

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF UNION
Planning Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes

A regular meeting of the Charter Township of Union Planning Commission was held on October 15, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. at the Union Township Hall.

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: Browne, Gross, Lapp, Olver, Squattrito, and Thering

Excused: Shingles

Absent: McDonald

Others Present

Rodney Nanney, Community and Economic Development Director; Peter Gallinat, Zoning Administrator; Tera Green, Administrative Assistant

Approval of Agenda

Olver moved Gross supported to approve the agenda as presented. **Vote: Ayes: 6. Nays: 0. Motion Carried**

Approval of Minutes

Olver moved Gross supported to approve the September 17, 2024 regular meeting as presented. **Vote: Ayes: 6. Nays: 0. Motion carried.**

Correspondence / Reports/ Presentations

- A. Board of Trustees updates by Thering – Gave updates on the Board of Trustees meetings.
- B. McDonald updates from ZB – No updates were given.
- C. Community and Economic Development Monthly Report
- D. Other Reports

Public Comment

Open 7:09 p.m.

No comments were offered.

Closed 7:09 p.m.

New Business

- A. **PREZ24-01 Township initiated rezoning request for the 0.53-acre lot at 943 S. Isabella Road (PID 14-001-30-004-01) from I-1 Light Industrial District to R-1 Rural Residential District**
 - a. Introduction by staff
 - b. Public Hearing
 - c. Commission deliberation and action (recommendation to the Board of Trustees for approval, or rejection; or postpone action for further discussion)

Nanney introduced the PREZ24-01 Request to rezone 943 S. Isabella Road from I-1 (Light Industrial District) to the R-1 (Rural Residential District) per Section 14.5 (Amendments). This is a township-initiated rezoning action. This matter was first discussed at the regular August Planning Commission meeting when the family living at 943 S. Isabella Rd spoke during public commented on raising chickens.

Nanney highlighted the Master Plan Future Land Use Map noting that the location of the half acre lot is at

the edge of what the Master Plan designates as Industrial land in this area. The property at 943 S. Isabella is outside of that designated industrial area and falls within the area designated as "Rural Buffer." Although it is a township-initiated action, the Planning Commission is required by Section 14.5. G of the Zoning Ordinance to evaluate all relevant factors before recommending it to the Township Board. Nanney encouraged the commission to consider the factors outlined in the memo as they proceed with the request.

Mr. Nanney also acknowledged a 10/15/2024 letter received from Mr. Kurt Feight, copies of which were provided to the commissioners and added to the agenda packet for the meeting posted on the Township website.

Public hearing

Open: 7:26 p.m.

Jared Gallinger, 943 S. Isabella Rd. addressed inaccuracies provided in a letter from Kurt Feight.

Allison Bjerke, 975 S. Isabella Rd., read a statement she provided requesting the Planning Commission consider a rezoning designation of her property and outlined how the change would benefit not only her family but align with the well-being of the community.

Rick Maylee, 931 s. Isabella Rd., addressed concerns with the number of animals, waste and odor the animals will cause if rezoned to rural residential.

Sandy Halasz, 580 S. Shepherd Rd., expressed her surprise with the exaggerated letter from Kurt Feight. She noted that the comments are getting away from the issue to request a rezone from Industrial to Residential.

Jessica Kandariss-Gallinger, 943 S. Isabella Rd., apologized to Mr. Maylee and noted she was not aware of the smell. Addressed the letter provided by Kurt Feight.

Allison Bjerke, 975 S. Isabella Rd., followed up with a comment on how many animals are typically allowed in a particular space.

Closed: 7:27 p.m.

During deliberation it was noted that a rezone is distinct from a special use permit; any limitation imposed would be based on the zoning ordinance. In the R-1 District, farming activities are allowable land uses to which provisions of Michigan's Right to Farm Act would be applicable. If the rezoning is granted, the township can only encourage the property owners to follow Michigan's adopted Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices (GAAMPs).

Chair Squattrito pointed out that this matter was brought before the commission due to a zoning violation. However, since it is a rezone request, the future land use should take precedence.

Commissioner Gross expressed concerned about the number of animals and potential odor issues, noting that these problems will remain whether the parcel is rezoned or not.

Commissioner Browne emphasized that the discussion of the proposed rezoning should focus on whether the change aligns with the Future Land Use Map rather than framed as a nuisance issue.

Commissioner Lapp agreed with Commissioner Browne but remarked that it appears that we are giving the nuisance people what they want rather than considering the concerns of the affected neighbors. She acknowledged that while this is a zoning issue, the original reason for bringing it to the commission was due to unresolved nuisance problems.

Commissioner Thering highlighted the need of being responsible neighbors.

Commissioner Olver stated that the role of the Commission is to fix inconsistency of the zoning.

Olver moved **Browne** supported to recommend that the Board of Trustees approve a rezoning of the 0.53-acre lot at 943 S. Isabella Road (PID 14-001-30-004-01) from I-1 (Light Industrial District) to R-1 (Rural Residential District). **Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Browne, Gross, Lapp, Olver, Squatrito, and Thering. Nays: 0. Motion Carried.**

B. Adoption of the 2025 Schedule of Planning Commission meetings

Olver moved **Thering** supported to approve the schedule of regular meetings of the Planning Commission for the 2025 calendar year in accordance with the requirements of the Open Meetings Act. **Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Browne, Gross, Lapp, Olver, Squatrito, and Thering. Nays: 0. Motion Carried.**

C. Master Plan updated – review of draft plan materials

- a. Introduction by staff
- b. Commission discussion

Nanney reviewed materials provided for the Township Master Plan updates. The Township’s Engineering Consultants will complete a more detailed evaluation of the US-127 corridor from the perspective of infrastructure needs and to identify areas along the corridor that are appropriate for future industrial and warehouse development.

The Commissioners reviewed the areas listed in the draft document dated October 9th. During deliberations, Commissioner **Olver** questioned why a site near the intersection of S. Isabella Rd. and E. Bluegrass Rd. was not referenced as a potential site for evaluation on the map provided in the packet. Nanney pointed out that the particular property belongs to the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, which is a Sovereign Nation and is not governed by our Zoning Ordinance. Commissioner **Gross** referred to the previous owner of this property as the old Coons Family Farm. Chair **Squatrito** observed that there was a general consensus of the Commission for staff to proceed with evaluating the areas listed.

Extended Public Comments

Open: 8:42 p.m.

Allison Bjerke, 975 S. Isabella Rd. clarified that her letter that was presented at the public comment was not an application and asked that the commission consider initiating a rezone of her property that is also zoned I-1.

Closed: 8:49 p.m.

Final Board Comment

Squatrito – asked for the commissioners thoughts on considering initiating a rezoning to property 975 S. Isabella.

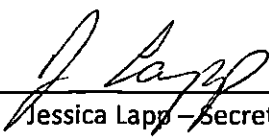
Browne – need to be consistent with considering the Future Land Use and the specific zone concerns.

Gross – echoed Commissioner **Browne’s** comment.

Squatrito – suggested that it makes sense not to proceed with rezoning the property at this time, but rather address it through the Future Land Use discussion.

Adjournment – Chair **Squatrito** adjourned the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

APPROVED BY:



Jessica Lapp – Secretary
Tom Olver – Vice Secretary

(Recorded by Tera Green)