loop Road was denied by the Township Board.

Bill McKeever – Zoning Board of Appeals

- I have nothing to update.

Jay James – Building Department

- We're getting pretty busy right now, but there's nothing new in particular.
- Some of the subdivisions are starting to crank up, such as Oak Hill, and Windwheel Estates on Benstein.
- We're also seeing a lot of home improvement projects getting started.

Chairperson Parel – I saw they put in the pads for the two new Barrington buildings on Martin Parkway. Do we know when they're going vertical?

Jay James – It's going to be soon. I'm guessing within 30 days.

Chairperson Parel – Thank you.

### **E. PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

#### **Chairperson Parel opened to Public Discussion of Matters Not on the Agenda.**

Jason Wright, 3275 Chenoa, Commerce Township – I hope I'm talking to the right people here. I'm sure you'll tell me if I'm not. I have talked with Mr. James. I've been dealing with an issue since October, a flooded basement. It has been rough. The water is coming through my discharge line. I've capped it off right now so it doesn't flood my basement, but the whole area is getting flooded here. We're looking for a resolution. I've been trying to figure this out since October. No one wants to touch this. I believe my line goes under a side street. It's going to be a headache dealing with the Township. I'm just trying to figure out what I need to get done.

I've been talking with my neighbors and Oakland County's various departments, Drain Commission and Road Commission. They're suggesting that we need to get some sort of canal where the dam is lowered and all that water pours out from Lower Straits lake. I know my neighbors have been open to connecting to some sort of a better system than we have right now with these catch basins that are all over the place, making lakes in people's lawns. I don't know who owns that patch of land, but this is a problem. It's not just us; it's previous owners. It just keeps getting passed down from owner to owner, and now I'm stuck with it. I need some assistance or direction.

Chairperson Parel – I appreciate you coming in. I don't know if this is the right place for this conversation. However, we're listening. Jay, it sounds like...

Jay James – I've been in contact with them. I've been in their house and I've looked at their...

Jason Wright – Yes, I've talked to you on the phone a few times. We're still dealing with it.

Jay James – His neighborhood is off of Newton, right at the dam. The groundwater level seems to be up substantially high in that area, which is causing water to come in through his sump pump. There are no storm sewers or ditches in that neighborhood, so the water empties out into the street and it's ponding in the yards. I've been talking to Jason from Giffels Webster about what we can do out there. We have made calls to the Road Commission.

There's not a lot of grade out there to run a storm sewer. The only outlet is a ditch that runs from the dam to the west, through Dodge V, ultimately over to S. Commerce Road and to Commerce Lake. There is an existing Consumers line that runs across that ditch that causes a high point, so that ditch always holds a little water. It's a problem that we are aware of. We have racked our brains on how we can try to help this. Right now, I think all we can do is go to the Road Commission to see if there is some way we can get a storm sewer system put in out there.

Jason Wright – I think it was the Road Commission or Water Commission that suggested that the Township needs to put something in out that way, where that stream is.

Jay James – Right now, it's just a ditch line. There was a plan a long time ago and I tried to get records from the County recently to make that into a County drain. The plan was from the 60s or 70s, and it was to make it into a County drain. That's something I've talked with the Supervisor. One of the biggest problems is the Consumers line that's there. It would have to be lowered in order for anything to be done out there. We are still looking into it. Jason and I are trying to get a hold of the Road Commission to see if there's something we can do. The ditch line that goes from your sub into that drainage course is privately owned. I've spoken to that owner before. We're aware of your issues and we all feel for you. We're trying to do whatever we can and it's a matter of trying to find the right answer.

Jason Wright – I know this is not an instantaneous thing. I've got more appointments scheduled with plumbers to come out and run a camera through there to see what's going on. I'm trying to do my part here.

Jay James – I know, and several of your contractors have called me. It's still on our docket.

Jason Wright – I wanted to get it out there for the record. I'm trying to make it official. I'm going to keep doing what I need to do. Is there a time frame we're looking at?

Jay James – If we can get a hold of the Road Commission and get a plan that we think might work, then I can give you a better timeline.

Jason Wright – Okay.

Weber – Who is responsible for resolving this?

Jay James – That's a great question. Mr. Wright has pumped the water out of his house and it's running into the road, and the road is not equipped right now to take the water anywhere. Even it was equipped to take it anywhere, there's nowhere right now to take it to, because there's no viable outlet for that subdivision. That's why we want to start with the Road Commission.

Jason Wright – Okay, I'm going to call the Road Commission again. I don't know where my situation is at as far as their docket. Thank you very much.

Jay James – Thank you.

**Chairperson Parel closed Public Discussion of Matters Not on the Agenda.**

**F. TABLED ITEMS**

None.

## **G. OLD BUSINESS**

None.

## **H. SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

None.

## **I. NEW BUSINESS (2):**

### **ITEM I1. COMMERCE GATEWAY SHOPPES – CONCEPTUAL REVIEW**

Marco Soave of Livonia MI is requesting a conceptual review for a proposed drive-through retail center to be located at 2255 N. Pontiac Trail. Sidwell No.: 17-25-101-015

David Campbell, Planning Director, gave a review of the conceptual proposal, noting that no formal action would be taken this evening. Marco Soave of MLS Holdings, LLC is interested in developing his vacant parcel located at 2255 N. Pontiac Trail, near the northeast corner of Pontiac Trail and Welch, with a retail building that would include a drive-through lane and window servicing the building's westernmost tenant. Mr. Soave received Planning Commission approval for a retail building (without a drive-through) in 2008 but the project never came to fruition and the approval expired.

Mr. Soave is again exploring the option of developing the property but with a smaller retail building (possibly 1-2 tenants) but adding the drive-through component. The parcel is currently zoned B-1 (Local Business) and drive-through uses are not allowed in B-1. The property would therefore require a rezoning to B-2, where drive-through uses are permitted as a special land use. This process would require a review and recommendation by Planning Commission, along with a public hearing, and adoption by the Township Board. At this time, Mr. Soave is requesting a conceptual review to receive informal and non-binding comments.

Mr. Soave, MLS Holdings, LLC, 37771 Seven Mile, Ste. C, Livonia, MI 48152, was present, along with Ray [Cousino], to address the proposal.

Mr. Cousino – I'm representing Marco Soave in this matter. Thank you, Dave, for your presentation, and thank you for the opportunity to come before you and have this informal discussion. As Dave indicated, the property is zoned B-1 right now. The critical component of our proposal is the drive-through facility, which can only be accommodated in the B-2 or B-3 district. We understand that there would be a rezoning needed.

We have no objection to a Conditional Rezoning, but more importantly, we wanted to get your feedback with respect to that drive-through component. That is very important to Mr. Soave to attract the type of tenants that he would like at this particular location. We are going to talk about a passive tenant; not a McDonald's or fast food, but perhaps a Dunkin Donuts which is Mr. Soave's target as far as a potential tenant. A second tenant could be a variety of uses. He has somebody from an insurance company interested. Without the drive-through facility, we really can't get our anchor.

The site plan you have before you this evening was developed under the B-1 zoning. It would have to be tweaked to accommodate the B-2 zoning. The screening and setback requirements to the adjacent properties; to the north is B-1, to the west is B-1 also, and to the east is residential. We understand that this site plan would have to be massaged. We also understand that there would be a need for a bypass lane for the drive-through, which we believe we could accommodate without significant changes to the site plan.

We're very sensitive to the residential property to the east. This current plan shows a masonry screening wall with landscaping. Again, it's a conceptual plan at this point. We could take a look at additional buffering or screening to try to shield that residential property as much as possible.

We're also concerned with the drive-through and a kiosk regarding the noise generation. Lighting can be handled through screening, but we're looking at new technology with respect to the kiosk. They have automatic controls now for kiosks that control volume based upon the ambient noise in the area. We think there's a variety of ways that we could minimize the impact to the adjacent properties.

We did submit a letter in March indicating some of the things that we would be willing to agree to in terms of a Conditional Rezoning. The Township indicated there were some issues they were concerned about. Number one, we don't intend to sell alcohol, no vaping or tobacco sales. We're prepared to commit to that.

Mr. Soave has been in your community for over 20 years. He currently owns and operates an AT&T facility on the south side of Pontiac Trail, across from the Walmart area. That has been a very successful facility for him. He would like to mirror that same success at this location.

Let me just close by saying, we're looking for your feedback right now as to whether or not a drive-through, as a principal component, would be acceptable. If it is not, then we're not sure we're going to pursue anything with the property at this point.

**Commission Comments:**

Chairperson Parel – Thank you. As Dave mentioned, everything we say is non-binding. This is just an opportunity for us to chat and see if we can help you with accomplishing your goals. I'll start with Bill.

McKeever – I feel a drive-through would be a tough sell for me, right there with that residential aspect to the east. There's absolutely no way I would be in favor of it without a bypass lane. I would be quite receptive to whatever feedback comes up at the public hearing for the rezoning. It's a quiet little dead-end subdivision and I don't think they're going to be very receptive to the traffic that would be generated by a drive-through.

Weber – I've got some concerns. The noise is one with the drive-through. I'm not familiar with the new technology, but I'm familiar with some complaints from drive-throughs in other areas. To me, the bigger challenge is the traffic impact. There is no turn lane there, especially for a Dunkin Donuts, with volume during rush hour. It's morning, and it's on the way home from work. Anybody heading east trying to turn left into there, right after the traffic light, is going to cause a backup. There are limited ways for people to get around that.

And, it's the same thing for people coming out of the drive-through that want to go east, or that want to go west, but have to cut across two lanes. To me, that's the biggest challenge, the in and out traffic, especially during rush hour.

Loskill – My comments mirror what the two gentlemen before me said. My other question was fire department access. You have one way in and I have a hard time seeing how you're going to get a fire truck in there. With other traffic already in there, I think it would be a very congested little site.

My other concern is the way that it would function. I'm assuming that the kiosk would be in the back, and your stacking would actually wrap around the east side of the building,

and not on the west as your diagram shows. That would mean you'd have everybody stacking right in front of all your parking. I think that makes for a difficult situation, seeing that everybody has to come in and out of the same access. I think a smaller building, with a bypass lane, dedicated to one tenant might be a better use. Those are my thoughts.

Rebeck – I don't have anything to add that hasn't already been said. All of my notes have been covered. I don't have a problem with the drive-through in general, if you can overcome all of those issues.

Winkler – The concerns I have about the site have already been mentioned by the other Planning Commissioners.

Karim – Everybody said what I wanted to say. I don't have any more comments.

Chairperson Parel – My feedback is similar. It looks like we're tight on parking already. I worry that if we add a bypass lane and modify the site plan, it will be even tighter. Joe made a comment regarding the queuing of cars and where exactly they would be. To me, it looks a little tight and it would be hard for me to support. I think you have an uphill battle here.

Dave Campbell – I don't know if this would necessarily make a difference in the concerns you're hearing, but when you use Dunkin Donuts as an example, that's a pretty intense drive-through user. I don't know if that was meant to be an example, or if that's a tenant that's being pursued. Are there any other drive-through users that you can see making sense here that maybe wouldn't have the intensity of Dunkin Donuts?

Mr. Cousino – With regard to Dunkin Donuts, that would be a preferred tenant at this point. I can appreciate all your concerns and comments. We want to explore a tenant that can make use of the drive-through that we know would be successful. We're not interested in bringing in somebody brand new and taking chances. The last thing we want is a facility that does not function properly and is not successful.

Dave Campbell – With respect to traffic concerns, anytime there is a rezoning, or a Conditional Rezoning and a Special Land Use, there is a requirement that traffic be addressed. There would be a traffic study required here for a drive-through component. That's where we would get into an analysis of some of the things you mentioned, Mr. Weber, of the turn lane configurations and potential conflicts within the center turn lane. You're right; that left turn lane for westbound Pontiac Trail, making a southbound turn onto Welch, it does queue up. Then, if there are folks coming from the other direction wanting to turn left into this site, there is a potential challenge there. That is something that would be evaluated if Mr. Soave were to move ahead with this.

Chairperson Parel – I think you have an uphill battle. Is there anything else we can answer in addition to that?

Mr. Cousino – I don't think so. Marco, did you want to say anything?

Mr. Soave – I appreciate everyone’s comments. The drive-through is a critical component. The only thing I would suggest is, with or without the drive-through, we’re probably going to have a 30-35% smaller building than what could be approved, and all of those issues wouldn’t go away as far as ingress/egress and the parking. It would still pretty much be like that without the drive-through. The drive-through would just help to ensure that we don't have another empty building in the Township.

Chairperson Parel – We appreciate that. Obviously, Dave is available if something else comes up.

Mr. Cousino – Your comments were all great. They were very specific and targeted, and we really appreciate them. Like Marco said, we would have a lot of these issues even without the drive-through; maybe not as intense, but we would still have those issues.

Chairperson Parel – I think that’s the challenge, onsite and offsite with the traffic, and the fact that we’re being asked to rezone and make changes for that.

Mr. Cousino – Obviously with the rezoning, we have to deal not only with you but with the Township Board for that. Thank you very much for your time.

Chairperson Parel – I hope we helped you. Thank you, gentlemen.

**ITEM 12. Accessory Structure – 6080 Ford Road – CONCEPTUAL REVIEW**

Mark Colone of Commerce MI is requesting a conceptual review for a proposed accessory structure to be located at 6080 Ford Road.  
Sidwell No.: 17-06-200-032

David Campbell, Planning Director, gave a review of the conceptual proposal, noting that no formal action would be taken this evening. Mark Colone is proposing an accessory structure, a pole barn, located at 6080 Ford Road. The proposed 5,000 square foot pole barn would require approval from both the Planning Commission and subsequently from the ZBA. The Planning Commission must approve any accessory structure greater than 900 square feet and only on a property of 2 acres or greater. Mr. Colone’s property is 3.6 acres.

The proposed pole barn would be located within Mr. Colone’s front yard and residential accessory structures of any size are required to be located in a side or rear yard. The structure being permitted in the front yard would require a variance from the ZBA. Per the Township Zoning Ordinance, the action of the ZBA must be subsequent to the action of the Planning Commission. Mr. Colone is seeking preliminary feedback from the Planning Commission.

Mr. Colone, 6080 Ford Road, Commerce Township, was present to address the request.

Mr. Colone – Can you put that on satellite view, Dave?

Dave Campbell – Sure.

Mr. Colone approached the overhead and gave a review.

Mr. Colone – Looking at my property, this is the front of my house. This is my front window and this is what I look at. Technically, this is the front yard of my house. The board approved this property and this house to be built facing the south some years ago.

This is this gentleman's back yard and Ford Road is over here. This is my other neighbor's back yard, and my other neighbors' back yards. Everybody's back yard goes into my yard. Essentially, this is everybody's back yard. Technically, you're calling it my front yard because my address or my mailbox is down here. My back yard is here, which is 40' from my house to the property line. You're not going to get a barn or anything in there, and that is this guy's front yard. My back yard is his front yard. It's a really strange piece of property. It is shielded here with trees all the way down. Now, the size of the barn was a little excessive because I wanted to go big. I want to back it down some. Right here would be out of the way. Nobody would look at it or see it. It's pine trees all the way down.

There's another barn in this back yard that would be near it. Where I want to put mine, it's out of my line of sight, which is essentially my front yard. I can't put anything up in here, in the other side of the rear, as it floods through the whole back yard. All the neighbors' property washes down into here. I had a flood in my basement. It's really wet back in here. The only real dry and good place to put the structure is right here. It would be out of my line of sight and in everybody's back yard. It's not in anybody's front yard. Also, sizing of the barn, which Mr. Campbell mentioned; Gary Perilli on Rivers Edge is putting up a very large barn right in his front yard, and you guys approved that barn as well. I'm not asking for something that you haven't approved before. You do approve barns in people's front yards. You also put another very large barn down Rivers Edge again, but that's off in his side yard. I don't have to have a monster barn like him. He's a race car driver.

I want a barn so I can store an RV in it, which is sitting in my yard right now. I also want to put trailers and all my other stuff in it. I'm an electrician so I have a lot of stuff. It's all over the yard. I have a Jeep sitting over here with a plow. I want to put it all inside the barn so nobody has to look at it, and then I need a little workspace in the front. I have a '71 Cutlass that I'm trying to work on with my son. I also want to pull my work van inside in the wintertime. It's a real important thing to me to have this barn, right where it's shown, because it's out of my way. It will be in the neighbors' back yards and it won't be causing anybody an eyesore.

Dave Campbell – If I could just mention one distinction, and this is a graphic that Paula created. Everywhere that is crosshatched is the defined front yard as our Zoning Ordinance defines it. Recognizing what Mr. Colone is saying, that the way his house is oriented, he considers this area to be the front yard.

The accessory structure would be permitted in both the rear yard and the side yard. Effectively, while I've heard everything being said about this area flooding, anywhere that is not in this crosshatched area would be considered side or rear yard, and would be an area where an accessory structure would be permitted.

Mr. Colone – I believe the septic field and tank is also right in front of that driveway, right there.

Dave Campbell reviewed the septic field on the overhead.

Mr. Colone – If the barn went down in the front, I'll be looking at it right out my front window. My wife has expressed that she doesn't want it there. Over there, it would be out of the way. That's a garden I have that is not in great shape. You can see what the neighbor has going on. I already have to look at all of this, which is like nine trailers and trucks coming in and out of here every day. He's got a construction company there. Over here, it would be matched kind of with his. Even if I have to put it here. Up over here, the driveway would be easier to turn a vehicle into it with the radius. If it has to go over here, I would figure something out. It's everybody's back yard right now. I think I've said that nine times.

**Commission Comments:**

Chairperson Parel – A couple questions before we pass it on for this non-binding conversation. You'd mentioned that you shot for the moon with the size. Has your thought changed as far as what size?

Mr. Colone – Yes, I think a 40x80 would be much more reasonable. That gives me the back half to store stuff in and the front half for the workshop, which basically is a hobby shop.

Chairperson Parel – Okay, but definitely smaller.

Mr. Colone – Yes, well the property is 3.6 acres. My driveway is over 500 feet long from the house to the road. I'm set back. You can see, when they built that house in '81, they didn't give it a lot of thought when they planned it. It's kicking to the right and it's low. They didn't raise it out of the ground. Last summer, when we had insane monsoons in July, it came off all the neighbors' properties and it went in my French doors into the basement and flooded it. I'm still fixing it because insurance didn't pay for it. Putting the barn in the back would just exacerbate more water going toward my house which is not what I want. Up there is a really good spot. The pine trees are very tall so they screen very well through there. I could add more trees to add to the screening.

Dave Campbell – That is something that is within the Planning Commission's discretion. As a condition of approving an accessory structure of this size, they can look at things like screening, along with opportunities to upgrade materials.

Mr. Colone – I was planning to try to match the house colors to keep it uniform, possibly even with wainscoting of the stone across the front to really tie it in.

Chairperson Parel – That's good to know. That was going to be my next question. Our assistance we give you today is really more in relation to the size of the structure, as opposed to the location, right Dave? I mean other than Bill.

Dave Campbell – It is hard sometimes to separate the two, but the Planning Commission's role is the size of the structure. The Zoning Board of Appeals' role, if Mr. Colone gets there, is the location, and he couldn't get to the ZBA unless the Planning Commission approved it. The proposed location is in the defined front yard.

Chairperson Parel – If we were to approve it, could we consider a restriction on the location? Or, is that not within our means here of where it will be situated?

Dave Campbell – He would come to you with a plan of where he proposes it to be situated. Your role would be to approve that plan, or deny it. If you did approve it, you would approve it almost certainly with a condition that it also get approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals. That would be a key condition. A lot of times when these pole barns come to you, you have other conditions such as planting trees, putting windows on the building, et cetera.

Chairperson Parel – I guess I'm confused. That tells me that we do have a say in the location. I thought we were saying before that it would be at the discretion of the ZBA to make that determination.

Dave Campbell – You would be approving the location of it in the sense that you would be conditioning your approval on the ZBA approving the location, if that makes sense.

Chairperson Parel – Yes, so we can have conversation about location, and we can put further restrictions on it for items like screening, building materials and things like that.

Dave Campbell – There might be suggestions, if it were to be approved by the ZBA at that location, here is what the Planning Commission thinks might be upgrades that could be done. We've already heard the size.

Chairperson Parel – Then there is the possibility that we approve it, along with the location, and it goes to the ZBA and they say they don't like the location.

Dave Campbell – Exactly. Your condition would be, "We approve it, subject to a ZBA variance for the location in the front yard."

Yes, it's possible the Planning Commission approves it, and then it goes to the ZBA and they say, no thank you. That's the risk he's running.

Mr. Colone – Well, I'm just thinking about the Perilli barn that's in the front yard, and you approved it. It's a very large barn.

McKeever – Yes, but we don't know the exact circumstances with that at this point. There might have been a hardship that allowed him to get it there.

Mr. Colone – He had water around the yard.

McKeever – To cut to the quick of it, I'm sure we don't necessarily have a problem with the size of the barn, given the size of your lot, but to get through the ZBA you're definitely going to have to prove that you have a hardship and why it can't go in your side yard. We're required to limit or minimize a variance as much as possible.

Mr. Colone – So with the septic field there and the flooding in the back, it really can't go in the side yard. There's no...

McKeever – But you're talking about the side yard at the top, and the septic...

Mr. Colone – That's right on the septic field.

McKeever – My experience on the ZBA, if you come to them and show them where you want it, the first question is going to be, *why can't it go in your side yard?* The next question is going to be...

Mr. Colone – Because then I would have to look at it right out my front window.

McKeever – But we have guidelines that we have to adhere to.

Mr. Colone – Well, considering my house is sideways and it's really looking to the front...

McKeever – I'm just giving you the parameters.

Chairperson Parel – I don't think Bill is saying that you can't prove a hardship. He's just saying that you have to prove it.

Dave Campbell – There's 6 specific criteria that the ZBA are statutorily obligated to look at. You have to demonstrate to their satisfaction that there's a hardship, a practical difficulty in putting it into a conforming location.

Mr. Colone – We can all agree that there's other barns in the area that are near it, that are right down in my front yard. Technically, I have to look at a barn and a whole parking lot in my front yard.

Dave Campbell – I think that's relevant information for the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Chairperson Parel – We can go down the line and hopefully what you'll have after today is an understanding from this Commission of where we're at, and you do have a member of the ZBA on here.

Karim – The way I look at it and the shape of this land, for me as an architect, if I had to put something here myself, I couldn't find a better location that what he is proposing. I know it's because of the front, but actually it's not the front of the house. The front of the house is the lower right corner, at the entrance of the house. That's where the circular driveway ends. I agree with the location he is proposing. It would only require a small road to get in there. I like to see people put their equipment inside and hide it.

Winkler – Of course, any site plan approval is conditioned upon the variance from the ZBA, which is a big challenge as Bill has pointed out. The fact that the building would be well-buffered in its proposed location is a big positive. It is a unique site. I think we would all agree on that. The soil conditions in the back yard are probably unsuitable for what's being proposed. The idea of saving the existing trees on the north portion of the site is a positive, but I would look hard at considering possibly reducing the size to bring it into scale with the existing building on the site, as well as the other buildings on the sites around the petitioner's property.

Rebeck – I'm fine with this, as long as you can get past ZBA. You have a property that's off the road. It's completely sheltered with trees from all the other neighbors. You're in everyone's back yard. Just be careful when you go to the ZBA that you know the criteria

and you're prepared to meet them. No matter what we do here, if you don't pass that, then it's going in the back corner.

Loskill – I agree, I think where he is suggesting this is the best possible spot to put the barn. I went by the site. You can't see anything past those pine trees. Setting it back there would be the best spot to put it. Your hardship is that, the way your house was placed, you really have no backyard. I would use that as a hardship. I think your proposal is the best spot and it makes perfect sense. You have an unusual lot and I hope you get your variances.

Weber – I just have two comments. One, I'm glad you're looking at something smaller, because 5,000 square feet is more than twice the footprint of the house. What would carry weight with me is going to be what your neighbors say. At the public hearing, if your neighbors say, "I don't want a 5,000 square foot building, even if it's in my backyard...".

Mr. Colone – I'll shrink it down to 3,200.

Weber – Even 3,200 – that's another house. I don't know whether you have talked to your neighbors.

Mr. Colone – I figured I would do this first, come here and get your opinion.

Weber – As it gets to a public hearing, I think that is going to carry some weight. My suggestion would be, talk to them. Get them to say, *we're all good with this*, and at least from the Planning Commission I think you'll build rapport.

Mr. Colone – I've fixed electrical on both of their houses. I'm a local electrician, Premier Electric.

Chairperson Parel – Bill, did you have anything else to add?

McKeever – I like barns. I'm a barn guy. Unfortunately, when this comes to the ZBA, I will have to abstain because I would have already been involved during the Planning Commission portion.

Dave Campbell – That's a good procedural point. Assuming this moves forward and it comes back to the Planning Commission for site plan approval for the barn, based on its size, then Mr. McKeever would have to recuse himself from the ZBA for the variance of the barn being in the front yard. That's State law. We do have an alternate who would sit in Mr. McKeever's seat with the ZBA. The idea with State law being that you don't get to vote on something twice.

In the comments, I heard a couple folks reference the size. I think Mr. Weber expressed his thoughts on the size, and I think Mr. Colone is committing to something more like 3,200 square feet. Since the size is the Planning Commission's domain, any further thoughts on the size that you can share with Mr. Colone, or thoughts on accommodating that size with additional screening or other requirements to account for the size of the structure, assuming this comes back?

Chairperson Parel – I would just ask, how does it compare to other structures?

Mr. Colone – If you pull it up, there is a barn not far from me that's pretty big. It's in Commerce too. Across the street in White Lake, there's a massive one.

Dave Campbell – We can't account for what they do in White Lake.

Paula Lankford – The barn to the south is about 900 square feet.

Mr. Colone – That was there when I moved in.

McKeever – How many square feet is the garden?

Mr. Colone – That's probably 40x75 so it's close. It was way too much to handle.

Dave Campbell brought up nearby pole barns on the overhead and discussion continued. Dave listed the sizes of 11 barns approved in Commerce Township since 2005, which ranged in size from 1,300 to 3,400 square feet.

Chairperson Parel – Knowing that, would anyone here be opposed to the size?

Mr. Colone – It's almost four acres, and I'm 500 feet off the road.

Loskill – You're nowhere near your lot coverage.

Rebeck – I'm also a barn person. I think one of the great things about living in Commerce and having a big lot like this, off of the road, is the ability to have outbuildings on it. Echoing George's comments, please talk to all of your neighbors and make sure that no one is going to come in here and say, *I don't want him building a large barn.*

Mr. Colone – Is it just the three here, or do I need to get...

Rebeck – Anyone who has a sight line.

Dave Campbell – As far as the public hearing goes, any property owner within 300 feet of your property line is going to get a public hearing notice in the mail. That's State law. Then we also have to put a notice in the Oakland Press.

Rebeck – If you want to go a little overboard, you can bring them here in support of it. That would make us very happy.

Dave Campbell – A lot of times folks come in with a petition of support.

Discussion continued regarding Mr. Colone holding family gatherings in the barn, the benefit of a letter of support or a petition, accessibility to the pole barn as it relates to the location and hardship, and the timeline. Dave Campbell stated that a public hearing would need to be held at the May 2nd Planning Commission meeting. An application would have to be received soon in order to meet the noticing requirements as

mentioned. If the Planning Commission acts favorably at the May 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, then it might be feasible to get it on the ZBA's May 26<sup>th</sup> agenda. Chairperson Parel agreed with Weber and Rebeck that Mr. Colone should seek support from his neighbors. Paula Lankford and Mr. Colone discussed application deadlines.

### **ITEM 13. MASTER PLAN REVIEW**

Dave Campbell – I'll start this off and then I'll turn it over to Jill and Rose from Giffels Webster. At our April meeting, we discussed the preliminary scope from Giffels for the update to our Master Plan, with the primary component of that update being a series of area plans, focused on specific development areas. Part of that discussion was looking at what the Planning Department came up with, 13 candidates for those development areas. Our discussion led to the Planning Commission agreeing to go through a prioritization exercise; looking at those 13 properties and giving each one a ranking of high, medium or low.

We took those rankings and compiled them into a spreadsheet, and came up with a scoreboard for each of the 13 properties by averaging everybody's scores. Those scores are provided to you in the memo in your packet.

The average prioritization "score" for each of the 13 candidate Development Areas are as follows:

- Beaumont Property – 2.7
- Rock Road properties – 2.5
- Long Farm – 2.4
- Bay Pointe golf course – 2.4
- Williams International – 2.3
- Commerce Village settlement area – 2.3
- Five & Main Phase 2 – 2.3
- Union Lake Golf Course – 2.1
- WLCSD property (adj. to Commerce Elementary) – 2.1
- NE corner of Commerce & Carey – 1.8
- Sleeth Rd gravel pits – 1.3
- Maple & Laura Lane – 1.3
- WLCSD property (adjacent to Victory Park) – 1.3

Part of the scope that Jill is going to discuss assumes that there are 10 development areas within the Master Plan update. Part of what I hope tonight's discussion will be addressing is the number; is it 11, 10 or 9? Maybe we can look at those scores and come to a decision of which of those development areas warrant having an area plan within the Master Plan update. That certainly impacts Giffels and their workload, it impacts the scope, and frankly, it impacts the final price tag for what Giffels is proposing to do for us.

My hope is that with tonight's meeting, and if necessary, the May meeting, that the Planning Commission can come to an agreement on what the scope of this Master Plan update shall be, so that I can take that scope and a request for funding to the Township Board at their May 10<sup>th</sup> meeting for approval.

Chairperson Parel – I don't see why we couldn't shorten this list based on feedback that we've gotten. My thought, if everybody agrees, and we can discuss it after Jill's presentation, but out of the 13, we've talked about a Top 10. To me, there's three of

them that scored on the very low end. My recommendation would be to knock it down to 10. Maybe we take off more.

Ms. Bahm delivered a PowerPoint presentation, addressing concepts to be refreshed, along with reviewing a timeline for the Master Plan update. Ms. Bahm highlighted what is being done, when it will be done, and what will be done with the Master Plan when it's finished. She reminded the Commissioners that the update is being done for a number of reasons:

- To increase public understanding through participation
- To promote government, citizen and developer coordination
- To protect and enhance community character
- To develop a shared vision for quality of life for all residents
- To anticipate and plan for solutions to emerging issues.

That last one relates to drive-through uses as discussed this evening, their impact on traffic, which is significant, and also what that does to the community. It seems there is an onslaught coming of drive-through uses and it's something to be addressed. How many drive-throughs can be accommodated realistically, where should they be and what does that do to the environment.

In addition, another important aspect of the Master Plan update is it supports community efforts for grants and funding, such as road improvements, as well as DNR grant funding for the Township. The Master Plan is also the basis for zoning, subdivision design and the capital improvement plan. That's really important as the Zoning Ordinance is updated to accommodate and anticipate new uses, or existing uses in a way that's different, as well as expediting the review process.

The Master Plan is long range. It provides guidance for land use decisions and it sets your policy. It helps you as you consider rezonings or Special Land Uses. The Zoning Ordinance is immediate, regulatory and has the rule of law, and it's enforced.

The Work Plan: This is shown with four phases. Phase I is updating existing conditions and demographics provided at the end of 2021. Census data is now available. Then looking at some maps, such as those on protected and undevelopable lands. Some of the maps will help with analysis, such as workforce and jobs related maps. The next maps look at tree canopy cover and natural features. These are helpful as we think about some of the metrics we might use in the future to gauge the progress with Master Plan implementation.

In Phase I, we think we'll be doing all of the work and then meeting with the Planning Commission to review the information. That would be updated demographics and maps. It's useful information at the start of the process with the community, engaging public input, and for future tracking as to progress. If we start in June, then it's likely we would return in July.

Phase II: Public Engagement. We talked about a variety of different components. This is really important to the process. We can't just do a survey or a meeting; we need both, and a workshop, and maybe neighborhood tool kits, along with another online component. A general guide has been prepared for that and there is some flexibility within that scope to refine. There will probably be one meeting with the Planning Commission to talk about the public input that is gathered, along with participation in the workshop or neighborhood meetings. The Commissioners are encouraged to send personal invitations to their contacts to participate.

Phase III: Study Areas and Future Land Use Map updates. The workshop to gather ideas about the development areas would go into Phase III at the beginning. Then, update some of the plan chapters, the nonmotorized transportation plan, housing, sustainability and resiliency. Then, a meeting is likely in October with the Planning Commission. The dates are tentative based upon availability.

Some of the area plans could be conceptual developments. Examples were illustrated on the overhead showing infill development. Images can be included in the Master Plan to describe the intent for that area. It would probably take at least three meetings, maybe more, to get through 10 development plans.

Updating the Future Land Use Map; an example of map annotation was presented. It's helpful to show community, and to see what changes were made and why. If that is all done by January or February, an Open House could be held on the final draft by February 2023.

Implementation of the Master Plan would then follow. Implementation strategies are categorized. For the Planning Commission, it's likely you will hone in on zoning action items. Those are zoning changes that the Planning Commission may need to make to implement the Master Plan. Advocacy items are other things, like encouraging residents or businesses to do something. Then Capital Improvement items; anything that is a physical improvement requiring a capital outlay should be highlighted in the Master Plan so it's easy to pull it out and put it in the Capital Improvement Plan. Plus, showing the lead and supporting players, along with a rough timeline and potential funding source.

Next are Metrics which we are adding. An example was shown for some of the measures that a community could take to preserve the quality of a lake. Benchmarks are noted, how they're identified, how to update it, how often and how to track progress. That's a strong thing to conclude in the Master Plan.

The Zoning Plan shows how the Future Land Use categories align with the zoning districts and whether any new zoning districts need to be created, or if any existing ones would need to be updated based on the Future Land Use plan.

So, 5-6 meetings with the Planning Commission during Phase III, assuming the June start, so that's probably March or April of 2023 that we would have Planning Commission meetings and the Open House. You might want to consider either doing a study session before the regular Planning Commission meetings, or possibly a second meeting in the month during that time.

Going forward, there is a 63-day review period, which might be roughly April to June or May to July, and then the public hearing would be in June or July. The timeline was shown on the following slide.

On the next slide, as we see our land use categories refined, our zoning districts and standards might need to be updated. Additional standards might need to be added to better direct and anticipate development. The review process might need to be improved to make better use of time, and some items might be administratively reviewed. Also, there may be other regulations may need to be updated. There may be special design plans. There might also be areas that need more detailed concepts or studies on that come up through the process.

Dave Campbell – The other thing that Giffels Webster created for us, from the list of development areas, was a zoning map with the prospective development areas overlaid.

Ms. Bahm and Dave Campbell discussed toggling the map to display various layers and turn them on and off. Dave reviewed the map visuals of the prioritized development areas.

Chairperson Parel and Dave Campbell discussed recreation grant funding as it relates to Township pathways. Dave noted that a grant was recently awarded for a pathway connection along the north side of 14 Mile Road, connecting Long Park to the Metro Trail. The Metro then connects to the Michigan Airline Trail.

Chairperson Parel discussed how much actual developable land exists versus how much is State-owned, wetland or controlled in some other fashion. He felt this should be noticed on the website. Weber explained that a study was performed for all of the Township-owned properties, and it was mentioned in that study that roughly 32% of the Township is either protected park land, greenspace or lakes.

Chairperson Parel – I look forward to getting feedback from the community on the Master Plan update. I anticipate a lot of it will come from Facebook, and I think it will require a lot of filtering. It would be nice if we could come to an agreement and reduce the list of 13.

Karim –

- I don't think the gravel pits need any further planning.
- I went to Rock Road. I'm uncertain if anything can be done there. That is a low priority item.
- I'm interested in creating service centers within the Township. Either another highway could be built, or centers could be developed closer to residential areas as needed for shopping and other services.
- I guess those sorts of things will not be addressed right now with updating the Master Plan. That's going to be in another phase when the Master Plan is completely redone.

Chairperson Parel – It seems to me that we could resolve some of the issues now.

Winkler –

- My suggestion is to study the first 8 on the list.
- I also suggest to David that there may need to be a small contingency in the project budget, given the fact that the process will take a year.

Rebeck –

- I appreciated the map. I grouped properties by purpose and geographical area.
- I grouped Northwest R-1A, Parcels 10, 8 and 4 to maintain the R-1A status.
- Northeast R-1C included 9, 12 and 7. From a developmental standpoint, I feel the view is the same for those.
- Parcel 13 is Historic Downtown which is conceptual.
- I grouped Haggerty M-5 Business, Parcels 1, 3, 2 and 11.
- That left 5 and 6 as outliers. I think 5 could go with Northwest R-1A, and 6 could be with 13 regarding downtown areas and walkability, however it has a different feel.

Chairperson Parel – Is your thought that some of these may just be single-family residential, and why are we having the conversation?

Rebeck – Not necessarily. All of these in the northwest corner that are zoned R-1A, we know that we're either going to keep them R-1A, or if they're not, we're going to have the same conditions put on them, which is recreational areas, walkability, sustainability, worrying about traffic. Anything we do with those, we're going to have the same criteria. That's my thought process on grouping those together.

Dave Campbell – I can see a challenge with grouping them together because there are some unique characteristics, such as grouping the Long Farm property with the gravel pit property. The adjacent properties of Walled Lake Northern and Huron Valley Hospital create unique character to Long Farm, whereas the gravel pit properties are adjacent to Proud Lake State Recreation.

Weber – Help me understand. Can you see a scenario where those would not be residential? All three are R-1A. There probably won't be any commercial in those locations.

Loskill – That's your one spot for expanding the hospital site, #4.

Dave Campbell – Is it too early to come to that conclusion?

Weber – That's a great point.

Ms. Bahm – I think the idea of grouping them is interesting, and not necessarily from land uses that are alike, but maybe as neighborhood areas. Whereas with 4, 8 and 10, we might envision a different kind of development, we might be thinking about how they all can support living in that area, and maybe some commerce in that area as well. That would tie in with our transportation planning.

Rebeck – So would we put 9 and 13 in there too? Because they're adjacent.

Ms. Bahm – Yes, I was thinking that. Thinking about 13, 9 and 4 together as an area.

Rebeck – I like that.

Ms. Bahm – I do like the idea of thinking about breaking the Township into neighborhoods or districts. That gets to your point too about having areas of commerce to support the people in that area. That promotes walkability. We also talked about how people may think differently depending on their school district and how it influences their identity of being a Commerce Township resident. Having neighborhood ideas may reinforce those.

Rebeck – I think that works with the northeast side also, if we put 5 in with 12 and 7.

Weber – You can pretty much eliminate 12. That's out of our control.

Dave Campbell – So, 12 is the property that's owned by Walled Lake Consolidated Schools who just recently sent out an RFP to the southeast Michigan development community seeking proposals for purchase and development of that property.

Ms. Bahm – But they don't control what happens on the property. Once they sell it, it's up to the Township.

Dave Campbell – That's correct. I mean to some degree, all of these properties are in various stages of flux. We're looking at spending a year doing this. A lot of these properties are still going to be actively pursued by developers. I still think it's prudent to be proactive instead of reactive.

Discussion continued regarding funding for the Master Plan update, the timeline, phasing, prioritizing, condensing and/or grouping the list of candidates for Development Areas, along with incorporation of the trailway plan.

Ms. Bahm – If we want to think about the neighborhood concept, we can rework and refine the scope to make that clear, clarify what we're updating, and make those costs reflective of those efforts.

Dave Campbell and Weber discussed the budget request to be taken to the Township Board, along with prioritization of the properties to be reviewed. Winkler feels that this will be money well spent and that the Master Plan update is overdue.

The Rock Road properties were further discussed. Dave Campbell felt that the site should be looked at as if it were a blank canvas. Given its location and proximity to Five & Main and M-5, what types of uses would the Planning Commission see as appropriate for that location. Ms. Bahm also suggested looking at that area as a transition; envisioning the incremental steps that it might take to get through that. Areas like that don't change overnight. Discussed continued regarding ownership of the property and the potential for future sale and development.

Dave Campbell feels that area plans are beneficial for discussing with prospective developers. Ms. Bahm added that area plans are helpful from the planning perspective, of having a concept the development community can look at, and it also helps the Planning Commission in the meantime to create the zoning standards necessary to make that kind of development a reality. Even if a site does not transition immediately, it can be helpful to have a district or standards in place. Weber and Dave Campbell discussed future land use designations and how those impact proposals.

Discussion continued regarding prioritization of the parcels, along with unique characteristics of each property, adjacent uses for each site and comprehensive planning. After extensive consideration, the list of top priorities for Development Area plans was as follows:

- Beaumont Property
- Williams International
- Long Farm
- Bay Pointe Golf Course

- Rock Road properties
- Commerce Village settlement area
- Union Lake Golf Course

Discussion continued regarding how the Master Plan update process affects those properties that are under review, along with the timeline. Dave Campbell also wanted further discussion of the Walled Lake Schools property, adjacent to Victory Park.

- The next Planning Commission meeting is May 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- Ms. Bahm would refine the scope and update the associated costs for the seven properties listed and send to the Commissioners within two weeks.
- Weber suggested starting the May 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting early.
- Dave Campbell will be taking a budget amendment to the Township Board on May 10<sup>th</sup>.
- The first two phases of the Master Plan update are expected to take place in 2022, and the third phase would be in 2023.

#### **ITEM I4. Sign Ordinance – Article 30, Potential text amendment discussion**

David Campbell – I am hoping that we can hold a formal public hearing for the amendment at the May 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. Before we schedule that, I want to make sure this is the direction the Commission wants to go. The ZBA wanted to see this happen. It's two amendments to our sign regulations. The first is regarding ground signs and the required setbacks. We require ground signs to be 50' 15' from the setback line, which is 75' from the centerline of the road right-of-way. On a lot of commercial properties, particularly along Haggerty and Union Lake Road, 75' from the centerline would put the sign in the middle of their parking lot or their building. They have to come to the ZBA seeking a sign exception.

What is being proposed would curtail some of those applications to the ZBA and the concept involves averaging, which we use in other applications. We take the existing adjacent signs and average those setbacks to determine the location of the new sign. Jay, you issue sign permits so you deal with these requests more often than I do. You see this averaging concept as having the desired outcome of limiting how often the ZBA has to hear these petitions.

Jay James – Yes, when we see similar items going to the ZBA quite frequently, we realize it is something we need to look at. As Dave said, Union Lake and Haggerty Road are two corridors where we have a lot of older buildings and they can't meet the sign setbacks. We have something similar in the ordinance. It used to be areas of special concern.

Paula Lankford – It's Article 6.

Jay James – Yes, Article 6 which addresses houses that are nonconforming; within their block, if there are houses closer to the road than the ordinance allows, we are allowed to average the setbacks for the new house.

Dave Campbell – That happens a lot on lakefront properties. We take the average of other houses on that same block and that determines the setback for the new house, or for the addition or a new deck.

Jay James – So, in our discussions, we came up with this idea that would allow us to administratively give them something more than what the ordinance currently allows, and at the same time, not having to go to the ZBA constantly, and it's something that won't be out of place with other signs in the area.

Chairperson Parel – Dave, I think you mentioned multiple numbers of these that go before the ZBA. Do they all eventually get pushed through?

Dave Campbell – I don't know that we've done a scoreboard.

Paula Lankford – There have only been two that were rejected; the daycare on Commerce, and Arkan Jonna's building on Commerce.

Dave Campbell – More often than not, the petitioner is successful in their appeal to the ZBA.

Chairperson Parel – We're trying to save time.

Dave Campbell – Time, and cost to the petitioner. They have to pay for a survey to go before the ZBA, and this revised process would not require a survey.

Chairperson Parel – If this were to pass, under the new rule, would those two that were rejected still be rejected?

Dave Campbell – I'd have to look at them.

Jay James – The daycare was visibility because of landscaping issues.

Paula Lankford – Arkan's had to do with trees as well. I don't think there would be anything to average for him.

Jay James – I don't know if that would have changed those outcomes or not, but I can tell you many of the others would have resulted in the same outcome.

Chairperson Parel – So it may not have changed them from getting rejected. They may still get rejected.

Dave Campbell – Correct, but I think for different reasons than what we're trying to address here.

Paula Lankford – Yes.

Chairperson Parel – I just don't want them all pushed through. If the ZBA rejected 2 out of 10, there's a reason for it, right?

McKeever – I can speak to the daycare on the corner. Their hardship was that their sign wasn't visible because their landscaping was overgrown. The ZBA said trim your landscaping.

Dave Campbell – They blame the Planning Commission for making them put in all that landscaping.

Weber – When we hear there are *a lot of requests*, help me understand the scope here. Give me a ballpark, once a month?

Dave Campbell – The ZBA is scheduled to meet six times per year, every other month. As you may have seen in our schedule, if we don't have a petitioner, the meeting gets cancelled. Part of that is because the Building and Planning Departments work with potential petitioners to find solutions that are better than going to the ZBA. If I added up all of our ZBA cases over the last three years, I would guess at least a third of them were ground signs too close to the road.

Weber – The ground sign amendment, to me, there's logic in what you're proposing. It's the average. We use that same logic to solve other issues.

Dave Campbell – And the ZBA uses that logic when the appeals come to them.

Weber – So ground signs, to me that seems logical. I had more notes on the wall sign discussion. I think it's a very small number.

Discussion took place regarding requests, or potential requests, for wall signs at locations such as Scooter's Coffee and Culver's, which are located on internal drives.

Chairperson Parel – Let's finish our thoughts on ground signs before moving on. Are we in agreement that it seems reasonable?

Loskill – I'm good with the ground signs. It's a reasonable proposition.

Chairperson Parel – Dave, are you good with that?

Dave Campbell – Yes, the language is already written. It's just a question of do we proceed with scheduling the public hearing for May. With the aforementioned wall signs. Mr. Weber is correct, we heard it recently with Culver's and Jiffy Lube. Scooter's Coffee hasn't actually applied for signs yet.

Jay James – Aldi's has.

Dave Campbell – What they're asking for is an additional presence when they are surrounded by a commercial shopping center, or a unified development. They are often asking for a second sign that is meant to face toward the interior of the development to provide a directional presence. I think it's key to point out that the size of that directional sign would be limited to 10 square feet, and that 10 square feet would be subtracted from the size of the sign that they're otherwise entitled to that faces the main road.

Chairperson Parel – I know some of the requests were for signs on all four sides of the building. This limits them to two?

Dave Campbell – Yes, unless they are a corner lot on two public roads. Then, they are allowed a second sign.

Jay James – They are then entitled to two wall signs.

Chairperson Parel – Plus another, in a scenario like this, with one in the back facing the shopping center.

Paula Lankford – If they were on a corner lot, yes.

Discussion ensued regarding potential requests for additional signage on existing buildings. There would be a need to look at whether or not they have already maximized their sign allowance. Weber felt that these wall sign requests are unique and stand on their own as a case-by-case basis, and he questioned the volume of these scenarios. Dave Campbell reflected on the out-lots in the Township. Chairperson Parel felt this would open it up for existing buildings to make requests. Dave reiterated that the directional sign square footage would be subtracted from their maximum allowable. He felt it would be a limited number of instances.

Dave Campbell – Shall we proceed with just the amendment relative to averaging for ground signs?

The Commission was in agreement.

Dave Campbell – Can we do this at a public hearing in May?

Paula Lankford – I can push it into May.

Dave Campbell – Another thing the ZBA has asked us to look at is the idea of the aforementioned corner lots, where you're entitled to a combination of ground signs and wall signs.

Paula Lankford – Or any location. Rick said if they want to get rid of their ground sign...

Dave Campbell – I'll make an easy example. You're entitled to one wall sign and one ground sign. If you would rather have two wall signs and no ground sign, we would have to amend the Zoning Ordinance to provide a mechanism to do that.

Weber – But you can't have two ground signs.

Dave Campbell – Correct. That still remains to be written.

Chairperson Parel – Do we have a preference then, if you have two signs, are we opposed to those two being on the building? Is this corner lots?

Jay James – No, it's any lot. Honestly, I think it probably came up at Zerbo's. They did not want a monument sign. They preferred two wall signs.

Paula Lankford – They gave Zerbo’s an additional wall sign, if they agreed to omit their ground sign.

Chairperson Parel – Is there a size difference?

Dave Campbell – Yes, because with a wall sign, it’s based on the width of your building. If you have a building that is 50’ wide, you get a 50 square foot sign. The ground sign is just a straight 32 square feet. We will talk about it further at another meeting.

**ITEM 15. Planning Commission’s 2021 Annual Report**

David Campbell, Planning Director, gave a review.

**MOTION** by Loskill, supported by Rebeck; move to approve the Planning Commission’s 2021 Annual Report, and present it to the Commerce Township Board of Trustees at their next meeting.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**J: OTHER MATTERS TO COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION:**

None.

**K: PLANNING DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

- **NEXT REGULAR MEETING DATE: MONDAY, MAY 2, 2022**
- Edgewood Golf Course wants to build a new cart barn and golf simulator room. It’s a pretty big building, so it will come before the Commission.
- DDA Director Watson hopes to sell a property along Haggerty Road to a daycare Montessori operator. This is located just north of Marz Deli on the west side of Haggerty Road. They would be coming to the Planning Commission seeking two things.
  - One would be site plan approval.
  - The other would be approval for a daycare less than 1,500 feet away from another daycare. We went through this on the same property once before when the operator was Goddard Schools. The newest applicant operates something very similar to Goddard Schools. The previous motion was specific to Goddard as the owner/operator, so we have to get a new waiver of that 1,500-foot rule, if you are so inclined.
- The Township is exploring some upgrades to 8585 PGA Drive in an effort to convert it to our new Oakland County Sheriff substation. Potentially, there will be new building materials, a fenced in area, et cetera. Those are things which the Township Board could waive Planning Commission approval of, but they want to play by the same rules as anybody else and seek site plan approval.
- I’d like to do a resolution in May honoring retired Chair, Larry Haber.
- We’re going to have a public hearing for the sign amendment.
- And, it sounds like we will have Mr. Colone’s large pole barn for a public hearing.
- We had a hose decoupling ceremony for Fire Station #03. For a fire station, you don’t cut a ribbon; you decouple a big fire hose. We did that last Thursday. It’s a beautiful facility inside and out.

Chairperson Parel inquired about the fencing along the road at Pontiac Trail and M-5. Dave Campbell noted that it was installed by the RCOC and MDOT. It forces drivers to slow down. Chairperson Parel thought it was temporary. Dave Campbell stated that the existing fence is the permanent solution.

Karim inquired about M-5 pedestrian bridge updates. Dave and Paula stated that information can be found on the Township website.

**L: ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** by Rebeck, supported by Winkler, to adjourn the meeting at 9:59pm.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

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Chelsea Rebeck, Secretary