

**OSHTEMO CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 14, 2024**

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**Agenda**

**Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments – warehouses and distribution/fulfillment centers**

Planning Commission to review a second draft of proposed amendments regarding warehouses, distribution/fulfillment centers.

**Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments – various**

Planning Commission to review first draft of various amendments to the Zoning Ordinance.

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A meeting of the Oshtemo Charter Township Planning Commission was held Thursday, November 14, 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  
Scot Jefferies  
Scott Makohn  
Alistair Smith

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jeremiah Smith

Also present were Jodi Stefforia, Planning Director; James Porter, Township Attorney; Leeanna Harris, Planning and Zoning Administrator; Colten Hutson, Zoning Administrator; and approximately 4 interested persons.

**CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Vice Chair Everett called the meeting to order at 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**

Vice Chair Everett asked if anyone present wished to speak on non-agenda items. There was none.

## **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF OCTOBER 24, 2024**

Vice Chair Everett asked for additions, deletions, or corrections to the minutes of the meeting on October 24, 2024. There were none.

Mr. A. Smith made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of October 24, 2024, as presented. Mr. Ford seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Doorlag took over leading the meeting at 6:02 p.m.

## **ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENTS – WAREHOUSES AND MISCELLANEOUS**

Ms. Stefforia presented a second draft of proposed amendments concerning warehouses, and distribution and fulfillment centers, which is incorporated herein.

The definition of “warehouse” was changed to incorporate a revised length of time of 30 days, based on feedback received. As for outdoor storage, operable and licensed vehicles are not considered storage, provided they are on an improved surface.

Under item three, warehousing, as discussed in the previous meeting, it would be acceptable to have employee parking not subject to a greater setback.

Loading was moved under item C to allow for a different setback requirement than the parking and access drive areas.

A significant portion of our I-R and I-1 zones abut power lines and do not require a greater setback if the underlying zoning under those power lines is residential. These power line corridors might be 130 or 150 feet wide. Therefore, if a warehouse is going to be built and it abuts an overhead power line corridor, it does not have to meet greater setback requirements, even if the underlying zone is residential. The language around overhead utilities and buffering will be added to the appropriate sections.

Mr. Jefferies raised a concern about expanding the hours of operation, as it is already listed from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Ms. Stefforia explained that this could be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Ms. Stefforia also shared that regarding height limits, as a building gets taller, the setback requirement increases.

Ms. Everett inquired if all applications for these uses— distribution , and fulfillment centers— would come before the Planning Commission requesting a special use permit. This would give the Commission an opportunity to require specific criteria for the use. Mr. Porter confirmed. Ms. Stefforia reminded the Commission that sometimes a building will be built prior to a tenant being identified.

Chair Doorlag inquired about item C, regarding loading and unloading zones being dedicated solely to those uses and asked whether there were specific vehicle types to consider. Ms. Stefforia stated that the verbiage for loading and unloading of trailers could be added, and item B could be changed to specify "other than trailers."

Chair Doorlag supports the changes. Chair Doorlag invited the applicant up to the podium to speak on the text including Electric Vehicle (EV) incentives.

Mr. Jamie Clark, owner of Clark Logic, spoke to the Commission. He shared that they follow a strategy called "intentional speculation," where they assess market demand before making decisions. It's important to note that development projects typically take between 22 to 26 months or longer to complete, depending on the availability of necessary infrastructure like gas, water, electricity, and IT fiber.

Recently, some customers have expressed interest in partnering on green energy solutions, particularly in the realm of renewable energy and electric transportation. While Clark Logic can't predict exactly which customers or what buildings will be used at a given site, they are seeing interest growing from their customers, especially in the publicly traded sector, for solutions that help reduce their carbon footprint. These solutions may include solar energy, renewable natural gas, and EVs.

However, there are challenges associated with these initiatives. For example, electric trucks are significantly more expensive than their diesel counterparts, which complicates the adoption of EVs for transportation. That said, Clark Logic is having productive conversations with customers, like a specific request from a client in Kalamazoo, who is interested in partnering on renewable energy solutions for their transportation needs.

Regarding incentives, one area of discussion is expanding the hours of operation for electric vehicle use. However, it's difficult to make concrete decisions about incentives or operational hours due to the uncertainty of which customers will occupy which properties and their specific needs.

However, Clark Logic is exploring the development of electric vehicle charging stations at their properties and are open to incentives that could make these solutions viable. Overall, while there are many variables at play, Clark Logic is actively pursuing opportunities to integrate renewable energy solutions into their development plans.

The Commission discussed changing the incentives to focus on developers rather than occupants. One example provided was the installation of rooftop solar. Ms. Stefforia shared that she will develop some language around the discussion for presentation at the public hearing. During the public hearing, requests for adjustments can be made.

Ms. Everett **made a motion** to set a public hearing for the warehouses and distribution/fulfillment centers language on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Mr. Ford **seconded the motion**. The **motion passed** unanimously.

## **ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENTS – VARIOUS**

### **Child Care and Home Occupations Proposed Amendments**

Ms. Harris referenced an audit that was incorporated herein. The audit was grant-funded. Oshtemo was approached by McKenna Associates and offered a free review of ordinances, particularly how they relate to the regulation of child care homes with seven children up to child care centers. Ms. Harris shared a map with the Commissioners that highlighted the locations of Child Care Centers by Facility Type.

Ms. Stefforia shared that the Special Use criteria for this use would be eliminated to reduce redundancies. Group Child Care Homes would still need to come before the Township for administrative approval. Childcare centers will be subject to Planning Commission approval. Family Child Care Homes would only need to meet the State of Michigan Licensing requirements.

### **Unrelated Site Plan Review Amendments**

Ms. Stefforia, Ms. Harris, and Mr. Hutson presented the unrelated site plan review amendments. Stefforia distributed a one-page update with additional modifications.

Mr. Ford inquired as to why a new mobile home park would not need Township Board approval. Ms. Stefforia explained that, based on the handout incorporated herein, the top line of the chart (Mobile Home Subdivision or Condominium) assumes they are using the plat or condominium acts to create the lots on which the homes would be placed. Mobile home parks refer to traditional mobile home communities.

For the landscaping incentives, Ms. Stefforia shared that the language ordinance allows for credit on new plantings required if trees can be saved based on their health and the diameter of the trunk you can get credit on a certain number of new trees. If a company is seeking this, a seal of a landscape architect on the plan would be needed identifying that they verified the species of trees, health and their diameters.

Mr. Hutson shared that unplotted properties less than one acre in size are allowed to have 30% of the property covered by an outbuilding; there is unequal treatment of properties as the ordinance stands presently. A revised chart was presented and incorporated herein. Chair Doorlag inquired about the change to reduce the maximum cumulative square footage of all detached accessory structures on a property to 5,000 square feet.

Mr. Ford asked about previous discussions regarding accessory dwelling units in R1. Ms. Stefforia confirmed that, as of now, there is a prohibition on establishing a dwelling in an accessory building. Housing will be worked on next year with a grant from the State of Michigan, and this issue will be revisited. When that time comes, allowable square footage may need to be reviewed.

Ms. Stefforia presented the handout she shared with the Commission this evening regarding updating the outdoor storage limitations in the industrial districts.

Ms. Stefforia shared that Oshtemo Township received a Housing Readiness Incentive grant from the State of Michigan to write zoning language that will begin implementing housing plans and objectives and anything that might emerge from the Master Plan. There will be numerous zoning amendments underway next year toward implementing the Comprehensive Master Plan.

Mr. Ford **made a motion** to set a public hearing for the various ordinance amendments presented for December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Ms. Everett **seconded the motion**. The **motion passed** unanimously.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Doorlag opened the floor to public comments, there were none.

### **OTHER UPDATES AND BUSINESS**

There were none.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Minutes Prepared: November 18, 2024

Minutes Approved: December 12, 2024