

NOTICE OF MEETING

A Regular Meeting of the Leelanau County Planning Commission (LCPC) will be held at **5:30 pm Tuesday, JULY 25, 2023** in the Leelanau County Government Center – 1st floor.

(Please silence any unnecessary cellular/electronic devices)

DRAFT AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA

CONFLICT OF INTEREST *(refer to Section 3.7 of the Bylaws)*

PUBLIC COMMENT

STAFF COMMENTS

CONSIDERATION OF JUNE 27, 2023 MEETING MINUTES *pgs 2-7*

OLD BUSINESS

Update – Fall Session “Mixed Big Development”

NEW BUSINESS

1. PC-11-2023-05 Empire Township Master Plan (document previously emailed to members) Review

REPORTS

1. Housing Action Committee
2. Parks & Recreation Committee
3. Report from LCPC members of attendance at township/village meetings, or Other Meetings/Trainings

COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE

PUBLIC COMMENTS

STAFF COMMENTS

COMMISSIONER & CHAIRPERSON COMMENTS

ADJOURN

LCPC Members

Steve Yoder-Chair
Casey Noonan-Vice-Chair
Melvin Black-Chair Pro-Tem
Craig Brown
Rodney Brush
Brian Fenlon
Melinda Lautner
Tom MacDonald
Robert Miller
Tom Nixon
Amy Trumbull

A REGULAR MEETING OF THE LEELANAU COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION WAS HELD ON TUESDAY, JUNE 27, 2023, AT THE LEELANAU COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER.

Proceedings of the meeting were recorded and are not the official record of the meeting. The formally approved written copy of the minutes will be the official record of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER Meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chairman Yoder who led the Pledge of Allegiance. The Meeting was held at the Leelanau County Government Center, 8527 E. Government Center Dr., Suttons Bay, MI.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: S. Yoder, T. Nixon, M. Black, C. Brown, T. MacDonald
B. Fenlon, M. Lautner, R. Brush, R. Miller, C. Noonan

Members Absent: A. Trumbull
(prior notice)

Staff Present: T. Galla, Director

Public Present: D. Allen, County Administrator

CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA

Motion by Noonan, seconded by Fenlon, to accept the agenda as presented. Motion carried 10-0.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST – None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Allen thanked members for their efforts and commended the commission and Galla along with her staff for all their work. Allen said it is the intent of the County Board to review the CIP document and she hopes it is used more as a planning tool going forward. .

STAFF COMMENTS

Galla reported that the tire and mattress recycling collection on Friday went well, as did the HHW collection held on Saturday.

CONSIDERATION OF MAY 23, 2023 MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Miller, seconded by Lautner, to accept the minutes as presented. Motion carried 10-0.

NEW BUSINESS

2024 -2029 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) DRAFT

Galla reviewed the CIP and changes from what was sent in the agenda packet. She reviewed potential action the commission could take on the document, and recommendation they could consider sending

to the Board of Commissioners.

Allen said sometimes departments will not know what is coming forward from other departments or what impacts those will have. All of this is taken into consideration, and part of responsibilities for the finance director is to review all grant applications. Allen said they may be looking at an opportunity for a grant writer. Galla is working on a grant for a grant writer, with approval to move forward. Might help it make more of a connection and have the department heads thinking more about these things going forward as part of the planning in their departments.

Lautner asked for clarification on which tower they are approving now. Allen said the Leelanau Township tower. Galla said it is not on the map yet. Lautner commented that it has been interesting to watch this document evolve, it's a good document. She hopes it can be useful for reference and she really liked the dollar figures, it's important they keep up on those if they change at all. She likes seeing the completed projects in the chart, it shows they are making progress. Good job.

Brown said he appreciates the "changes document" provided, it cut down on the time needed to review. He pointed out that under Planning Commission, CIP Committee, it mentions Gail Carlson, and Tom MacDonald is missing.

Black commented on seeing revenue from three towers and asked if they come to us or we solicit them. Allen responded that traditionally they come to us. They are discussing how they can be a little more proactive and generate revenue because that supports our 9-1-1 system. One of their goals is to be more forward thinking on that. Black stated it would be good to get a couple more of those with income coming in.

Nixon echoed Lautner's comments and said others have not had the privilege of sitting on the Planning Commission for several years as he has. He said this document is extremely impressive and it has been thrilling to watch it grow from a few pieces of paper to what it has grown into. The county and this commission can take pride in this. Nixon concluded by saying the County Board can use this as a guide for goals and objectives. He commended Galla on her perseverance and diligence in putting this document together.

Miller stated it was a great document.

MacDonald commented on the changing the Old Settlers Park ranking to a 2 at the last meeting, IT Cyber to a 1, and it looks like Veronica Valley's was changed to a 1. He doesn't recall changing that to a 1.

Discussion ensued on the priority rankings of these items.

Macdonald said 2024-05 gazebo should be a 3 not a 1. Members agreed and changed the ranking on 2024-05 from a 1 to a 3. Fenlon commented that possibly the numbers shifted when the probate submission was deleted.

Galla reviewed the ranking in the document and told members to keep in mind that the County Board can change these rankings. Galla explained the rankings chart in the document.

Allen said one of the things they discussed with Galla and the Finance Director, is maybe finance or administration would have changes to make a recommendation a priority. Maybe they know of a mandate by the state or things that are required or recommended and they can send that to the Planning Commission to help with the decision process.

Yoder questioned the aerial imagery under planning and equalization as \$50,000.00 which is color coded that it needs to be updated, but on page 10, it shows as completed. Galla said those were two different types of aerials, the \$50,000.00 ones were resubmitted and completed.

Yoder said it was a great document that has come a long way over the years. He is very pleased with the changes that have been made and how it has improved. Lautner asked for clarification on a septic system listed for Veronica Valley Park.

Yoder mentioned discussion held at their last meeting regarding CIP items over 6-years old, and having department head resubmit those, if they want them to remain.

Motion by Brush, seconded by Black, to recommend the BOC request department heads revise and resubmit for 2025, all projects in the CIP older than 6 years. Motion carried 10-0.

Motion by Nixon, seconded by Noonan, to approve the CIP with changes made and discussed and to recommend the CIP be sent to the County Board for consideration and approval. Motion carried 10-0.

REPORTS

Housing Action Committee

Lautner said it is getting more and more difficult to build with the cost of materials and interest. The New Waves Church project is on hold because they can't fill the gap between what they have for building and what it will actually cost. Three of the homes in Maple City are occupied now. In conclusion, Lautner said housing in general is really struggling.

Parks & Recreation

Noonan reported that Myles Kimmerly is updating their Master Plan which has drummed up lots of comments and input which is what the process is all about. He hasn't seen this much interest since he's been a part of parks and recreation. He talked with Dave May last month and they are hoping to have an ice rink at Myles Kimmerly this winter. May lives close to park and heading it up.

Nixon asked if Noonan had any speculation why the higher interest in the parks? Noonan said he really didn't know, but there has been more overall interest in the park. Lautner mentioned the *Ticker* article. Noonan said that may have helped, it's nothing bad; just lots of ideas and motivation.

Nixon questioned if they were able to separate expression from resident's vs part-time people. Noonan said somewhat. They got an email on pickle ball courts and it was well written, motivating information on pickle ball in the county. Lots of interest in baseball fields also.

REPORTS from LCPC members

Brown gave an update on the road commission activities. They have completed over 7 miles of surfacing on County Rd. 641. They started chip operations last week and have 17 miles of chip seal to do. In the end, they will have over 50 miles done. County Rd. 614 has a long stretch that is in bad shape that is in design right now and the goal is to get it constructed next year. They have four sets of culverts on County Rd 675 in Glen Arbor to reconstruct. One to a larger culvert which will be done this fall and the other 3 will be done over next 2 years, by end of 2025 they should be done. They have to

stretch it out as there are houses in between and they can't close down two at the same time. Fenlon asked if that was along Crystal? Brown said yes, and two more down by M-22, so there will not be any more portaging.

COMMUNICAITONS

Galla said staff is working on the fall presentation on mixed big development.

Lautner spoke regarding a video she watched called "Made in Michigan, owned by China." What is interesting is that right in the documents it says they will be faithful to communist China. She encouraged members to listen if they get an opportunity. The video started listing other concerns that maybe we don't have to worry about in Leelanau County, but other areas do. China will be owning a large amount of land in Ohio, Wyoming, and California. She doesn't know if it is anything we should think about in this county but foreign countries are coming in and controlling our lands. Black said there are a number of areas in our country that have blocked other countries from buying American soil. Noonan stated that we have more waterfront area than any county in the state. To say we have nothing to worry about; we have a lot at stake. Black said they need to be proactive now. Nixon questioned how a public servant in the county honor their constitution but also swear allegiance to the communist party? Lautner commented township recall going on for supporting this.

Lautner concluded by saying Solon Township Parks is meeting now and next week they have the next visioning session for township parks. You don't have to be from Solon Township to give input. Watch the paper for news on the township parks.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Allen mentioned that Galla had been nominated for a prestigious honor. Galla said she is going to be nominated for the fellows of the American Certified Institute of Planner. She is a certified planner already and this is the next step.

STAFF COMMENTS – None.

COMMISSIONER & CHAIRPERSON COMMENTS – None.

ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned by consensus at 6:23 pm.

CIP – changes to make from agenda packet:

- Table of Contents – Part I - update to match the document.
- Staff to add 1 paragraph for 'Process' in the beginning of Part II: Proposed Capital Improvement Projects. This paragraph will explain the CIP submittal process, review, and action.
- On the 1st chart for Priority level, Projected capital costs (page 8) – make Project 2022-10 a Priority 1. Make project 2024-01 a Priority 2. Remove 2024-09 Lower Level remodel. (The lower level remodel is on next page for 'other' potential projects.)
- Reformat Chart on bottom of page 9.
- Summary of projects submitted for the 2024-2029 CIP and for consideration in the 2024 Budget. Starts on page 12. Only listed the 2024 projects. We can do summaries for all projects, if requested, and include them.
- Part III Recommendations, page 18 – 2nd bullet is new recommendation and we will add "and any other" after MMRMA.
- Part IV is the Existing Capital Inventory which has been moved to the back. And the Submittal Form is now an Appendix.
- Submittal Form – has been slimmed down to 3 pages. Additionally, staff will modify to have check boxes that the Finance Manager has reviewed before consideration as a CIP project, and the Administrator has reviewed. Language in the 'Process' section in Part II will include language to address these reviews.

Action for consideration:

Motion to approve the CIP with changes noted, and recommend the CIP be sent to the Board of Commissioners for consideration & approval.

Further recommendation – Motion to recommend the Board of Commissioners request Department Heads revise and resubmit for 2025, all projects in the CIP that are older than 6 years.

Suggested Grammar and Punctuation Changes to County
CIP Draft Document
6-27-2023
Tom Nixon, Planning Commissioner

- Table of Content, Part 1, Overview: Move "CIP?" up 1 line to read, "What is a CIP?"
- Page 1 of 37, Part 1: Overview, What is a CIP?: DELETE first 2 comma's and ADD 1 comma after "planning schedule" and "and identifies"
ADD colon after "a link between a"
- Page 1 of 37, Why is the CIP important?: DELETE second comma
- Page 1 of 37, *Help Plan for Future Debt*: DELETE comma
- Page 2 of 37, The first year of the plan....: ADD "an" between "receive" and "expenditure"
- Page 2 of 37, IMPLEMENTATION: ADD "the" before "county staff"
- Page 3 of 37, First Sentence: ADD comma after "County Treasurer"
- Page 3 of 37, ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE: 5th sentence, DELETE semi-colon, between "Circuit Court" and "Probate Court", ADD comma
- Page 4 of 37, Improvement of Operating Efficiency: DELETE 2 comma's
- Page 5 of 37, Capital Improvement Program: 4th sentence, DELETE comma after "planning basis only"
- Page 5 of 37, Capital Improvement Project: #2), DELETE 1 dot after "...new facility (e.g...)"

**Leelanau County Planning & Community Development
Staff Report PC11-2023-05 (Empire Township)
Master Plan Review**

Reviewing Entity: Leelanau County Planning Commission
Date of Review: July 25, 2023

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

Date Request Received: July 10, 2023
Expiration of Review Period: August 21, 2023 (42 day review period, per PA 33 of 2008, as amended)
Requested Action: Review and comment on the Empire Township Master Plan 2023 Update.
Applicant: Empire Township Planning Commission
Duane Shugart, Chairman

The township plan with changes was previously emailed to the County Planning Commission and the documents are on file in our office, and can be found on the Empire township webpage.

SECTION 2: EMPIRE TOWNSHIP ACTION

The Notice of Intent to Plan was distributed by the Empire Township Planning Commission on January 13, 2021 to neighboring Local Units of Government and Leelanau County Planning. The Empire Township Planning Commission passed a motion at their March 21, 2023 meeting to forward the document to the Township Board for review and comment.

At their April 18, 2023 meeting, the Empire Township Board unanimously passed a motion to have the Planning Commission send the updated Master Plan draft onward to the County Planning Commission for review and comment.

The township planning commission held a Public Hearing on May 16, 2023. According to the township minutes, several members of the public were present, and one written comment had been received. After the public hearing, a motion was unanimously passed to hold a special meeting to discuss the public comments received. A Special Meeting was held on May 22, 2023. At the townships regular meeting held on June 20, 2023 the following motion was passed:

Deegan moved, Krawczak seconded, to distribute the Master Plan to the necessary bodies and begin the 42-day review period as of 7/1/2023. All in favor, motion carried.

SECTION 3: BASIS FOR PLAN REVIEW

Section 41 of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA) (PA 33 of 2008, as amended), requires a copy of a Plan or extension, addition, revision of other amendment of a Plan to be submitted to the county planning commission for review and comment. The review period for an extension, addition, revision, or other amendment is 42 days.

Section 41.

3. If the county planning commission or the county board of commissioners that receives a copy of a proposed master plan under subsection (2)(e) submits comments, the comments shall include, but need not be limited to, both of the following, as applicable:

(a) A statement whether the county planning commission or county board of commissioners considers the proposed master plan to be inconsistent with the master plan of any municipality or region described in subsection (2)(a) or (d).

(b) If the county has a county master plan, a statement whether the county planning commission considers the proposed master plan to be inconsistent with the county master plan.

(4) The statements provided for in subsection (3)(a) and (b) are advisory only.

SECTION 4: ANALYSIS
<i>The Principal Goal of the Leelanau General Plan is to establish a strategy for meaningful growth that protects, and where possible, enhances the unique character and quality of life on the peninsula by focusing on the balance of environmental protection, resource management and economic development so as to provide a foundation for a sustainable economy that permits long term prosperity for all present and future Leelanau County residents. The proposed amendment to the Master Plan has been reviewed for consistency with these policies.</i>

Policy Guidelines of the Leelanau General Plan

A. Intergovernmental and Regional Context

A partnership founded on mutual respect and mutual support in achievement of the common goals of the General Plan should guide the development and implementation of new relationships between the County and local units of government in the County and between the County and adjoining counties in the region.

Does the proposed plan strive for greater cooperation between neighboring units of government?

While the Plan does not specifically talk about greater cooperation between neighboring units of government, it does include language regarding coordination of zoning regulations of the Village and surrounding townships on adjacent lands.

B. Preservation of Peninsula Character

The interdependence of the natural and people-made features on the peninsula that make up its rural character, with the activities that comprise its economic base require that future land use change on the peninsula not undermine and where possible enhance the character of the area around it, and in so doing contribute to the unique rural character of the area around it, and to protection of the unique rural character of the entire Leelanau Peninsula.

Does the proposed plan include strategies for the preservation of rural and small-town character?

Yes

C. Working with Nature

Extensive and diverse sensitive natural features found throughout the peninsula provide the foundation for the present and future quality of life on the peninsula and should be protected where pristine, restored where damaged and have access and use managed for long term sustainability everywhere else.

Does the proposed plan include strategies for environmental protection, restoration, and management?

Yes

D. Managed Growth

Local land use or comprehensive plans and local development regulations should be updated and thereafter maintained to include goals, objectives, policies and strategies for managed future growth consistent with the Leelanau General Plan. Local plans should include more specific land use and density proposals at the parcel specific level. Local regulations should focus on design and other issues of local significance. Public facilities should all be constructed according to local capital improvement programs that are coordinated at all governmental levels on the Peninsula.

Does the proposed plan include parcel-specific future land use recommendations (map)?

The Plan includes future land uses by layers, with flexible boundaries. Page 16 of the Plan states “This Future Land Use Plan appreciates the multifunctional nature of these land areas, and describes the future land uses by layers, versus using a single classification; and just as nature does not have defined boundaries of ending and beginning, so, also these land use layers have flexible boundaries.”

SECTION 5: STAFF COMMENTS

A Master Plan is the vision of how a community will develop over time, providing guidance regarding how areas should be zoned, and standards that should be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance.

The Master Plan on the township’s website is dated 2005. At least every 5 years after adoption of a master plan, a planning commission shall review the master plan and determine whether to commence the procedure to amend the master plan or adopt a new master plan. The review and its findings shall be recorded in the minutes of the relevant meeting or meetings of the planning commission. This doesn’t require a local municipality to do an update every five (5) years, but it does require a review and then recording that decision in the minutes.

Section 43 of the MPEA states:

(3) Approval of the proposed master plan by the planning commission under subsection (2) is the final step for adoption of the master plan, unless the **legislative body by resolution has asserted the right to approve or reject the master plan.** In that case, after approval of the proposed master plan by the planning commission, the legislative body shall approve or reject the proposed master plan. **A statement recording the legislative body's approval of the master plan, signed by the clerk of the legislative body, shall be included on the inside of the front or back cover of the master plan and, if the future land use map is a separate document from the text of the master plan, on the future land use map.**

Comments / suggestions:

The Township has changed reference to Empire Township Planning and Zoning Board to the Township Planning Commission, throughout the document. They have also expanded the introduction on page 1 to include the intention of the Plan.

The township has cleaned up some of the wording in the document, and also removed language which could have the affect of limiting future development, such as removing the wording on page two which was to “discourage or minimize water and sewer expansions beyond the Village area”.

On page 4 of the document, the township has modified language in the bullets under ‘Encourage a Variety of Housing Types’. The 3rd bullet uses the words ‘in suitable areas’. What would be considered suitable, or not suitable? The last bullet is changed so it reads “Allow accessory dwelling units throughout the Township where compatible with surrounding land uses”. How will this be determined? Why not allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) wherever there is a residence?

Text in the bullet points for ‘Collaborate with Residents and Other Jurisdictions’ (page 6) has been updated.

Page 7, under Land Uses and Environment, in the 2nd paragraph add ‘a’ before “variety of historical...” Text under Generalized Land Use Map has been updated and the nine classifications with brief definitions have been eliminated and replaced with just the names of the nine classifications. The township has updated the PDR section and Transfer of Development Rights section.

In the Future Land Use section, the township has updated the Intent and Recommendations, and removed the Forestry Corridor and Steep Slope Protection Corridor.

Under Single Family Residential, the Recommendation for 30,000 square feet per one dwelling unit for residential density has been removed and the recommendation is changed to allow for more dense residential use near the Village.

Minor changes have been made to the Shoreline Corridor, Gateway Mixed Use, Scenic Roadside, Environmentally Sensitive – Sand Dunes, Wetlands, Lakes, and Streams, Planned Development Areas. A new section for Commercial Development (page 28) has been added. The Planned Residential Area on page 29 is being removed. Census data has been updated throughout the document, and some older information has been removed.

Long term objectives have been added to the document.

The Human Environment section has been renamed to Housing Policy & The Economy and includes a lot of data and information from studies. The ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, and Employed) data is not included in this section as well as the most recent Housing Needs Assessment from Housing North. This is recent data, but could be referenced in the document if the township wishes to add information before the Plan is final.

ALICE data: <https://www.unitedforalice.org/michigan>

2023 Housing Needs Assessment:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/61768dc8a236c639b8fe44ec/t/649c3611a9ae9c791c30a16a/1687959077783/RS+Northern%2C+MI+22-463+%28Housing+Needs+Assessment%29.pdf>

After approval, the township will need to review the zoning ordinance and propose amendments to implement Policies & Actions that are listed in this Plan.

Staff does not find this Master Plan Update to be inconsistent with the Leelanau General Plan, or with plans from adjacent municipalities in the county. Following the July 25 County Planning Commission meeting, minutes from the county planning commission, along with this report, will be sent to the township for consideration. The township is commended for their work updating the Plan.

Gail Myer

From: Trudy Galla
Sent: Saturday, July 8, 2023 7:02 PM
To: Gail Myer
Subject: Fw: Empire Master Plan Review for LCPC
Attachments: 2023 Master Plan.pdf; 2005 Master Plan with Changes.pdf; 5-16-2023 ETPC Approved.pdf

From: Dana Boomer <dana_boomer@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 6, 2023 8:44 AM
To: Trudy Galla <tgalla@leelanau.gov>; "Tim Cypher" <tim@allpermits.com>
Subject: Empire Master Plan Review for LCPC

Hi Trudy,

The Empire Master Plan has recently had a final draft approved by the Empire Township Board for distribution. I have attached the draft Master Plan in two versions - a red-line version and a "final" version. I have also attached the minutes from a preliminary public hearing that was held in May. A second public hearing will be held in September.

Please let me know if you need any additional documentation, or if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Dana Boomer
Recording Secretary
Empire Township Planning Commission

Gail Myer

From: Trudy Galla
Sent: Saturday, July 8, 2023 7:02 PM
To: Gail Myer
Subject: Fw: Empire Master Plan Review for LCPC
Attachments: Master Plan Changes Summary 5.16.23.docx

From: Dana Boomer <dana_boomer@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, July 8, 2023 2:42 PM
To: Trudy Galla <tgalla@leelanau.gov>; 'Tim Cypher' <tim@allpermits.com>
Subject: Re: Empire Master Plan Review for LCPC

Hi Trudy,

Please also see attached for a summary of changes that was developed for the initial public hearing.

Thank you,

Dana

On Thursday, July 6, 2023 at 08:44:53 AM EDT, Dana Boomer <dana_boomer@yahoo.com> wrote:

Hi Trudy,

The Empire Master Plan has recently had a final draft approved by the Empire Township Board for distribution. I have attached the draft Master Plan in two versions - a red-line version and a "final" version. I have also attached the minutes from a preliminary public hearing that was held in May. A second public hearing will be held in September.

Please let me know if you need any additional documentation, or if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Dana Boomer
Recording Secretary
Empire Township Planning Commission

NOTICE OF AMENDMENT TO
THE TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN
EMPIRE TOWNSHIP, LEELANAU COUNTY, MICHIGAN

July 13, 2023

Kasson Township Planning Commission
Glen Arbor Township Planning Commission
Village of Empire Planning Commission
Lake Township Planning Commission
Platte Township Planning Commission
Almira Township Planning Commission
Leelanau County Planning Commission
Leelanau County Road Commission
Glen Lake School District

Rec'd 7-19-23

In accordance with the requirements of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008, as amended), this letter serves as notice that Empire Township, Leelanau County, Michigan, is distributing a draft Master Plan for review and comment. If interested, the Township asks for your cooperation and assistance in this process.

The red line and final versions of the amended Master Plan can be found at <https://www.leelanau.gov/empiretwpor.asp>. A summary of changes is included in this mailing. We would appreciate your comments regarding the amendments to the Empire Township Master Plan and how you feel it may affect planning efforts in your community. There will be a public hearing regarding the Master Plan at the Empire Township Hall on Tuesday, September 19, 2023 at 7 pm.

Thank you, in advance, for your cooperation and assistance. Also, we would like to take this opportunity to ensure you of our cooperation in any planning efforts you may choose to undertake in the years to come.

Please direct any correspondence or questions to:

Empire Township Planning Commission
PO Box 234
Empire, MI 49630
Phone (231) 590-9788
dana_boomer@yahoo.com

Respectfully,

Dana Boomer
Recording Secretary, Empire Township Planning Commission

Empire Township Master Plan

Summary of Major Changes

5/16/2023

- Updated Generalized Land Use Map to utilize tax assessment classifications for current land usage.
- Substantial updates to Future Land Uses section, including combination of “Rural Living” and “Agricultural Preservation” areas into “Agricultural/Residential” area; the removal of the “Forestry Corridor”, “Planned Residential Area, and “Steep Slope Protection Corridor” areas; and the addition of a “Commercial Development” area, as well as other, more minor, changes to other sections. These changes also include complementary changes to the Future Land Use map, and brought the Master Plan up to date with current and potential land usage within the Township.
- Renamed the previous The Human Environment section to Current Environment and Long Term Objectives, and split into several sub-sections, including Transportation, Utilities and Services, Housing Policy & the Economy.
- Substantially expanded Housing Policy & the Economy sub-section from the existing housing and economic language in the previous The Human Environment section. Integrated information from 2019 Community Survey and various housing and economic analyses covering the Township, and added discussion of zoning techniques that can be used to expand housing options for a variety of economic levels.
- Developed Long Term Objectives for the various sub-sections of the new Current Environment section. These objectives will drive and focus township planning and zoning over the next 10-20 years.
- Integrated 2019 Community Survey results throughout the Master Plan.
- Coordinated with Leelanau County Equalization Department to ensure accuracy, completeness, and readability of maps and data.
- General updates and corrections to demographic data, dates, maps and other information throughout the Master Plan.

**APPROVED
EMPIRE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES**

May 16, 2023

The Empire Township Planning Commission held a regular meeting on Tuesday, May 16, 2023. The meeting was held at the Empire Township Hall.

CALL TO ORDER: Duane Shugart, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Dale DeJager, Duane Shugart, Micah Deegan, Larry Krawczak

Members Absent: Dick Figura

Staff Present: Dana Boomer, Tim Cypher

Krawczak moved, Deegan seconded to excuse Dick Figura from the meeting. All in favor, motion carried.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The PC briefly discussed the agenda. **Motion by Deegan, second by DeJager to approve the agenda as presented. All in favor, motion carried.**

ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST – None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The PC briefly discussed the minutes of April 18, 2023. **Motion by Deegan, second by Krawczak to approve the April 18, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. All in favor, motion carried.**

COMMUNICATIONS: Cypher received a communication from Rowan Brady regarding the Master Plan, and communication from legal counsel regarding the same. Those were distributed to the PC prior to the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

PUBLIC HEARING – MASTER PLAN:

The public hearing was opened by Chairman Shugart at 7:03 p.m. Shugart summarized the process of amending the Master Plan and welcomed the members of the public (4) in attendance. Shugart thanked Boomer, Cypher, and Dick Figura for their work on the Master Plan over the past few years.

Boomer and Cypher gave an overview of the proposed changes to the Master Plan. Red-line and final drafts of the Master Plan were posted on the website for public review. A summary document regarding the major changes to the Master Plan had been developed and distributed, and copies were available for the public at the meeting. Cypher stated that one written comment had been received from Rowan Brady, and distributed to the PC for review. After the previous meeting, it was noted that state law requires a public hearing to be held after the initial 42 day review process for Master Plan amendments. This goes against previous precedent in the county, and requires some changes to the previously discussed process.

Shugart opened the floor for public comment at 7:13 pm.

Zach Hillyer – Housing North – He is the Leelanau County Housing Ready Program Coordinator. He thanked the PC for the addition of discussion and actions related to housing in the draft Master Plan. With Zoning Ordinance changes going forward from this draft Master Plan, he encouraged the PC to review the Housing Toolkit, available through Housing North. At the end of 2022, four new housing bills were passed by the State of Michigan. One of those is a payment-in-lieu-of-taxes bill, which encourages housing investment in smaller communities. He distributed a one-page summary of that bill to the PC. He thanked the PC for their work on the subject. Boomer will be in touch with Hillyer by email to get electronic versions of their toolkit and checklist to distribute to the PC.

Susan Rife – Empire – She asked how frequently the Master Plan is reviewed and how long that process usually takes. Shugart replied that the Master Plan has to be reviewed every five years, and this review has taken longer than usual due to COVID and a number of long-term zoning projects. The PC and staff described the process for the review of the Master Plan, which will then lead into a review of the Zoning Ordinance.

With no further public comment, Chairman Shugart closed the public hearing at 7:25 p.m.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: Cypher had previously distributed his monthly reports for April 2023. Cypher reported that he has been in contact with the applicant and Tim Figura regarding the Glen Lake Manor SUP. The application has become substantially more complete, but there are a few details left that require information to be formally completed. He is expecting the application to be complete prior to the June meeting.

He followed up on the initial conversation he had regarding a solid waste facility in the township that he initially mentioned at the February meeting. There has been no additional information submitted; he is not expecting any further movement on this until fall. **Motion by Deegan, second by Krawczak to acknowledge receipt of the April 2023 reports. All in favor, motion carried.**

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Master Plan Review** – The PC discussed the Master Plan and public comment received. The PC discussed the comments received from Mr. Brady and whether any changes need to be made based on those. The PC does not feel they have had enough time to review the comments, and so would prefer to hold a special meeting to discuss these points and determine which should be addressed in the Master Plan. Many of them also have value for the purposes of amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. The PC discussed the overall timeline for the review process for the Master Plan.

Deegan moved to hold a special meeting on May 22, 2023 at 7 pm for the purposes of discussing the Master Plan. DeJager seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. **Pleasure of the Board** – None

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

BOARD COMMENT: Deegan thanked the public for their attendance.

ADJOURNMENT: **Motion** by Krawczak to adjourn at 7:51 pm. With no objection, Shugart adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dana Boomer
Recording Secretary

Dear Empire Township Planning Commission,

My name is Rowan Brady (6008 W. Woods Dr) and the following are my comments on the 2023 Empire Township Master Land Use Plan.

I would like to begin my comments with a discussion on the Master Planning process. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008 outlines specific processes for creating and adopting a Master Plan. Based on the information I have been able to discern from the meeting minutes of the Planning Commission I am unsure if this process is being followed to the letter of the law. A brief summary of important and required steps is provided below. Based on the meeting schedule of the Empire Township Planning Commission and Township Board of Trustees, I believe item 4, in the list below, was skipped.

1. Intent to Plan Notices
 - a. Prior to preparing a Master Plan the Planning Commission must send notice to the following entities:
 - i. The Planning Commission, or Legislative Body if no Planning Commission exists, of each surrounding municipality
 - ii. The County Planning Commission
 - iii. The Regional Planning Agency (Networks Northwest)
 - iv. Each public utility within the Township (gas, electric, telecommunications)
 - v. Each public transportation agency operating in the Township (BATA)
 - vi. Any governmental agency that registers its name with the Township
 - vii. The County Road Commission (if the Master Plan includes a street plan)
2. Planning Commission Recommends Approval for Distribution
 - a. The Planning Commission recommends to the Township Board of Trustees the approval of distribution for public review of the Master Plan
3. Township Board of Trustees Approves Distribution
 - a. The Township Board of Trustees approves the Master Plan for public review
 - b. A copy of the Master Plan must be sent to all entities listed under item 1(a)(i)
4. 63-Day Public Review
 - a. The public review period must last for a minimum of 63 days, counted from when the Township Board of Trustees authorized the document for distribution
5. Public Hearing on the Proposed Master Plan
 - a. Only after the conclusion of the 63-day public review may the Planning Commission hold a public hearing
6. Planning Commission holds a Public Hearing on the Proposed Master Plan
 - a. Notice of a public hearing must be sent to all entities listed under item 1(a)(i)
7. Planning Commission recommends the Township Board of Trustees adopt the Proposed Master Plan
8. Township Board adopts the Master Plan
9. Adopted Master Plan sent to entities listed under item 1(a)(i)

General Comments on the Master Plan

- There are a lot of interesting ideas in the Master Plan, many of which I support.

- The Proposed Master Plan is a good starting point, but I think that this document is a long way from a complete and actionable Master Plan.
- This document is extremely text heavy, I would appreciate more graphs, tables, images, and maps to support the text and make the document easier to read.
- Overall, I found the Master Plan very difficult to follow. In the 100s of Master Plans I have read, I have never seen one structured like this.
 - I would recommend the following structure for the Empire Township Master Plan. Text in **bold is a chapter**, text in *italics is a heading* of a chapter, text in **blue are the existing sections/pages** of the Proposed Master Plan, and text in **red are items that I believe warrant discussion in the Master Plan** (see additional comments later in this document). Some pages/sections may be missing from the proposed reorganization, this was not intentional. Any content in the Master Plan should be able to be placed in the proposed structure below.
 - **Table of Contents**
 - **Introduction**
 - Page 1
 - Page 31 – 34
 - *Guiding Principles*
 - Pages 2 – 6
 - **Demographics**
 - *Population*
 - Page 35 (Population)
 - *Age*
 - Page 35 (Population)
 - *Households*
 - *Education*
 - *Disability*
 - *Income*
 - *Poverty*
 - *Employment*
 - **Housing**
 - Page 47 - 49
 - **Natural Features**
 - *Climate*
 - Page 37 (Climate)
 - *Watersheds*
 - Page 10 – 11
 - Page 15 (Watershed Management)
 - *Wetlands*
 - *Hydrology*
 - Page 37 (Lakes and Wetlands)
 - Page 37(Groundwater Availability)
 - *Coastal Resilience*
 - *Geology*
 - Page 38 (Surface Geology)

- *Soils*
 - Page 38 – 40 (Soil Association)
- *Pollution*
 - Page 38 (Pollution)
- **Existing Land Use**
 - Page 7 – 9
 - *Agricultural Land*
 - *Residential Land*
 - *Commercial Land*
 - *Public/Institutional Land*
- **Transportation**
 - *Motorized Network*
 - Page 41 (Highways)
 - Page 41 (Road Standards)
 - Page 42 (Access Management)
 - Page 41 (Road Design)
 - *Non-Motorized Network*
 - Page 42 (Road Improvements)
 - *Public Transportation*
 - Page 43 (Public Transportation)
- **Community Facilities and Services**
 - Pages 44 – 46
- **Economic Development**
 - *Agricultural Base*
 - Page 35 (Agriculture in Empire Township)
 - Page 13 (Purchase of Development Rights)
 - Page 14 (Transfer of Development Rights)
 - *Resource Base*
 - Page 13 (Resource Base)
 - Page 13 (Mineral Extraction)
 - *Tourism Base*
- **Future Land Use & Implementation**
 - *Future Land Use*
 - Pages 16 – 30
 - *Implementation*
 - Pages 51 – 54

Specific Comments on the Master Plan

Page 1

I think the introduction to the Master Plan should include a discussion about the relationship between the Master Plan and the zoning ordinance. As the Master Plan drives changes to the zoning ordinance it would be helpful to the reader to introduce this concept at the beginning. Below is some sample text to that effect:

“The Master Plan is not a binding agreement but rather a planning framework. The Zoning Ordinance, on the other hand, is local land use law. The Zoning Ordinance is a set of regulations that provide exacting specifications as to how and where development may take place. The Zoning Ordinance implements the Master Plan; and, as outlined in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA), a direct relationship between the two documents is required. For example, if it emerges through community engagement and research that the housing types available do not adequately serve the population, a municipality would revisit the Zoning Ordinance to determine if the land use code is preventing a particular type of development through height restrictions or lot size requirements. Only when the two documents are in sync can they be effective planning tools.”

Page 2

The three guiding principles provide a good framework for the Empire Township Master Plan. However, the difference between the guiding principles, subheadings under the guiding principles, and long-term objectives elsewhere in the Master Plan is unclear. What is a guiding principle? What is a goal? What is an action? I strongly encourage the Planning Commission to trim the guiding principles section and move many of the subheadings and actions to the body of the Master Plan where they can be supported by data and narrative. It is essential that the actions are supported with content.

Guiding Principle 1: Maintain the Rural Character of the Township

Locate future growth near existing development areas.

“Focus population growth in the areas adjacent to the populated areas, and [try] to match or compliment lot size and density to that of the Village on adjacent lands wherever possible.”

I am strongly in support of this [policy/action/goal/recommendation], as concurrency is good planning policy. However, there are no areas designated for future growth on the future land use map (FLUM). The “Residential” designation on the FLUM only covers existing residential development and does not designate any areas for future growth, as the item above states. Therefore, the FLUM needs to be revised or this [policy/action/goal/recommendation] needs to be removed.

Page 3

Maintain open spaces and natural resources.

“Protect the water quality and beauty of the lakes and streams by establishing buffer areas along the water’s edge that consist of natural vegetation and undisturbed open space...”

The Empire Township Zoning Ordinance requires a shoreline protection area, does this [policy/action/goal/recommendation] intend to change that? The word “establish” creates a sense that a similar regulation is not already in place.

“Minimize the loss of quality vegetation and grading on steep slopes.”

The Empire Township Zoning Ordinance has steep slope regulations (Section 4.20), does this [policy/action/goal/recommendation] intend to revise those standards? If so, what revisions?

“Preserve valuable natural resources by encouraging the clustering of housing with no loss of density.”

The phrase “no loss of density” is confusing, based on the tone/goal of the Master Plan I am assuming it means that while cluster housing is encouraged it should not be a tool for increasing residential density in agricultural/natural areas. “No loss of density” means that moving from higher to lower density would be discouraged as that would be a loss, so this [policy/action/goal/recommendation] is encouraging higher residential density through cluster housing. I am in support of higher residential density through cluster housing, but I do not believe that this was the intent of the [policy/action/goal/recommendation].

“Interconnect valuable natural resources... providing incentives to do so”

What incentives does the Planning Commission intend to offer? How do they intend on offering them?”

Maintain views along major roads.

Which roads are considered major? Section 4.15 of the Township Zoning Ordinance states M-72, M-22, County Road 616, and County Road 677.

“Cluster development within wooded areas....”

Cluster development has already been mentioned in the Master Plan and will be mentioned several more times. Given the importance the Master Plan is putting on cluster development, there should be a [policy/action/goal/recommendation] to adopt cluster development standards in the zoning ordinance. The following standards from the zoning ordinance are insufficient as cluster development standards:

“No more than one dwelling per acre, except for lots in excess of ten (10) acres in size, in which case the Planning Commission may increase such density by no more than 50% where dwelling units are clustered and no less than 50% of the lot will remain perpetually as a conservation area. Density may be increased by an additional 25% where the dwelling units are clustered and set back no less than 500 feet from M-72 and screened from view by landscaping approved by the Planning Commission as part of site plan review.”

Value and encourage agricultural uses.

“Encourage the incorporation of existing agricultural structures such as barns, silos, ...”

How does the Planning Commission intend to implement this [policy/action/goal/recommendation], if a property owner has an old barn on their property and wants to build a house on the property are they prohibited from tearing the barn down? How many existing agricultural structures are present in the Township, is this worth including as a [policy/action/goal/recommendation]?

Page 4

Plan for recreational uses.

“Support tourism based on natural resources as an economic industry, while [ensuring] that natural resources are not over-burdened.”

The ensure v. insure grammatical error was corrected throughout the Master Plan, this was an additional spot I noticed.

“Encourage different types of recreational uses that are low impact in terms of noise, and crowds and do not adversely impact natural resources.”

How does the Planning Commission intend to encourage these uses? Does the Planning Commission intend to solicit companies or people to open and operate these businesses? They are already considered special land uses in the public recreation district.

Guiding Principle 2: Plan for Growth Compatible with the Existing Rural Character of the Township

Think design, not density.

If the Planning Commission maintains that the design of a development is more important than the density of said development (a view which I am in agreement with), the statement on Page 3 “encouraging the cluster of housing with no loss of density” is antithetical to this viewpoint, as the “encouraging the cluster of housing with no loss of density” is tying design and density together.

“Avoid a ‘one size fits all’ mentality for regulating land uses.

I am unsure what this means... Zoning is inherently a ‘one size fits all’ approach as all land zoned X must conform to the standards of zoning district X. Is this [policy/action/goal/recommendation] intending to revise how the Township regulates land use (i.e. zoning)?

“Minimize excessive widening, paving, and curbing of roads, designing roads to follow the natural contour of the land or the character of the neighborhood.”

How does the Township intend to implement this [policy/action/goal/recommendation]? Through the zoning ordinance, later in the Master Plan the planning and design of roads is stated as the county's responsibility. Does the Township intend to adopt road standards?

“Encourage developments designed around a common element, such as a park, open space, or civic building.”

This [policy/action/goal/recommendation] needs additional clarification, specifically “Encourage developments [to be / that are] designed around ...” The inclusion of “to be” changes the intent of the [policy/action/goal/recommendation] so that when development does occur the design around common elements is encouraged. The inclusion of “that are” changes the intent of the [policy/action/goal/recommendation] so that the Township is actively encouraging development in the Township that is designed around a common element. Additionally, how does the Township intend to implement this action as no such standards for development design exist in the Zoning Ordinance?

Create a mixture of commercial activities.

“Promote home grown businesses, family-owned businesses, and local entrepreneurship.”

How? Does the Planning Commission intend to give incentives to just those groups?

“Discourage drive-in or drive-through businesses, especially in areas visited frequently by tourists.”

Discourage or prohibit? If either, how does the Planning Commission intend to implement this [policy/action/goal/recommendation]?

“Encourage mixed-use development that provides compact places for people to live, work, play, and shop.”

I am strongly in support of this [policy/action/goal/recommendation] but there is no future land use category that supports this [policy/action/goal/recommendation] and no zoning standards that support it either. The gateway “mixed-use” future land use designation does not “provide compact places for people to live, work, play, and shop.” This [policy/action/goal/recommendation] needs to be removed or an additional future land use category needs to be added and designated on the map.

Encourage a Variety of Housing Types

“Encourage the development of housing to satisfy the lifecycle housing needs of residents of all income levels.”

This is an excellent [policy/action/goal/recommendation] that I am in strong support of. However, throughout the Master Plan the predominant land use approach, specifically regarding residential development is for large-lot single-family residences. Large lot-single family is one of the least affordable/attainable housing options. The statement above and the preferred land use approach prescribed throughout this Master Plan are in conflict.

“Encourage the development of affordable housing in suitable areas throughout the Township.”

This is also an excellent [policy/action/goal/recommendation], however, the statement is unclear on what is considered affordable housing or what is considered a suitable area. Additionally, how does the Township plan to encourage the development of affordable housing?

“Allow accessory dwelling units throughout the Township where compatible with surrounding land uses.”

What are considered to be compatible surrounding land uses? Additionally, the Empire Township currently allows accessory dwelling units under Section 5.4 Guest Houses. However, the standard to have a guest house is that the lot must be twice the minimum size of the lot, which means that the ordinance is not permitting an accessory use, just two homes on one (two) undivided lot.

Page 6

Guiding Principle 3: Collaborate with Residents and Other Jurisdictions

“Become familiar with the vision, Master Plan, and zoning regulations of the Village and surrounding Townships.”

It is concerning to me that this item has to be included in the Master Plan. I would hope that the Planning Commissioners who are charged with guiding the future land use direction of our Township are already aware of the Master Plan and zoning regulations of the surrounding planning jurisdictions.

Page 7

I would appreciate a table showing the breakdown of existing land uses in the Township by acreage and total percent. It is also unclear to me how assessment classifications delineated “wetlands”, as wetlands are not delineated for tax purposes.

Page 12

The framing of influencing factors for future land use planning does not make sense to me. Are these factors how future land use categories were delineated? If so, what does a TDR and PDR program have to do with designating future land use? These programs are strategies to encourage

land preservation but should not influence FLU unless the Planning Commission is specifically stating “Area X should be preserved through a PDR or TDR program.” Additionally, I think there are a LOT more influencing factors when determining future land use, housing needs, availability of utilities, slope and grade, etc. are all factors that should be considered when future land use planning. Again, this framing of influencing factors is incredibly confusing and unclear.

Page 13

Purchase of Development Rights

Has the Township had any substantial discussion on a PDR program? This item looks like it was a holdover from the previous Master Plan so in the past decades has any progress been made on this item?

Additionally, a PDR program does not have to go through a governmental agency. The Leelanau Conservancy will enter into conservation agreements with landowners, which is a form of PDR. This should be mentioned in the Master Plan.

Transfer of Development Rights

This section does not actually detail what a TDR program is, just what it does. There is no mention of sending and receiving zones or that a TDR program will have to be instituted through the Zoning Ordinance. Acme Township in Grand Traverse County has a TDR program.

Page 16

I strongly encourage the Planning Commission to reevaluate the effectiveness of future land use “layers.” The Master Plan is correct that lands serve more than one purpose but that does not mean that each use/function should have its own “layer.” Future Land Use is intended to guide future zoning classifications, so if the Planning Commission was to revise the zoning ordinance according to the future land use, the zoning map would consist of a bunch of overlapping zoning districts that each have a very specific and narrow use, this approach does not conform to best future land use planning practices. Additionally, this approach completely ignores the fact that some uses are compatible with each other. The outlined future land use “layers” and the future land use map create numerous incompatibilities between land uses. See discussion below. Furthermore, the future land use map does not illustrate these “layers” because it does not show where future land use areas overlap with each other. This incomplete and misguided approach to future land use planning could create future development inconsistent with the goals of this Master Plan, see discussion below.

Agricultural/Residential

“In addition, the intent of this layer is to maintain, promote, and allow existing farming operations to continue and grow by protecting them from encroachment by other incompatible land uses.”

As described on page 18 “this later includes the entire Township”, if that is the case the two statements above are in conflict with each other. For example, the industrial areas designated on the future land use map may be considered to be incompatible with the agricultural/residential land use layer. But since this layer includes the entire Township there are areas that are both designated “Agricultural/Residential” and “Industrial’ on the future land use plan.

Page 18

“Land-owners in this layer should be encouraged to utilize their properties for agricultural activities...”

How does the Planning Commission intend to encourage these operations? Does the Planning Commission intend to offer some form of incentives to achieve this?

“Single-family residential uses should be located at a safe distance and buffered from normal farming operations...”

What is considered a safe distance? How does the Planning Commission intend to enforce this?

Page 22

“adequate buffering and spacing between these uses and residential uses is highly recommended”

Recommended but not required? If required this would require a revision to the Zoning Ordinance.

“intensity of use should be scrutinized through a special review process”

What is the special review process described here? Is this in addition to site plan review or is this site plan review?

Page 23

Single Family Residential

“The primary use should be standard single-family residential uses”

The focus on single-family residential development does not achieve the goals of this Master Plan regarding providing housing to all residents at all stages of life and income levels.

“Residential density near the Village should allow for more dense residential use, including multi-family construction, while maintaining the existing character of the Village.”

This statement appears to be in direct conflict with the goal that primary uses in this future land use category should be single-family. Additionally, this is the only place in the Master Plan that

mentions multi-family. There needs to be a much more substantial discussion on non-single-family housing types to achieve the housing goals as outlined in this Master Plan.

“A mixture of architectural styles to prevent homogenous-appearing housing developments should be encouraged”

How does the Planning Commission intend to encourage this?

Page 24

“building design recommendations in this layer are intended for enlarged renovated homes and new construction”

What design recommendations? How does the Planning Commission intend to enforce this?

“There should be sufficient setback distance from the high-water mark”

Is this item intended to expand the setbacks currently in the zoning ordinance?

Page 26

“any proposed commercial land use should be supported by an impact analysis”

Impact analyses can be very expensive for applicants, if commercial uses are permitted by right in this district, why are applicants required to provide this information? It seems like it should be the judgment of the Planning Commission to determine the impact.

“This area includes the parcels that are located along M-72”

All of the parcels along M-72 are in this future land use layer, meaning that theoretically, this Master Plan supports commercial development on every parcel along M-72.

Page 35

Overall I found the discussion on demographics very bare bones, the Master Plan is intended to support the needs of the community but a one-page analysis of demographic factors is insufficient on illustrating what those needs may be. There is no discussion on gaining in place, poverty, etc. This information is all available on data.census.gov

Page 36

“Statistics for agriculture in Empire Township are not readily available”

The United States Department of Agriculture does an agricultural census every 5 years. While the statistics are detailed at a county level it would provide some information on area agricultural operations.

Page 37

I believe that climate change and its impact on Empire Township warrants significant discussion in the Master Plan.

“Flooding has not been a major problem in Empire Township”

Source?

“Pollution of ground or surface water is not significant in Empire Township.”

Source?

Page 41

“Road designers should give priority to environment, historic preservation, and neighborhood protection concerns, instead of opting from standard road designs that give priority to vehicle capacity”

How does the Planning Commission intend to enforce this?

Page 42

“The Township encourages the addition or inclusion of bicycle paths when major roadwork takes place.”

Does Empire Township have a non-motorized plan? If not, encouraging the inclusion of non-motorized infrastructure seems inefficient and improper if there is not a proper plan for where improvements are needed and what type of infrastructure is needed. Additionally, there is limited discussion about the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail, the major non-motorized path in the County, which has a termination point in Empire Township.

Page 47

“Promote a range of housing types and prices while maintaining the quality of the environment.”

If this is truly a goal of the Township, then why does the future land use plan reinforce the dominant residential land use pattern of large-lot single family development?

I would appreciate the Planning Commission relying on census figures to provide context to current levels of affordability, not the survey results which are based on the perceptions of survey respondents, not data.

“Input received from local government stakeholders indicated that public opposition plays a large role in the ability of local governments to plan and zone for affordable housing.”

What does the Planning Commission intend to do about this critical issue?

Page 50

“Zoning changes may be considered that allow for smaller homes, more concentrated development, incentives for diverse housing options, and multi-family housing.”

What changes specifically? The Master Plan is supposed to outline these changes in detail, not “may be considered.”

Thank you to the Planning Commission for taking the time to review my comments on the proposed draft Master Plan. However, I do have more comments beyond what I was able to provide during the accelerated public review period. I would appreciate the Planning Commission observing the required 63-day public review process so I could provide my comments in full.

Thank you,
Rowan Brady, AICP
6008 W Woods Dr.
Empire, MI 49630