



Calhoun County Planning Commission

February 26, 2024, at 4:00 p.m.

315 W. Green Street, Marshall, MI 49068

Garden Level Conference Room

1. **The February 26, 2024, Calhoun County Planning Commission Meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM by Vice Chair John Sackrider.**
2. **Roll Call** – called by Teri Zadigian
Members present: Richard Porter, Ben Lark, Aaron Haynes, John Sackrider, Diane Thompson, Jerry Johnson, and Kelli Scott.
Members excused: Dan Livingston
Staff in attendance: Jennifer Bomba, Community Development Director; Brittany Stein, Zoning Coordinator; Teri Zadigian, Administrative Assistant.
3. **Approval of Agenda**
Moved by Member Thompson to approve February 26, 2024, Agenda with removal of 9 a., supported by Member Scott.
On a voice vote, **Motion CARRIED**
4. **Election of Officers**
Moved by Member Haynes to nominate the following slate of officers: John Sackrider, Chair; Richard Porter, Vice Chair; and Ben Lark, Secretary, supported by Member Scott.
On a voice vote, **Motion CARRIED**
5. **Public Comments (limited to 3 minutes per participant)**
There was none.
6. **Approval of December 11, 2023, Minutes**
Moved by Member Thompson to approve December 11, 2023, meeting minutes as presented, supported by Member Scott.
On a voice vote, **Motion CARRIED**
7. **Communication**
 - a. Notice of Public Hearing on Master Plan, Eaton County, January 23, 2024
Will review Eaton County Master Plan at March 25, 2024, meeting.
 - b. Notice of Intent to Conduct Master Plan Amendments, City of Battle Creek, February 7, 2024
City of Battle Creek first initial announcement regarding Master Plan Amendments.
 - c. Any other Communication to come before the Commission.
There was none.
8. **Old Business**
 - a. Any Old Business to come before the Commission.
There was none.
9. **New Business**
 - a. Any other New Business to Come before the Commission.
There was none.
10. **Township Planning & Zoning Coordination**
 - a. **02-24-01, Marengo Township: Zoning Text Amendment re: Sand and Gravel Mining**

Ms. Bomba presented the review of the proposed zoning text amendment which will permit sand and gravel mining as a special land use in all zoning districts within the Township. In addition to the site development standards, the ordinance language establishes the application process, site plan review procedure, Planning Commission role in review, and names the zoning administrator as the enforcement officer.

Community Development staff believe the proposed language recommended by the Marengo Township Planning Commission is an important step in managing this type of use within the Township, from site development to operations to reclamation. The language presented is thorough and provides safeguards for the community while allowing this use to be sited within the Township. Therefore, Community Development staff recommend for approval by the Marengo Township Board, the proposed zoning text amendment regarding sand and gravel mining.

Moved by Member Thompson to recommend approval of the Marengo Township Zoning Text Amendment re: Sand and Gravel Mining, supported by Member Johnson.

On a voice vote, **Motion CARRIED.**

b. 02-24-02, Albion Township: PA 116 Application re: Patricia and Wayne Jarvis

Ms. Stein presented the Application for Farmland Preservation Agreement (PA 116) submitted by Patricia and Wayne Jarvis (Jarvis Farms Inc.) for property located in Section 14 of Albion Township. The application consists of approximately 103.73 acres total, with 96 acres under cultivation and 6.73 acres of swamp/woods. There are five (5) structures on the property; 1 residence, 2 barns, and 2 tool sheds.

The subject parcel is zoned by Albion Township as Agricultural. The Albion Township Future Land Use Plan classifies the property as Agriculture as does the Calhoun County Master Plan. The property owner has requested a 30-year contract for this application.

Community Development staff believe that the Application for Farmland Agreement submitted by Patricia and Wayne Jarvis is valid and recommends for approval by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Moved by Member Porter to recommend approval by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development of the PA 116 Application submitted by Patricia and Wayne Jarvis, supported by Member Johnson.

On a voice vote, **Motion CARRIED.**

c. 02-24-03, Climax Township, Kalamazoo County: Master Plan Amendment

Ms. Stein presented the Climax Township Planning Commission proposed update to their Master Plan. The Township completed a new Master Plan in 2016 effective through 2035. Climax Township proposes to add the following information:

- Section 5, "Public Input & Community Goals" shall be amended to add the following category:
"Alternative Energy Facilities Goal: Study if areas suitable and appropriate for utility scale wind or solar facilities can be identified."
- Section 6, "Land Use Plan & Zoning Plan" shall be amended to add the following at the end of the "Agriculture" section: "Possibly some marginal lands for Agriculture would be suitable for utility scale solar or wind facilities or in conjunction with an agricultural shared use of the land."

Community Development staff believe that the recommendation by Climax Township to amend the Master Plan as it relates to solar energy systems is comprehensive planning practice and in the best interest of the Township. The Township could take this one step further and consider implementing a solar overlay district that would allow the township to prioritize what properties within the Agricultural zoning districts are most suitable for solar energy development versus active agriculture. Community Development staff believe that the Climax Township Master Plan meets the requirements of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act and therefore recommend adoption of the Climax Township Master Plan by the Climax Township Board of Trustees.

Moved by Member Lark to recommend approval of Climax Township Master Plan Amendment, supported by Member Johnson.

On a voice vote, **Motion CARRIED.**

- d. Any other Planning & Zoning Coordination to come before the Commission.
There was none.

11. Department Report

Ms. Bomba stated: Community Development continues to work on the 2023 annual report for the County Planning Commission, and it will look different this year because it will include contract work that has been completed with the Pennfield Charter Township, Lee Township, Convis Township, and Fredonia Township.

Staff continue to look for resources to update the County's Master Plan. Also working to provide a workshop on the renewable energy legislation that passed in late 2023 to assist townships with developing a Compatible Renewable Energy Ordinance (CREO). Legal work is happening now with the development of that template ordinance and then we will pull together the townships, much like a Government Leaders Forum.

12. Member Comments

Member Porter shared that Sheridan Township is building a new township fire station, much of the funding for this project is from the various solar companies developing in their township.

Member Scott indicated that more info on the solar legislation and taxation of solar developments is needed.

Member Lark shared his frustrations on the state's preemption of local siting for renewable energy projects, maybe for sand and gravel mining in the near future. He questioned if the state shares any information regarding development of the megasite with the County Planning Commission.

13. Public Comments (limited to 3 minutes per participant)

There was none.

14. Announcements

The next Calhoun County Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2024

15. Adjournment 4:56 pm

Respectfully submitted by Teri Zadigian