



Calhoun County Planning Commission Minutes
February 28, 2022 @ 4:00PM
315 W. Green Street, Marshall, MI 49068
Garden Level Conference Room

1. The February 28, 2022 County Planning Commission Meeting was called to order at 4:00PM by Chairperson Terance Lunger.

2. Roll Call - called by Jen Bomba

Members present: Sarah Kelly, Brian Kernstock, Ben Lark, Terance Lunger, Jen Rice, John Sackrider, Kelli Scott.

Members excused: Dan Livingston, Commissioner Rochelle Hatcher.

Staff in attendance: Jennifer Bomba, Community Development Director; Brittany Stein, Zoning Coordinator.

Public in attendance: Larry Holcomb, resident of Convis Township.

Quorum was met.

3. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Member Scott to approve the February 28, 2022, Calhoun County Planning Commission agenda, as presented, supported by Member Sackrider.

On a voice vote, Motion CARRIED.

4. Public Comments

Larry Holcomb, a resident of Convis Township, shared an article with the Commissioners from the Woods and Water News, December 2021 issue, which is written by himself. He summarized the article to the Commissioners regarding solar energy development and production throughout the County. He voiced his opinion and suggested to conserve and preserve the farmland and to rethink the overall drastic environmental impacts and impacts on wildlife due to the development of solar and wind power too. He described how fences surrounding solar panels and accessory equipment prevent the presence of wildlife reproduction of nearly all bird and animal species. Larry explained that the developers of solar energy systems completely clear cut land and remove all good soil, leaving a farmer with no fertile ground if or when a project decommissions.

5. Approval of Minutes

Moved by Member Lark to approve the January 24, 2022 meeting minutes as presented, supported by Member Sackrider.

On a voice vote, Motion CARRIED.

6. Communication

Ms. Bomba shared the following incoming Communications with members:

- Barry County, Notice of Intent to Conduct Master Planning, January 25, 2022

7. Old Business

- a. Any Old Business to come before the Commission
There was none.

8. New Business

- a. Recommendation of new members to the County Planning Commission – Jen Bomba reported that there were 5 total applications received for two vacancies on the Planning Commission. Of those applications, the membership subcommittee came to an agreement and recommend Richard Porter, Sheridan Township Supervisor to represent Government & Municipal interests, and Aaron Haynes, Georgia Pacific Director of Operations to represent the Industrial & Economic interests on the Planning Commission.

Moved by Member Sackrider to recommend to the County Board of Commissioners, the appointment of Richard Porter and Aaron Haynes to serve on the County Planning Commission for a term set to expire on December 31, 2024; supported by Member Rice.

On a voice vote, Motion CARRIED.

9. Township Planning & Zoning Coordination

- a. **02-22-01, Bedford Charter Township; Zoning Map Amendment re: 22420 Bedford Rd.**

Staff presented zoning map amendment for the property location at 22420 Bedford Road, encompassing 6.5 acres. The property is currently zoned Low Density Residential and is occupied by a single-family residence. The request is to rezone the entire parcel to Commercial. The surrounding zoning consists of Low Density Residential to the north and west, Agricultural to the east, and Commercial to the south. The request to rezone the property to Commercial is consistent with the Bedford Charter Township Master Plan. Brittany Stein described to the Commissioners the background of this request. In March 2021 a rezoning request was heard to amend the zoning on only a portion of this same parcel. At that time, the rezoning request encompassed approximately 1.5 acres of the subject parcel with the intent to combine it with the parcel directly to the south, also zoned Commercial, and occupied by a vacant retail building. At the March 22, 2021 County Planning Commission meeting the Commission recommended approval of the rezoning request to the Bedford Charter Township Board. Following the County Planning Commission recommendation, the requested zoning map amendment was withdrawn by the applicant and did not go before the Township Board.

Chairperson Lunger asked if staff had any information about any proposed projects for this property following rezoning. Ms. Stein clarified that the Commercial zoning districts permitted and special uses defined in the Zoning Ordinance for Bedford Charter Township include a wide variety of common commercial uses including, but not limited to retail, restaurants, grocery stores, hotels, hospitals, personal services, professional offices, etc. However, a Dollar General may be proposed at this site, which is a permitted use in the Commercial district Stein explained.

Member Scott questioned if the residential structures were to remain. Stein mentioned that once the rezoning is finalized, the buildings and current use will be non-conforming, however it is assumed that if a Commercial use is proposed to the Township, then the residential structures and accessory buildings would be removed from the property.

There was brief discussion about the impacts of the rezoning of this lot compared to the other nearby Commercial zoned lots. There were no additional member questions.

Moved by Member Sackrider to recommend approval of the zoning map amendment at 22420 Bedford Rd. from Low Density Residential to Commercial as presented; supported by Member Kernstock.
 On a voice vote, Motion CARRIED.

10. Township Planning & Zoning Coordination Follow-up

CCPC #	Township	Twp. Planning Commission Recommendation	CCPC Action	Twp. Board Action
01.22.01	Clarence Twp.	Zoning Text Amendment – Home Occupations	Approved	Approved

11. Department Report

Ms. Bomba shared a brief update about the developments of solar power throughout the County. Community Development staff will be working on a spreadsheet to track solar power developments happening throughout Calhoun County. It’s been a thought among our community development staff, “When does it become too much?” and “How much is enough?” “Could it be better managed at the township level with overlay districts?” This is a discussion we should expect to keep going.

Ms. Bomba discussed an upcoming training opportunity for local planning commissioners and zoning board of appeals members. The training date is March 31st and will be held at Firekeepers Casino, additional details will be announced via email soon.

Ms. Bomba explained where the Planning Commission By-Laws are in the updating process. Upon further review, the Planning Commission Ordinance may also need amended or reviewed as well. We are awaiting legal review before bringing draft updates to the Planning Commission.

Ms. Bomba reported on various planning projects that the Community Development staff are leading, including site readiness work through grants with MEDC.

12. Member Comments

Member Kelly shared information about a recent inquiry she received. A Marijuana grow facility reached out to her asking questions about where to compost material from their production. She said we know very little about the production process, which makes it difficult to provide a direct answer. They wanted to know if they could compost on site or send the compost to the landfill, which they are already doing. Sarah mentioned reaching out to the State to ask if they would allow it on site, or what restrictions the operator would have, such as volume limits and odor. It was discovered that on-site composting is likely permitted for these businesses which raises various questions for neighboring properties specifically in regards to odor.

Member Sackrider commented about composting. He said that as an agriculture producer, they are heavily regulated by state agencies in regards to composting of farm materials which results in additional expense to the business.

Member Rice mentioned the City of Marshall has a new City Manager, Dereck Perry, and wishes to welcome him to the community.

Chairperson Lunger raised a concern about the need for affordable housing in the community and noted that housing today is very expensive.

13. Public Comments

Larry Holcomb, of Convis Township, continued his explanation about solar and wind production. He briefly described a document the Mackinac Center has published titled "Electricity in Michigan: A Primer." He suggested the Commissioners read it and research impacts of solar energy.

14. Announcements:

Chair Lunger stated the next Calhoun County Planning Commission Meeting is scheduled for March 28, 2022, at 4:00 p.m.

15. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:45PM.