

**OSHTEMO CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD MAY 9, 2024**

---

**Agenda**

**Discussion: Text Amendments**

**Amendment to allow warehouses and distribution centers in the I-R, Industrial District, Restricted, and other unrelated staff-suggested amendments.**

**2023 Planning Department Annual Report**

**June 13, 2024 Comprehensive Plan Visioning Session**

---

A meeting of the Oshtemo Charter Township Planning Commission was held Thursday, May 9, 2024, commencing at approximately 6:00 p.m. at the Oshtemo Township Hall, 7275 West Main Street.

MEMBERS PRESENT:      Deb Everett, Vice Chair  
                                    Alistair Smith  
                                    Zak Ford, Township Board Liaison  
                                    Jeremiah Smith  
                                    Scott Makohn

MEMBERS ABSENT:      Philip Doorlag, Chair  
                                    Scot Jefferies

Also present were Jodi Stefforia, Planning Director; Leeanna Harris, Zoning Administrator; James Porter, Township Attorney; Jennifer Wood Recording Secretary; and 4 interested persons.

**Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Vice Chair Everett called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. Those in attendance joined in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of Agenda**

Vice Chair Everett asked if there were any changes to the agenda. Hearing none, she let the agenda stand as published.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

The Vice Chair asked if anyone present wished to speak on non-agenda items. Since no one responded, she moved to the next agenda item.

## **Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of March 28, 2024**

Vice Chair Everett asked for additions, deletions, or corrections to the Minutes of the Meeting March 28, 2024.

Hearing none, Vice Chair Everett asked for a motion.

Mr. Smith **made a motion** to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of Meeting of March 28, 2024, as presented. Mr. Makohn **seconded the motion**. The **motion was approved** unanimously.

## **TEXT AMENDMENTS**

Ms. Stefforia presented her memo dated May 9, 2024 which is incorporated herein by reference. She informed the Commission that an applicant has requested the I-R, Industrial District, Restricted district be amended to allow warehouses and distribution centers. A supporting narrative was prepared by the applicant speaking to the need for such industrial space and is included in the meeting packet.

Another suggested amendment is to address off street parking including the front yard and side yard. This was staff initiated based on comments and complaints from residents. She added that this is a big change so should be discussed.

Ms. Stefforia stated that the I-R was originally written in the 1980's and the needs have changed. It may be time to revisit the I-R and the whole district may need some reconsideration. This will be looked at after the master plan has been completed. A planning consultant will look at the vision for the South 9<sup>th</sup> Street area moving forward.

Ms. Everett asked how this fits with the future land use plan.

Ms. Stefforia explained right now the future land use plan supports the I-R, but the language of the master plan for that area needs modernization. A team is doing an economic development strategy as part of the master plan process, and they are meeting with individuals like the applicant one on one to get input of the market. The last opportunity to meet with the marketing consultant is next Friday.

Staff had recommended to the applicant that he apply for a text amendment if they wanted to move this forward faster than the master plan process will take. The applicant is interested in a specific site, but today's discussion is about the change to the ordinance because if adopted, it applies throughout the I-R.

Ms. Stefforia invited the applicant to speak about his application.

Mr. Jim Rodbard, representing Clark Logic, LLC, stepped up to the podium and spoke in support of the text amendment. Clark Logic is a logistics and warehouse business that operates across Southwest MI and Indiana with their headquarters located in Portage, MI. Included in the

meeting packet is supporting documentation for the text amendment. The applicant seeks to amend and expand the definition of permitted uses in Article 26 of the Zoning Ordinance, 26.30 to add as a new subsection O, "Warehouses and Distribution Centers" as permitted uses. Images of facilities that Clark Logic owns and operates were provided in the meeting packet.

Derek Wissner, from Calendar Commercial, spoke to the commission. Calendar Commercial provided current local industrial construction information in the meeting packet. There are currently 8 properties with 1,862,467 square feet under construction with 98.5% of them released. There is a market demand in the community for these types of projects.

Mr. Wissner thanked the commission for their consideration.

Ms. Jill Bland from Southwest Michigan First, an Oshtemo Township resident, addressed the commission. A letter of support was provided in the meeting packet. Ms. Bland informed the commission that distribution warehousing is a complement to the existing uses that occur in this particular zone. Ms. Bland shared that in the community, many manufacturers have shifted their logistics and warehousing to off-site nearby locations.

Ms. Stefforia explained that the 9<sup>th</sup> street corridor is well positioned with proximity to the interstate. Ms. Stefforia mentioned that what Ms. Bland described, manufacturers moving their product to off-site locations for warehousing, is different than a distribution center for warehousing for a business like Amazon. This is why an amendment for clarity is needed.

Ms. Stefforia advised today was a discussion about the changes prior to them being shared at a public hearing. If recommended, the items would be consolidated into one ordinance for introduction to the township board if recommended.

Ms. Everett inquired if the Commission was ready to move forward to the other proposed text amendments and if there were any questions or comments.

Mr. Smith inquired about the parking amendments proposed to Section 52.136 and how many complaints were received over a given period of time and also where those complaints originated from.

Mr. Porter stated that over the last several years there have been a lot of complaints. He is not sure of the locations, but believes they are in the denser neighborhoods.

Ms. Stefforia inquired about adding the Ag and Rural Residential districts or limiting this prohibition in the side and rear yards to the R-1 through R-4 districts.

Mr. Porter responded R-1 through R-4 is probably good.

The Commission inquired if the complaints were for cars or boats and if so, could a size limitation could be added, for example, over 20 feet. The proposed language seems too broad.

Mr. Porter stated the complaints are for boats and rvs. He stated that the Ag and Rural Residential districts could be removed. The main concern is rvs.

Mr. Ford asked about red lined 52.135, “prohibited in the required side and rear yard setback areas”. Is it ok as long as not in the required setback areas?

Mr. Porter mentioned that it could be more restrictive than just the setback area.

Ms. Stefforia stated that is the correct interpretation of the reading. The word ‘required’ was removed from the previous page at 52.130. It was an oversight that it was not removed here.

Ms. Stefforia commented she is aware of some communities that allow seasonal parking in the front or side yard as long as they meet the setback requirement. Ms. Stefforia will investigate and provide the commission with additional information. The Commission agreed that more information would be appreciated. Ms. Stefforia will also provide a definition of a warehouse and distribution center for the public hearing. Any part of it can be pulled out prior to sending to the township board.

Ms. Everett inquired if there were any other questions or comments about the remaining proposed text amendments.

Ms. Everett asked about moving the entire packet forward for a public hearing and if there were any objection.

Mr. Ford **made a motion** to set the public hearing for the proposed ordinance amendments for June 27, 2024. Ms. Everett **seconded the motion**.

Mr. Allistar asked if this is for the whole package. Ms. Everett replied yes, but we can remove any parts of it. Ms. Stefforia advised she will gather the information requested and will also try to identify which zoning district the complaints are coming from.

The **motion was approved** unanimously.

## **2023 PLANNING DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORT**

Ms. Stefforia acknowledged Ms. Harris for her work on the document.

Mr. Allistar **made a motion** to accept the Planning Commission Annual Report for 2023 as submitted. Mr. Ford **seconded the motion**. The **motion was approved** unanimously.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Ms. Stefforia spoke about the upcoming June 13<sup>th</sup> Comprehensive Plan Visioning Session. It will be in lieu of the Planning Commission meeting. This will be open to the public to view the vision boards and provide input.

Ms. Stefforia provided an update on the master plan timeline. The target end date is still the mid to end of 2025.

Meeting adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

Minutes prepared: May 13, 2024

Minutes approved: May 23, 2024