

**ALPINE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING**

**October 21, 2021**

**In Person and by Electronic Remote Access**

**21-44 CALL TO ORDER / APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF  
SEPTEMBER 15, 2021 AND THE / PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA  
ITEMS.**

The Alpine Township Planning Commission held its regular meeting on October 21 2021 at 7:00 p.m. at the Alpine Township Center, 5255 Alpine Avenue NW, Comstock Park, MI 49321 in person and by Electronic Remote Access via Zoom. Present: Chair Mike O'Malley, Ron Cordes, Lisa Frizzell, Luke Arends and Gary Potter. Steve Thome joined via Zoom at 7:35 to listen to discussion. Dawn Swafford was absent. Planner Susan Becker and recording secretary Barb Griswold were also present. Chair O'Malley called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Arends moved, with support from Potter to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Alpine Planning Commission on October 21, 2021.

**Ayes: 5      Nays: 0      Motion Carried**

Chair O'Malley opened the meeting up for Public Comment on any non-agenda items. No comments were received.

**21-45 PUBLIC HEARING: REZONE PROPERTIES ALONG 4 MILE ROAD  
BETWEEN WALKER AND BAUMHOFF AVENUES FROM THEIR CURRENT  
C-2, COMMERCIAL DESIGNATION TO C-4, COMMERCIAL.**

Planner Becker gave her review of the rezoning from C-2, Commercial to C-4, Commercial along 4 Mile Road between Walker and Baumhoff Avenues. The area between Walker and Baumhoff Avenues is zoned for commercial use to a depth of 500 feet from the right-of-way line for a distance of about one-half mile. This equals about 30 acres of commercially-zoned land and this zoning has existed since the 1960s.

The area contains one parcel of 15 acres which is vacant. The remainder consists of parcels ranging from one-half to five acres. Four single family dwellings occupy the smaller lots while the Kenowa Hills School Administration building occupies a five acre parcel and a package delivery business is located on a 3-acre former vehicle sales lot. A small business building is located near the northeast corner of 4 Mile Road and Walker Avenue.

Becker stated the Township is looking ahead to provide opportunities for small-scale less intense uses that support neighborhood-scale needs and provide support services to the industrial uses to the south. The planned uses along 4 Mile Road are intended to serve as a buffer to the planned residential and agricultural uses further north of 4 Mile Road.

The future land use designation of the properties proposed for rezoning is *Commercial Boarder*. A part of this area was known as Sub-Area 1 in the 2007 Master Plan and 2015 Master Plan Update. The former Sub-Area 1 portion encompassed properties from Walker Avenue east to Baumhoff Avenue for a depth of about 500 feet from the right-of-way.

This area is envisioned to provide support retail, commercial and office services for the industrial development to the south. Envisioned uses are to be much less intense in use and scale as compared to those uses on M-37. To minimize the potential negative impacts of strip commercial development, access management provisions limiting the number and locations of driveways will be required.

In addition, drive-through establishments such as restaurants and oil changes businesses will not be permitted since the operations of such (number of customers, nighttime headlights, large delivery vehicles during the night, etc) are disruptive to adjoining planned residential areas. When gravity sanitary sewer becomes available to this area, all existing businesses must connect to the public sanitary sewer system. All new businesses shall connect to gravity sanitary sewer. The future land use designation of *Commercial Border* is included in the expanded, revised and renamed Sub-Area 2 encompassing land from Walker Avenue to Cordes Avenue.

Becker explained to implement the provision in the *Commercial Border* future land use designation that there be no drive-through facilities, a new zoning of C-4 was established. The new C-4 Commercial zoning district is essentially the C-2 zoning district minus drive-through facilities.

In addition, because there are few design items unique to the corridor that the Planning Commission wanted to address, a 4 Mile Road Corridor Overlay District was adopted that applies to all commercial and office uses. An overlay district is a legal mechanism that contains design parameters that only apply in the specified geographic area of the overlay district. An overlay district does not change the underlying zoning district designation; it literally lays overtop of existing zoning districts within the specified geographic area. An overlay district supersedes some design parameters of the underlying zoning districts. The C-4, Commercial zoning district is analogous to the future land use designation of *Commercial Border* for the area between Walker Avenue and Bristol Avenue.

Motion made to open for public comments by Potter, supported by Arends.

**Ayes: 5      Nays: 0      Motion Carried**

Nathaniel Reed, 3593 Walker Avenue, Walker MI asked if any intersection changes can be made at the 4 Mile Road and Walker Avenue intersection. Mr. Reed said with all the construction of new buildings being built on the south side of 4 Mile Road, there are now massive amounts of traffic.

O'Malley said the City of Walker has stated the new Amazon building traffic will be using a different route to get to I-96 and not 4 Mile Road.

Becker said the northeast corner is going from C-2 to C-4 so there will be no drive-through facilities and added Alpine Township is only on the north side of 4 Mile Road, with the south side being in the City of Walker. The Kent County Road Commission is not planning changes to the intersection because of challenges with a creek being there. Becker added a 4-way stops are actually safer than signaled intersections according to the traffic engineers of the Kent County Road Commission.

Motion made to close for public comments by Arends, supported by Cordes.

**Ayes: 5      Nays: 0      Motion Carried**

**MOTION: MOTION FOR REZONING**

Arends made a motion, supported by Cordes to recommend to the Alpine Township Board to approve the requested rezoning for the following properties as publicly noticed of the portions of the following properties currently zoned C-2, Commercial as noted on the official Zoning Map to C-4, Commercial:

Parcel Number	Property Address	Owner's Name	Current Zoning District #1	Current Zoning District #2	Proposed Zoning District(s)
41-09-33-400-014	2445 4 Mile Rd. NW	ETHERTON DIANA M TRUST	C-2		C-4
41-09-33-400-016	3650 Walker Ave.	ETHERTON ROBERT D	C-2		C-4
41-09-33-400-017	2425 4 Mile Rd. NW	ETHERTON DIANA M TRUST	C-2		C-4
41-09-34-300-052	2383 4 Mile Rd. NW	BETZ KENNETH D TRUST	C-2		C-4
41-09-34-300-008	2325 4 Mile Rd. NW	KENOWA HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS	C-2	R-1	C-4 & R-1
41-09-34-300-010	2295 4 Mile Rd. NW	KOSTER DONALD L	C-2		C-4
41-09-34-300-033	2275 4 Mile Rd. NW	KOSTER DONALD L & ARDITH A	C-2	R-1	C-4 & R-1
41-09-34-300-034	2255 4 Mile Rd. NW	KOSTER ARDITH A	C-2		C-4
41-09-34-300-012	2225 4 Mile Rd. NW	KOSTER DONALD L & ARDITH A	C-2		C-4
41-09-34-300-013	2205 4 Mile Rd. NW	KOSTER PROPERTY LLC	C-2	R-1	C-4 & R-1
41-09-34-300-018	2195 4 Mile Rd. NW	HILTON GLORIA J TRUST	C-2		C-4
41-09-34-300-050	2031 4 Mile Rd. NW	HILTON DANIEL L LLC	C-2		C-4
41-09-34-300-016	2021 4 Mile Rd. NW	HILTON PHILLIP W LLC	C-2		C-4

**Findings of Fact:**

Based upon representations made during rezoning review and upon the standards found in Chapter 13B and 24 of the Alpine Township Zoning Ordinance and the Alpine Township Master Plan, we find that the proposed rezoning:

- 1) Is consistent with the *Commercial Border* future land use recommendation of the Alpine Township Master Plan.
- 2) Does ensure compatibility with adjoining land uses and zoning types.
- 3) The location is appropriate for all the allowed uses in the C-4, Commercial zoning district.

**Ayes: 5      Nays: 0      Motion Carried**

**21-46                    CORRESPONDENCE:   KENOWA HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS REGARDING  
ADDITION ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE MIDDLE SCHOOL, STORM WATER  
CHANGES AND INTERIOR RENOVATIONS.**

John Gilchrist of Kenowa Hills Public Schools said the construction is part of the 2020 Bond Project embarking on an extensive overhaul of the existing Middle School. Originally built as the High School in 1962 the classrooms were sized for a high school class rather than middle school class. Subsequently, internal walls are being removed and rearranged in a manner to enlarge classrooms to better accommodate a middle school curriculum.

Additionally, the cafeteria and kitchen are receiving a complete upgrade to provide a more inviting and modern space. The new kitchen displaces the current music area and hence a new band and orchestra addition of about 8,450 square foot will be added to the south side of the existing building.

Mr. Gilchrist said as part of the upgrades, it becomes necessary to add fire protection fire sprinkling to the entire building adding significant safety to the building. Finishes in the building are extensively being upgraded as well bringing a fresh face lift to the entire building.

The site will be reworked to accommodate the building addition and also include a new storm water detention area on the southeast corner of the site. The detention area is provided to treat runoff from the building expansion, portions of the existing building and the southern parking lot. These improvements will result in reduced peak runoff from the site as well as improved water quality of runoff. Other site improvements include sidewalks, curb ramps, and landscaping.

**21-47                    DISCUSSION:   DISCUSSION ON ELIMINATING FARM VS NON-FARM  
DWELLING LANGUAGE IN CHAPTERS 1 AND 5.**

Becker gave the review for the proposed changes to the provisions for dwelling units in the Agricultural zoning district. The Zoning Ordinance currently differentiates between houses for people that earn their living as a farmer and houses for people that earn their living doing other things. It doesn't make sense to classify or restrict property ownership by profession of its occupants. The language is proposed to shift to *Single-Family Dwelling Unit*, which indicates the use of the structure not the occupation of its occupants. The only exception, which exists now, is Farm Labor Housing and that is regulated by the Michigan Department of Agriculture.

Becker said proposed changes to the Definitions chapter include: changed the definition of *Agriculture* to include animal husbandry; deleted the definition of *Dwelling Unit, Farm*; deleted the non-farm language from the definition of *Dwelling Unit, Nonfarm or Single-Family*; deleted the farm or non-farm language from the definition of *Farm Buildings* and further clarified dwelling units of any kind are not considered to be *Farm Buildings*; added the qualifier of "Agricultural" to the definition of *Labor or Work Camp*.

Becker said proposed changes to the A, Agricultural zoning district include: substitutes single-family dwelling units for all references to non-farm dwelling units and farm dwelling units; moved the restriction of one dwelling unit per lot from the Definitions chapter to Section 5.02; Section 5.04(d)(3) are the provisions that require an Agriculturally-zoned parcel to be deed restricted for FARMING USES ONLY if all Agricultural Sliding Scale land divisions have been used up. This is only substantive proposed change to the ordinance. Currently the ordinance allows the construction of a FARM dwelling on deed restricted land. The proposed changes would eliminate the option of constructing a dwelling unit.

Thome joined the meeting via Zoom.

Thome asked why are they doing the changes proposed and Becker answered the Township Attorney recommended it.

Thome asked how the proposed changes affects Farm Labor Housing and Becker said it doesn't affect it and added on deed restricted property they will still allow farm labor housing.

Thome shared to create and have farm labor housing is not an easy process. It is licensed through the State of Michigan and is renewed every year. The camps are inspected thoroughly from mattresses to chairs around a table and there are rules on square footage per worker.

Becker asked if migrate workers are temporary or if they stay year round. Thome said his labor camp has no one that stays all year, his camp will be empty from November 15<sup>th</sup> to approximately March 15<sup>th</sup>.

The Commissioners agreed the proposed changes were ready to go to a public hearing.

**21-46 ADMINISTRATIVE ITEM: NEXT MASTER PLAN OPEN HOUSE THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4<sup>TH</sup>, 6:30-8:30.**

**21-47 SITE PLAN EXTENSION AT 6661 ALPINE AVENUE.**

Becker read a letter requesting a site plan extension at 6661 Alpine Avenue from Erica Gonzalez for a grocery store and small restaurant area.

Frizzell made a motion, supported by Cordes to extend the site plan approval at 6661 Alpine Avenue for one year until August 2022.

**Ayes: 6 Nays: 0 Motion Carried**

**21-48 COMMISSIONER AND STAFF UPDATES / ADJOURNMENT**

Cordes said the Township Board approved the rezoning and M-PUD request from Mike Houseman for *The Range at Alpine*.

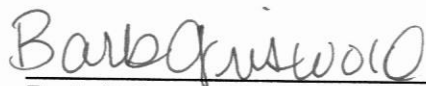
Becker shared she has many inquiries regarding possible development in the Township and next month there will be a discussion item on the agenda to develop Gracewil Golf Course with 592 dwelling units.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Arends motioned, supported by Potter to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 PM.

**Ayes: 6 Nays: 0 Motion carried**

  
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Lisa Frizzell, Planning Commission Secretary

  
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Barb Griswold, Recording Secretary