

**OSHTEMO CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD SEPTEMBER 12, 2024**

Agenda

Presentation: Street Connectivity

Public Hearing: Conceptual Review of Mixed Use Development Schematic Plan (Ferlito Group) Planning Commission to conduct a public hearing on a proposed 48-acre mixed use development on the south side of West Main Street in the 6400 block

A meeting of the Oshtemo Charter Township Planning Commission was held Thursday, September 12, 2024, commencing at 6:00 p.m. at the Oshtemo Township Hall, 7275 West Main Street.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Scot Jefferies
Jeremiah Smith

Also present were Jodi Stefforia, Planning Director; James Porter, Township Attorney; Leeanna Harris, Planning and Zoning Administrator; Colten Hutson, Zoning Administrator; Anna Horner, Public Works Director; and Jennifer Wood, Recording Secretary; and approximately 35 interested persons.

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Doorlag called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. Those in attendance joined in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Doorlag asked if there were any changes to the agenda. There were none.

Mr. Ford **made a motion** to approve the agenda for September 12, 2024. Mr. Smith **seconded the motion**. The **motion was approved** unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Chair Doorlag asked if anyone present wished to speak on non-agenda items. One citizen made a comment regarding interest in a left turn light at Lodge Lane and West Main Street.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF AUGUST 22, 2024

Chair Doorlag asked for additions, deletions, or corrections to the Minutes of the Meeting August 22, 2024. There were none.

Mr. Ford **made a motion** to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of August 22, 2024, as presented. Mr. Smith **seconded the motion**. The **motion was approved** unanimously.

PRESENTATION: STREET CONNECTIVITY

Ms. Horner, Oshtemo Township Public Works Director, provided a presentation on street connectivity in Oshtemo Township. The street connectivity plan originates from Oshtemo Township's Master Plan, addressing the significant development expected in the area. Chapter Five of the Master Plan, "Transportation and Community Services," emphasizes that "Growth Happens, Let's Decide How." Roads not only serve as conduits for vehicles but also enhance the quality of life for residents.

The Township focuses on three best practices for street connectivity:

1. Access Management
2. Connectivity
3. Network Development

This plan for connectivity of streets will offer time savings and improve both efficiency and environmental impact related to road usage. Increased connectivity enhances the community's overall livability. Complete streets aim to provide the high quality of life desired by Oshtemo Township residents.

PUBLIC HEARING: CONCEPTUAL REVIEW OF MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT SCHEMATIC PLAN (FERLITO GROUP)

Ms. Stefforia shared that the Oshtemo Township Planning Commission, along with the Township Board, spent over a year preparing a housing plan, which was adopted last year. The W.E. Upjohn Institute was engaged to collect data and survey the community, while public input sessions were also held. The Oshtemo Township Housing Plan 2023 identified the need for a housing continuum and the development of 750 new housing units over the next eight years. This document is publicly available on the Oshtemo Township website.

The Mixed Use District (MUD) was adopted in March 2023 following years of research, edits, and public input. It was designed to implement the Township's Sub Area Plans and promote a mix of uses, transforming existing commercial areas into mixed-use developments. The MUD encourages innovative projects with high-quality building design, compatibility with adjacent uses, and preservation of unique environmental features, while creating open spaces and enhancing the quality of life for residents.

MUDs require a minimum of 15% open space not including required buffers and street rights of way and the review of a draft Development Schematic Plan which involves a public hearing, after which consideration of the request and another public hearing follow.

Ms. Stefforia presented her memo on Conceptual Review of a Mixed Use District Draft Development Schematic Plan dated September 5, 2024, and is incorporated herein. Utilizing the recently adopted Mixed Use District ordinance, the applicant is proposing a 48-acre mixed use development on the south side of West Main Street in the 6400 block. The proposed mix of uses includes commercial, multi-family and two-family residential. The applicant submitted a narrative describing the concept presently before the Planning Commission.

Project summary:

The subject properties are on the south side of West Main Street opposite the Advia Credit Union development. The development will include public streets utilizing the existing signal on West Main Street at the Advia drive, a planned extension of Seeco Drive and utilization of several existing outlots/cul-de-sacs/stub streets abutting the properties. Several commercial buildings of varying sizes are envisioned along West Main Street at the north end of the development. Ten multi-family buildings (336 units) and 54 two-family buildings (108 units) are also proposed.

Recommendation:

Planning Department staff recommend that the Planning Commission review the application submission, listen to the applicant's presentation and public comment, have an open dialogue with the applicant and then make a finding as to whether the proposed conceptual plan conforms to the standards and recommendations of the West Main Street Sub Area Plan, Master Plan, and the MUD Ordinance.

Chair Doorlag asked about the limits of the traffic impact study. Ms. Horner advised that MDOT will set the limits, with consultation from the Township.

Developer Presentation:

Mr. Mike Corby, of Integrated Architecture, praised the Township's foresight and efforts in planning for future developments. He emphasized the importance of connectivity and the creation of a "sense of place" in this project. The project includes housing mixed-use developments, and special attention was paid to pedestrian safety, architectural design, and a central park with active and passive uses such as a community building, pickleball courts, and a swimming pool. The site will feature numerous traffic-calming measures, including curves and mini roundabouts.

There will be a large stormwater detention pond on the west side, and smaller ones will serve the southern portion. The intention is for duplexes to be built on ¼-acre lots. Connectivity and safety are prioritized, with parking areas designed to remain behind buildings. The development will maintain buffers along several property lines to enhance privacy and aesthetics.

The developer shared a diagram illustrating the project's three phases, noting that while there is no set timeline between phases, connectivity features will be implemented as each phase is completed.

Mr. Tony Ferlito, owner of the Ferlito Group, thanked the Planning Commission and shared his company's values, emphasizing a commitment to community needs and high-quality projects. He reassured the community that concerns about connectivity would be addressed collaboratively.

Public Comment

Chair Doorlag opened the floor to public comments. Thirteen residents spoke, with 12 expressing opposition and one expressing partial support. An email received prior to the meeting was also shared with the Commissioners. Concerns were expressed about traffic, fear of connecting existing and new neighborhoods, loss of trees, property values, and water and sewer rates increasing.

There being no further comments, Chair Doorlag closed the Public Hearing and invited the developers back up to speak to comments heard during the hearing.

Additional Discussion:

The developer and his representatives addressed community comments, particularly regarding connectivity. They stated that the back 20 acres of the development would consist of duplexes for sale, designed for empty nesters and young professionals.

Mr. Erik Hahn, from Continental Properties, provided insights into the demographics of potential residents, stating that most are young professionals or retirees. He also clarified ownership of the multifamily buildings, which would be retained by Continental Properties.

Commission members agreed that the project largely conforms to the Township's Master Plan and the MUD Ordinance. However, they expressed interest in reviewing the traffic impact study before finalizing decisions.

Township Attorney Porter shared that decisions are based on the rule of law which is to follow the ordinance and to follow the Master Plan. The Planning Commission's job is to determine if it follows the Master Plan.

Chair Doorlag reminded the residents in attendance that many years of work and planning have gone into the creation of the MUD ordinance. These meetings were public meetings. Chair Doorlag invited the public to attend the meetings that are currently underway for the development of the new Master Plan. Residents will be able to voice their concerns and opinions on how development will occur in the Township.

Mr. Ford stated that this proposal follows the rules put in place with the mixed use district language and that this project is a quality project for the community.

Mr. Ford asked how it was determined which roads connected and which ones did not. Ms. Stefforia informed the Commission that the decision had been made by the Township Planning

Department and the Public Works Department. Mr. Ford agreed with the connectivity of the project.

Chair Doorlag asked if these connection points are part of the ongoing Master Plan process or is this part of the Mixed Use District ordinance? Ms. Stefforia informed the Commission that the connections are part of the Master Plan and the Transportation Mobility Ordinance adopted last year. The new Comprehensive Master Plan will have a strong transportation element and a regulating plan. Various areas in the Township where new streets for connectivity are warranted will be identified in the new Master Plan's Regulating Plan which will be adopted and amended into the Transportation Mobility Ordinance once it is completed.

Chair Doorlag stated that this project conforms with what he envisioned for a mixed use project. The renderings of the three-story buildings look like a townhouse versus a large apartment complex.

Mr. Smith agrees the concept conforms and fits the Mixed Use District, but he has reservations about the traffic density.

Vice Chair Everett agrees the concept conforms with the Mixed Use District and looks forward to the information that will be learned from the traffic study.

Mr. Makohn agrees the concept conforms with the Mixed Use District. He is also interested in the traffic study and would like to see more mixed use among the apartments.

Mr. Smith **made a motion** to approve the concept plan for the 48 acres finding that it does meet the requirements of the Mixed Use District Ordinance and the Master Plan. Mr. Makohn **seconded the motion**. The **motion was approved** unanimously.

Other Updates and Business

Chair Doorlag suggested adding a second round of public comments as an agenda item after applications are considered. Ms. Stefforia agreed this could be added to future agendas.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Minutes Prepared: September 16, 2024

Minutes Approved: October 10, 2024