

**EMPIRE VILLAGE PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, MAY 2, 2024**

The Village of Empire Planning Commission held a regular meeting on Tuesday, May 7, 2024, in the Empire Township Hall.

Schous opened the public hearing on Zoning Ordinance, Section 3.12, Signs at 7:00 PM. Terry Bacon commented on his in-depth review of the proposed ordinance in a communication dated May 2, 2024, which will be attached to the meeting packet. Schous closed the hearing at 7:02 PM.

Schous opened the regular meeting at 7:03 PM.

ROLL CALL –Bacon, Collins, Ellibee, Schous, Ford, Deering and Chase were present. Zoning Administrator Hall was absent.

**Motion by Ellibee, supported by Ford to approve the April 2, 2024, regular meeting minutes as presented. AYES: 7, NO: 0. MOTION PASSED.**

TREASURERS REPORT – Chase summarized of the quarterly revenue and expenditure report for the planning commission. Schous commented on attorney fees.

ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO THE AGENDA – Ellibee added discussion to consider joining the Michigan Planning Association’s RFP website to new business. Bacon added RRC Update to old business.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST – None.

**Collins proposed a motion to reopen the Signs public hearing to accommodate members of the public that arrived late. Consensus to allow such comments.** March Dye asked questions on temporary sign language that had been removed, bench signs, and the zoning districts. Karen Baja commented that she is in favor of a less stringent Sign Ordinance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS & CORRESPONDENCE – A communication from Terry Bacon on Signs was received.

ZONING ADMINISTRATORS REPORT – Schous commented that based on a conversation with Hall, he supports the planning commission forwarding the Sign Ordinance to Council. Hall has also met with the engineers at Cherry Republic regarding an upcoming site plan review.

Zoning Ordinance Section 3.12 Signs

- Bottom of page 2, change the word ‘chapter’ to ‘section’.
- Definitions will now be incorporated into the definitions part of the Zoning Ordinance.
- Page 6, g) Sections ~~5, 9, and 10~~, 4, 8, and 9.
- Page 6, g), i) Section ~~5~~ 6.
- Page 8, g) Section ~~6~~, 5
- Missing section 8, add back in and change the zoning district names.
- Residential (R), General Residential (GR)
- ~~Commercial Residential~~ change to Gateway Corridor and Front Street Corridor.

- Repealer- Ordinance No. 141 of 2014 and No. 142 of 2019 of the Village of Empire Code of Ordinances is hereby repealed.

**Motion by Bacon, supported by Collins to forward proposed Zoning Ordinance, Section 3.12: Signs to Village Council for consideration. Roll call vote: AYES: Bacon, Chase, Collins, Deering, Ellibee, Ford, and Schous. NO: None. MOTION PASSED.**

#### Master Plan Planner Services RFP Review

There was a single response by Place Strategies to the posted RFP, which came in over budget. The Master Plan Update Subcommittee is recommending that the Planning Commission take on larger chunks of the update in order to save on planning costs. Ellibee recommended limiting the scope of work of the planner to develop a community survey and hold public input sessions. The subcommittee will still meet and contact regional county organizations and gather thoughts on housing, recreational, and other needs. Members discussed how this could be implemented. Collins proposed that Place Strategies come to the next meeting to discuss the process and submit a revised proposal.

#### Recreation Plan

Schous gave a quick reminder to the group the Recreation Plan is being updated simultaneously to the Master Plan and it should not be overlooked.

#### Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) Update

Bacon suggested that the following RRC Best Practices be added to a future agenda so that the Village can meet the requirements of the RRC Essentials designation:

**2.3 Concentrated Development** – To meet this best practice a community’s zoning ordinance should clearly allow mixed-use by-right. This means allowing for residential above commercial or even allowing a mix of residential and commercial on the first floor. Additionally, at least one placemaking provision should be incorporated into the zoning ordinance.

**2.4 Housing Diversity** - The zoning code currently allows for accessory dwelling units by-right. To align with this best practice, one additional housing use by-right should be added. Addressing housing, a key priority for Michigan communities, involves enabling diverse housing options by-right, thereby effectively meeting the varied housing needs within these areas.

**1.4 Public Participation Plan** - Facilitating consistent future public engagement is important and the village should formalize an all-inclusive comprehensive public engagement plan. This plan can help determine which methods of engagement it would like to pursue, identify when and how each method would be used, and establish ways to measure the effectiveness of each method. When formalizing the public participation plan, the plan should identify goals and objectives, key stakeholders, methods of communication, strategies for outreach and how to communicate results to the public.

#### Consider Joining the Michigan Planning Association

Ellibee suggested that the Village join the Michigan Planning Association for an annual fee of \$75 so that the Village can take advantage of the RFP portal. Ellibee will get more details regarding RFP opportunities through the MPA.

COMMITTEE REPORTS – Bacon gave updates on the STR Committee, Wastewater Committee, and an upcoming presentation on May 16<sup>th</sup> by Renovare about future development in the Village of Empire.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Karen Baja is interested in a dog park at Shalda Park. Terry Bacon thanked the Planning Commission for the time spent on the Sign Ordinance and noted that the proposed Ordinance would allow for a large string/garland of flags. Palmer commented that Mary Sharry passed away and she had helped with the last Master Plan update.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS AND CHAIRPERSON COMMENTS – Deering commented on the passing of Mary Sharry. Shous commented on the Sign Ordinance.

ADJOURNMENT – There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:29 pm.

Alacia Acton, Recording Secretary

*These draft minutes will be considered for approval at the June 4, 2024, Village of Empire Planning Commission meeting.*

DRAFT