

**VILLAGE OF EMPIRE**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING AND REGULAR MEETING**  
**TUESDAY, MAY 7, 2024, AT 7 PM**  
**EMPIRE TOWNSHIP HALL**  
**10088 W. FRONT STREET**

**PUBLIC HEARING** – Zoning Ordinance Section 3.12: Signs

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

**ROLL CALL**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – 04/02/2024 Regular Meeting Minutes

**TREASURER’S REPORT**

**ADDITIONS OR CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

1. Zoning Ordinance Section 3.12: Signs
2. Planning Request for Proposals Review
3. Recreation Plan

**NEW BUSINESS**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS AND CHAIRPERSON COMMENTS**

**ADJOURNMENT**

Persons with questions or individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services to effectively participate in the meeting should contact the Village of Empire Office at (231) 326-5466, PO Box 253, Empire, MI 49630, or at [deputyclerk@villageofempire.com](mailto:deputyclerk@villageofempire.com).

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

The Village of Empire Planning Commission held a regular meeting on Tuesday, April 2, 2024, in the Empire Township Hall.

Schous opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

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

**Motion by Bacon, supported by Ford to approve the March 5, 2024, regular meeting minutes as presented. AYES: 5, NO: 0. MOTION PASSED.**

TREASURERS REPORT – Bacon reported that Council approved a not to exceed amount of \$10,000 for planning services to update the master plan.

ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO THE AGENDA – Schous moved the Light Industrial District ZO Text Amendment to the first item of business.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST – None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS & CORRESPONDENCE – A letter from Cherry Republic attorney, Marc McKellar was read and will be posted as a handout on the village website.

ZONING ADMINISTRATORS REPORT – Hall passed out land division zoning information and provided a sample of an Ordinance. Hall also reported that he met with Cherry Republic for pre-application meeting.

Zoning Ordinance Amendment to the Light Industrial District

Commissioners reviewed Village Attorney, Tim Figura's recommendation to move "combination of uses" from "permitted uses" to "uses subject to special use permit". Figura's opinion stated that "it is not appropriate to list "combination of uses" as permitted by right. A use by right is subject to site plan review and is not reviewed for compatibility with uses on neighboring parcels. Consideration of combined uses by right under this amendment would require that the planning commission find that the uses are mutually compatible with one another, but it would not require compatibility with neighboring uses".

Cherry Republic attorney Marc McKellar, cited in his correspondence that this would add an additional process, cost and time. McKellar asked that the language not be changed and argued that "the use by right language is appropriate and provides that it is further subject to special use review for any special use that is considered in the combination of uses".

Zoning Administrator Hall understood both attorneys' concerns and did not recommend one over the other. Hall noted that if "combination of uses" was left as permitted uses, there is discretionary language in the ZO that permits the zoning administrator to forward any future site plan review to the planning commission for approval if need be.

**Motion by Bacon, supported by Ellibee to forward the zoning amendment as requested by Cherry Republic to Village Council for consideration. AYES: 5, NO: 0. MOTION PASSED.** Bacon asked that Schous attend the Council meeting to answer questions.

Planner RFP Review

Bacon summarized the planning services RFP drafted by Bacon and Ellibee. The expected project timeline was described as aggressive and a Master Plan subcommittee was discussed to cover the groundwork, keep on schedule, and create focus. Subcommittee meetings will be posted and open to the public.

**Motion by Collins, supported by Ford to form a master plan update subcommittee comprised of Ford, Bacon and Ellibee with Chase as an alternate to meet and preform work as directed by the planning commission. AYES: 5, NO: 0. MOTION PASSED.**

**Motion by Bacon, supported by Ellibee to release the RFP to the identified planners and place it on the village website. AYES: 5, NO: 0. MOTION PASSED.**

Sign Ordinance No. 142

**Motion by Bacon, supported by Ford that the Planning Commission recommend that Village Council amend the Zoning Ordinance of the Village of Empire by adding Section 3.12: Signs and to repeal all ordinances in conflict herewith. AYES: 5, NO: 0. MOTION PASSED.**

Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) Next Steps

Commissioners reviewed the RRC Empire Snapshot prepared by MEDC community planner, Pablo Majano. The recommended action items need to be addressed to achieve the RRC Essentials designation. Currently, Empire is fully aligned with 26% of the Redevelopment Ready Communities expectations. Members discussed the following items: Master Plan, Public Participation Plan, Concentrated Development, Housing Diversity, Conceptual Review Meetings, Internal Review Process, Recruitment Process, Training Strategies. The full snapshot can be viewed in the meeting ePacket.

Election of Officers

**Motion by Bacon, supported by Collins to elect Schous as Planning Commission Chair. AYES: 5, NO: 0. MOTION PASSED.**

**Motion by Bacon, supported by Ellibee to elect Collins as Planning Commission Vice Chair. AYES: 5, NO: 0. MOTION PASSED.**

**Motion by Collins, supported by Bacon to elect Chase as Planning Commission Treasurer. AYES: 5, NO: 0. MOTION PASSED.**

**Motion by Collins, supported by Bacon to elect Ellibee as Planning Commission Secretary. AYES: 5, NO: 0. MOTION PASSED.**

COMMITTEE REPORTS – Ford reported that an STR Committee meeting will be held on April 9<sup>th</sup>. Bacon reported on the STR Committee and Wastewater Committee, the status of the new village office real estate purchase, stating that Council has been planning/saving for office options since at least 2018.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None.

PLANNING COMMISISON MEMBERS AND CHAIRPERSON COMMENTS – None.

ADJOURNMENT – There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:37 pm.

Alacia Acton, Recording Secretary

*These draft minutes will be considered for approval at the May 7, 2024, Village of Empire Planning Commission meeting.*

DRAFT

## Village of Empire Deputy Clerk

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**From:** Timothy J. Figura <TFigura@mikameyers.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 21, 2024 5:32 PM  
**To:** Sue Palmer  
**Cc:** Derith Smith; Alacia Acton; 'pjschous@yahoo.com'; 'Bob Hall'; Richard M. Wilson  
**Subject:** Zoning Amendments  
**Attachments:** Zoning Ordinance amendment, Signs (03410912-2x9ED46).pdf

Sue,

Please find the attached zoning amendment. The amendment would repeal the Village's police power sign ordinance and would place the same provisions into the zoning ordinance. I have re-reviewed the ordinance, and I have added a purpose section to illustrate the intent of the ordinance.

Best,

**Timothy J. Figura**



**Mika Meyers PLC**

414 Water Street  
PO Box 537  
Manistee, MI 49660  
Tel: 231-723-8333  
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VILLAGE OF EMPIRE  
LEELANAU COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Minutes of a regular meeting of the Village Council of the Village of Empire, Leelanau County, Michigan, held at the Empire Township Hall located at 10088 W. Front St., Empire, Michigan, on the \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024, at \_\_\_\_\_ p.m. Local Time.

PRESENT: \_\_\_\_\_

ABSENT: \_\_\_\_\_

The following ordinance was offered by \_\_\_\_\_ and supported by \_\_\_\_\_.

ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE VILLAGE OF EMPIRE BY ADDING SECTION 3.12: SIGNS AND TO REPEAL ALL ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT HEREWITH

**Part I.** The Village of Empire ordains: Article 3 of the Zoning Ordinance of the Village of Empire is hereby amended by the amendment of Section 3.12, which shall be read in its entirety as follows:

**Section 3.12 – Signs**

**1. Purpose.**

- a) This section is intended to regulate the size, number, location, and manner of display of signs in the Village to carry out the following purposes:
  - (i) To protect and further the health, safety and welfare of Village residents, property owners, and travelers caused by signs which obstruct vision, distract, disorient, or confuse drivers or pedestrians, or are improperly secured or constructed.
  - (ii) To conserve and enhance community character by reducing visual clutter which can arise due to excessive or unregulated signage, temporary signage, or other signage which is improperly located or unreasonably distracting.
  - (iii) To promote uniformity in the size, number and placement of signs within each zoning district.
  - (iv) To promote the economic viability of commercial areas by minimizing visual clutter and allowing for proper placement of signs to safely direct motorists to their destination; to allow businesses the opportunity to use

the signage permitted to them to advertise their businesses and to direct customers to their businesses.

- (v) To promote the use of signs that are safe, aesthetically pleasing, compatible with their surroundings, and legible in the circumstances in which they are seen.
- (vi) To carry out these purposes in a manner that is content neutral by regulating the size, number, location and other physical aspects of signs without respect to their content, except as the content may relate to the location of the sign for regulatory purposes or conveys information essential for safety purposes.
- (vii) To respect the rights recognized by the courts for residents to use signage on their premises to express their viewpoints or personal messages, with additional opportunities during limited seasons, by regulating the number, size and location of signs, without reference to the message the occupant of the premises may choose to convey.
- (viii) To recognize that signs with messages which change automatically by electronic or mechanical means by their nature pose a greater risk of motorist distraction due to the changing nature of the sign, message, or graphics, as opposed to a static sign, the distinction being similar to the distinction between a painting and a television set. It is recognized, however, that in limited sizes and locations, such signs serve a valuable purpose of providing up to date information, requiring a balancing of the impact of such signs with their benefits.
- (ix) To recognize that directional signage and traffic control signs such as street signs, stop signs, signs within commercial or institutional sites which direct traffic or identify facilities for the disabled, address signs or which identify historic or public service sites, serve an important function of promoting traffic safety by avoiding driver confusion and promoting the safe flow of traffic, and allowing ready location in emergency situations. In addition, it is recognized that such signs are often placed by governmental entities that are not subject to local zoning.
- (x) To require that signs of significant size and substantial construction obtain a permit to assure compliance with the ordinance and codes, while recognizing the administrative burden of requiring permits for certain small and non-permanent signs outweighs the benefit of prior permitting.

The regulations contained in this chapter involve a determination by the Village that the rights of sign owners to convey a message must be balanced against the public right to be free of

signs which unreasonably compete for attention, distract drivers and pedestrians, or produce confusion. It is recognized that sign regulations must afford businesses a reasonable opportunity to communicate. It is also determined, however, that oversized, projecting, distracting, clutter, or crowded signs can lead to pedestrian and driver confusion, disorientation, and distraction and endanger the public health, safety and welfare. To lessen such adverse consequences, reasonable limitations and restrictions are appropriate with respect to the placement, construction, size, type, and design of signs in location of buildings and uses and the availability of other means of communication.

2. **Definitions.** As used in this Ordinance, the following words shall have the meanings:

- a) **Accessory Sign:** A sign that is not for a principal use of the property on which it is located, including warning signs.
- b) **Animated Sign:** A sign that uses movement, spins, or changes of lighting to depict action or create a special effect or scene.
- c) **Awning/Canopy Sign:** A sign that is part of or attached to the surface of an awning/canopy.
- d) **Banner:** A sign printed or displayed upon cloth or other flexible material, excepting national, state, or municipal flags.
- e) **Changeable Copy Sign:** A sign or a portion of a sign with characters, letters, or illustrations that can be changed or rearranged without altering the face or the surface of the sign. A sign on which the message changes more than eight (8) times per day shall be considered an animated sign and not a changeable copy sign for purposes of this Ordinance.
- f) **Corner Lot Sign:** Signs placed facing both public streets on corner lots.
- g) **Display Area:** The entire space used for lettering and symbols on one vertical plane.
- h) **Flag Sign:** Any cloth or bunting attached to a staff.
- i) **Flashing Lighted Sign:** An illuminated sign that intermittently and repeatedly flashes on and off, and/or creates an illusion of a flow of lights.
- j) **Freestanding or Ground Sign:** A sign supported by permanent uprights or braces in the ground.



- k) Identification Sign:** A sign that identifies a building or street address.
- l) Illuminated Sign:** A sign rendered visible during the period from sunset to sunrise by means of an internal light source or by means of an exterior light source directed on to, or in the vicinity of the sign.
- m) Marquee Sign:** A permanent overhang or roof-like structure projecting beyond a building or extending along and projecting beyond the wall of the buildings and are generally designed and constructed to provide protection from the weather.
- n) Marquee Surface Sign:** A sign attached to or made part of a marquee.
- o) Multi-Business Plaza:** Those structures that contain more than one enterprise, leased or owned, ~~under separate ownership~~, and may have a common entrance or multiple entrances.
- p) Nonconforming Sign:** Any existing sign on the effective date of this Ordinance, as amended, which does not at that time comply with all the provisions of this Ordinance and any amendments.
- q) Portable Sign/Trailer Sign/Sandwich Board:** A sign that is designed to be transported, including but not limited to signs:
- With a chassis or support constructed without wheels.
  - Designed to be transported by trailer or wheels.
  - Converted A- or T-frame signs.
  - Attached temporarily to ground, a structure, or other signs.
  - Mounted on the exterior of a vehicle and visible from the public right-of-way.
  - Menu and sandwich boards.
  - Searchlight stand; and
  - Hot-air or gas-filled balloons or umbrellas.
- r) Projecting Sign:** A sign attached to or erected on the exterior wall or surface of a building which projects twelve (12) inches or more from the wall or surface.
- s) Roof Sign:** A sign mounted on or over the roof of a building and is wholly or partially supported by the building. Mansard roof signage shall be considered wall signage for the purpose of calculating allowable footage.

- t) **Sign Enforcement Officer (SEO):** The Zoning Administrator or such other person as shall be designated by the Village Council.
- u) **Sign:** A structure, including its base, foundation and erection supports upon which is displayed any words, letters, figures, emblems, symbols, designs, or trademarks by which any message or image is afforded public visibility from out of doors. **The following are not signs: (1) flags; (2) architectural features; (3) tombstones and other memorial markers.**
- v) **Surface Sign:** The portion of a sign excluding its base, foundation and erection supports on which message is displayed.
- w) **Temporary Sign:** A display sign, banner, flag, or device intended for a limited period of display.
- x) **Wall Sign:** A sign that is affixed to or placed flat against the exterior wall or surface of a building or structure, with no portion projecting more than twelve (12) inches from the building or structure wall.

3. **Permit Application.** The following application requirements shall apply to all signs requiring a permit pursuant to the provisions of this Ordinance.

- a) Application for a permit, on a form supplied by the Village of Empire, shall be required to erect, alter, or reconstruct a sign, unless otherwise noted. The completed application, together with all plans and specifications, shall be submitted to the SEO. Approval shall not be given until the application complies with all provisions of this Ordinance. If the application is approved, a permit to erect, alter relocate, or post the sign shall be issued.
- b) A non-refundable permit fee shall be submitted with the application. Fees for sign permits shall be established, from time to time, by resolution of the Village Council and shall be remitted to the Village.
- c) The application shall contain or have attached the following:
  - i) Name, address, and telephone number of owner, where the sign is to be erected and the owner of the sign.
  - ii) Location of building, structure, or lot where the sign is to be attached or erected.
  - iii) Position of the sign in relation to nearby buildings or structures.
  - iv) A sketch or scale drawing with the dimensions, specifications of the display area, method of construction, lighting and if applicable, method of attachment to the building or ground.

- v) Name of person, firm, or corporation erecting the sign.
  - vi) Any Leelanau County construction permit required and issued for the sign.
  - vii) Other details the SEO shall require establishing conformance with this Ordinance.
- d) Issuance of a sign permit in no way indicates any responsibility by the Village of Empire for structural adequacy of a sign or the right to construct the sign.
  - e) A sign permit shall be null and void if the sign has not been installed within ninety (90) business days from the date of approval. An extension of ninety (90) business days may be approved by the SEO.
  - f) Public service and non-profit agencies must apply for a permit, but the fee may be waived by the SEO.
  - g) In addition to the limitations stated in Sections 5, 9 and 10, the following conditions shall apply to all signs in any use zoning district:
    - i) Except for the signs authorized without a sign permit pursuant to Section 6, no sign except nonilluminated identification sign shall be erected or altered until approved by the SEO or authorized by the Village of Empire Planning Commission as part of an approved site plan. After approval, the required sign permit shall be issued by the SEO.

**4. General Provisions.** The following regulations shall apply to all signs:

- a) Signs must be constructed of durable materials, maintained in good condition, and shall not be allowed to become dilapidated.
- b) When a business is abandoned, the sign must be removed within thirty (30) business days. A business shall be considered abandoned if determined by the Zoning Administrator to have been suspended or halted for a continuous period of one (1) year.

**5. Signs Not Requiring a Sign Permit.** The following signs may be placed in any zoning district without a sign permit, provided such signs comply with all applicable federal or state law or regulation and are located to not cause a nuisance or safety hazard:

- a) Four (4) non-illuminated signs per property not to exceed six (6) square feet each of sign surface.

- b) Signs erected or approved by the state, county, or village agencies when necessary to give proper directions or to safeguard the public.
- c) Accessory signs erected by any organization, person, firm, or corporation that is needed to warn the public of dangerous conditions and unusual hazards including but not limited to road hazards, high voltage, fire danger explosives, and severe visibility.
- d) Signs posted near property boundaries, provided the sign surface does not exceed the maximum size of one (1) square foot.
- e) Signs marking a historically significant place, building or area when sanctioned by a notional, state, township, village, or local historical organization provided the sign surface does not exceed the maximum allowed size of sixteen (16) square feet or the maximum size allowed in the zoning district whichever is less.
- f) Signs required by federal or state agencies in connection with federal or state grant programs that have been approved in conjunction with a valid site plan or land use permit.
- g) Temporary signs may be removed by the Village after fifteen (15) business days following abandonment or obsolescence as determined by the SEO.

**6. Prohibited Signs.** The following signs are prohibited:

- a) A sign not expressly permitted is prohibited.
- b) Signs imitating warning signals are prohibited. No sign shall display intermittent lights resembling the flashing lights customarily used in traffic signals or in police, fire, ambulance, or rescue vehicles.
- c) Revolving, moving, animated, mechanical, electronic simulated motion, and flashing signs are prohibited, except for rotating/revolving barbershop poles.
- d) Signs within a village street or highway right-of-way are prohibited. No signs (except those established and maintained by the village, township, county, state or federal governments) are to be located, projected onto, or located overhead within a public right-of-way or dedicated public easement, unless the sign has been issued a permit by the agency having jurisdiction over that right-of-way.
- e) Signs higher than eight (8) feet, measured from ground level are prohibited, except for projecting signs and signs fully attached to the face of a building.

- f) A sign which is part of a canopy or an awning.
- g) Stake or wire signs, other than those allowed in Section 6: Signs Not Requiring a Sign Permit.
- h) Bench Signs.
- i) Mansard roof signs shall be considered as wall signage.

7. **Alteration or re-establishment of nonconforming signs.** Any existing sign which, on the effective date of this Ordinance, does not at that time comply with all provisions of this Ordinance and any amendments shall not be changed to another type of sign which is not in compliance with this Ordinance.

9. **Signs Allowed in Zoning Districts.**

a) **Residential (R), Mixed Residential (MR), and Village Residential (VR) Districts**

Only signs not requiring a permit shall be allowed.

b) **Commercial-Residential (CR) and Light Industrial (LI) Districts**

Any sign not requiring a permit, and approved signs in accordance with Section 10.

c) **Recreation/Conservation (RC) District**

Any sign not requiring a permit. Also, for nature areas consisting of over thirty (30) acres in the R/C District, may have on the property not more than two (2) identifying signs, each not to exceed twelve (12) square feet and not more than eight (8) feet in height. One (1) thirty-two (32) foot kiosk is also allowed with a height limitation of eight (8) feet.

d) **Planned Unit Developments (PUD)**

Any sign not requiring a permit. Commercial uses within a PUD, shall be allowed approved signs in accordance with Section 10.

10. **Permitted Sign Types, Allowable Dimensions and Specific Requirements.**

- a) **Sign size limits based on sign type.** If a sign is a double-faced sign, only one side shall be used in calculating compliance with the total allowable square footage.
- b) **Corner Lots.** Signs may be placed facing both public streets on corner lots within the Gateway Corridor (GC) and Front Street Corridor (FSC), Light Industrial (LI) District,

and Planned Unit Development (PUD) Districts. All other requirements of this Ordinance must be met.

Sign Type	Max Sign Surface Area	Other Regulations
Either freestanding or marquee sign (or other)	24 square feet	Number of freestanding signs shall not exceed 1 sign / 100-foot lot in the Gateway Corridor or Front Street district. Maximum height allowed is 8 feet.
Identification sign	4 square feet	
Illuminated sign	24 square feet	Signs may be illuminated only during the hours of operation by a direct light source. Light source shall be shielded and downward directed. No direct rays or glare from the light sources shall be visible from a public right-of-way or from an abutting property.
Projecting sign	20 square feet	Maximum projection allowed is 5 feet from a building; not to extend over a public sidewalk, street, or alley; shall not exceed to height of a building's roof line; and with a maximum height of 15 feet.
Portable sign	2 feet wide by 4 feet high. Signs on wheels 4 feet high by 8 feet high	If intended to direct attention to a specific event, may be displayed for up to 14 days prior, and must be removed within 3 days after the event.
Banner sign	24 square feet	May be displayed 2 weeks prior to an event and removed within 3 days following an event.
Wall sign	32 square feet	1 sign / building. If multiple businesses are within a building, they shall share the total 32 square feet.
Alley sign	4 square feet	1 sign / street façade. If multiple businesses are within a building, they shall share the total 4 square feet.
Multiple business / plaza entrance sign	48 square feet	All businesses with a common structure will share a common entrance sign.
Individual businesses within a multiple business building	1 square foot / lineal feet building length	The total lineal street frontage divided by the number of business units within a building, not to exceed 12 square feet / business. Signs shall comply with all other provisions of this Ordinance.

**11. Administration; Annual Inspection; Enforcement; Sanctions.** The SEO, or designee shall administer and enforce the provisions of this Ordinance. The SEO shall inspect signs on a yearly basis. In the case of a sign that poses an immediate danger to the public health or safety, the Village or its employee may remove the sign immediately and without notice. Neither the Village nor any of its employees shall be held liable for any damage of the sign or building of the sing or building when a sign is removed under this Ordinance.

**Part II: Repealer**

Sigs – Ordinance #142 of the Village of Empire Code of Ordinances is hereby repealed.

**Part III: Severability**

The various parts, sections and clauses of this Ordinance are hereby declared to be severable. Should any part, clause, sentence, paragraph, or section of this Ordinance be found invalid or unconstitutional for any reason by any court of competent jurisdiction, any such decision shall not affect the validity of the remainder of this Ordinance.

**Part IV: Savings Clause**

All proceedings pending and rights and liabilities existing, acquired or incurred at the time this Ordinance takes effect are saved and may be consummated according to the law in force when they were commenced.

**Part V: Effective Date**

The provisions of this Ordinance are ordered to take effect thirty (30) days after publication (as the full text or as a summary thereof) in a newspaper of general circulation in the Village of Empire.

**Part VI: Adoption**

This Ordinance was duly adopted by the Village of Empire Council at its regular meeting called and held on the \_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024.

**Part VII: Publication**

The Village Clerk shall cause this Ordinance or summary of this Ordinance to be published in a newspaper of general circulation within Village of Empire within thirty (30) days after adoption.

AYES:           Members: \_\_\_\_\_

NAYS:           Members: \_\_\_\_\_

ORDINANCE DECLARED ADOPTED.



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Sue Palmer, President  
Village of Empire

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Derith Smith, Clerk  
Village of Empire

STATE OF MICHIGAN     )

) ss.

COUNTY OF SAGINAW    )

I, the undersigned, the duly qualified and acting Clerk of the Village of Empire, Leelanau County, Michigan (the "Village"), do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and copy of an ordinance adopted by the Village Council at a regular meeting on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024, the original of which is on file in my office. Public notice of said meeting was given pursuant to and in compliance with Act No. 267, Public Acts of Michigan, 1976, as amended, including in the case of a special or rescheduled meeting, notice by posting at least eighteen (18) hours prior to the time set for the meeting.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereto affixed my official signature on this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024.

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Derith Smith, Clerk  
Village of Empire

# Response to Village of Empire Master Plan Update Request for Proposals



Prepared By:



**Place Strategies**  
Building Community Together

Point of Contact: Brad Lonberger  
1129 Woodmere Ave, Suite K5  
Traverse City, MI 49686  
817.269.1863  
brad@placestrategies.com

Prepared For:



Exhibit A: Authorization Page

Village of Empire Planning Commission

Please submit this completed form with your proposal.

Firm Name: Place Strategies, Inc.  
Address: 1129 Woodmere Ave, Suite K5, Traverse City MI 49686  
Phone: 817-269-1863 Website: www.placestrategies.com

Representative Authorized to sign the offer and contract:

Name: Brad Lonberger  
Title: Principal  
Phone: 817-269-1863 Email: brad@placestrategies.com  
Address: 1129 Woodmere Ave, Suite K5, Traverse City MI 49686

Authorized Point of Contact/Project Team Lead:

Name: Brad Lonberger  
Title: Principal  
Phone: 817-269-1863 Email: brad@placestrategies.com  
Address: 1129 Woodmere Ave, Suite K5, Traverse City MI 49686

I certify that I am authorized to execute and submit this proposal on behalf of the Firm listed above; that all of the RFP instructions and rules, exhibits, addenda, explanations, evaluation criteria, submittal requirements, terms and conditions and any other information provided by the Village of Empire Planning Commission has been reviewed, understood and complied with; and that all the information in this submission is true, correct, and in compliance with the terms of the RFP.

I hereby state that I have the authority to submit this proposal with will become a binding contract if accepted by the Village of Empire Planning commission. I further state that I have not communicated with nor otherwise colluded with any other person or Firm, nor have I made any agreement with nor offered or accepted anything of value from an Official or employee of the Village of Empire Planning Commission that would tend to destroy or hinder free competition.

  
Authorized Representative Signature

May 1, 2024  
Date

Alacia Acton, Deputy Clerk  
Planning Commission Recording Secretary  
Village of Empire  
11518 S. LaCore Street  
Empire, Michigan 49630-0253

**RE: Village of Empire Master Plan Update Proposal**

Dear Ms. Acton and Selection Committee,

Our small but nimble team of expert planners and engagement consultants presents this proposal for updating the Village of Empire Master Plan. Through work experience, cultural ties, and thought leadership, we understand the Village of Empire and similar rural communities.

As we will outline in this response, our team can meet your desired scope of work, but we provide alternative approaches to arriving at the same outcomes. This is to ensure that our team has the information and the time to complete the deliverables to provide the master plan update and not just the engagement portion of the initiative. Meeting your timeline requires more than a one-person team, so higher fee caps are recommended to complete the level of work within your timeframe.

We also understand that you are undergoing Redevelopment Ready Certification, a Waste Management Study, Assets Mapping, and a Village Site Feasibility Analysis. These all add to the "big picture" of goals, strategies, and objectives that will influence the master plan update. *With this team, the work you've already done will not go to waste.*

Our Place Strategies Team includes Brad Lonberger, who has been working with you on the Village Site Feasibility Analysis and brings extensive experience from nationwide and various communities like Empire. His strategic mindset focuses on real-time solutions and the ability to respond proactively to reach decisions and guide the process effectively. Iván Gonzalez will also support Brad on various mapping, community surveys, and engagement strategies for this initiative.

In addition, Brad will be joined by Elise Crafts of Placecraft, a Michigan native and seasoned community listener who brings statewide experience in guiding conversations and planning processes. Her background in rural experiences, cultural diversity, and expanding the core values of the communities she works with will support the Village and its strategies for community togetherness.

This response includes the desired scope of work and provides additional service options that the Village may find helpful. However, there is no obligation to go beyond the scope as outlined. We like to show that our services are broad, but our focus is on what our clients need to be successful, not just useless exercises.

We appreciate this opportunity to respond to your request and are available to answer any questions you may have as you make your selection.

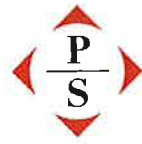
Deepest regards,



Brad Lonberger, AIA, AICP, CNU-A  
Principal and Founder, Place Strategies Inc.



## Firm Background



**Place Strategies**  
Building Community Together

**Office Location:** 1129 Woodmere Ave, #K5, Traverse City, MI 49686

Headquarters: 209 W 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, #180, Fort Worth, TX 76102

Services: Town Planning, Code Writing, Municipal Administration, Historic Tax Credits, Architecture, Master Planning, Comprehensive Codes, Housing Design, Adaptive Reuse, Community Engagement

Recent Relevant Work:

**City of Justin Comprehensive Plan** – A new comprehensive (master) plan for the community in an area struggling with the mutually strategic goals of managing growth and preserving their culture. This process included a Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Mobility Plan, Future Land Use Plan, and the overarching Comprehensive Plan elements. *This document is provided as a recent work sample.*

**City of Aledo Downtown Master Plan**—A landlocked community focusing on revitalizing its Downtown and managing commuter and rail traffic through its central business district. This plan focused on creating nodes of development opportunities and envisioning the potential for redeveloping vacant parcels while creating walkable, mixed-use opportunities in the city.

**City of Catoosa Comprehensive Plan**—Catoosa is a historic city with deep roots in Native Cherokee and Creek Tribal Lands. This comprehensive plan focused on the City's need to attract new businesses and provide infill opportunities to enhance its frontage on Historic Route 66 while presenting short-term implementation strategies to build on the historic roadway's imminent centennial.

**City of Mayflower Downtown Revitalization Plan** – a revitalization strategy for a 400-person community hit by a tornado in 2014. The plan centered around walkable redevelopment and enticing development into the town center rather than continuing to build on the natural, undeveloped lands surrounding the town.



Office Location: **414 E Eighth Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Traverse City, MI 49684**

Services: Community Engagement/Listening, Land Use Planning, Action Planning, Meeting Facilitation, Project Management, Grant Management

Recent Relevant Work:

**City of Traverse City Master Land Use Plan, Community Engagement**—Placecraft is leading community engagement activities to inform the 2023 update to the City of Traverse City Master Land Use Plan, including designing/implementing multiple community surveys, open house events, pop-up events, and public communications in English, Spanish, and Anishinaabek.

**Blair Township Trail Meeting Facilitation**—Placecraft facilitated a meeting in 2023 between Blair Township officials, TART Trails staff, state/federal officials (MDOT, EGLE, rail), and township residents to discuss the feasibility of a potential nonmotorized rail/trail conversion on a publicly owned parcel in Blair Township.

**Village of Elk Rapids Downtown Development Authority Strategic Plan**—Placecraft supported the Elk Rapids Downtown Development Authority with developing their first strategic plan in 10+ years, focusing on achievable and impactful action steps for the all-volunteer DDA board and part-time Village staff member assigned to support the DDA.

**Weldon Township Master Land Use Plan Community Engagement**—Placecraft led community engagement to inform the 2021 update to the Weldon Township Master Land Use Plan, including a community questionnaire, open house event, and draft plan presentation event. The resulting plan presented a vision for the Township that emphasized preserving rural/natural character and focusing new development near the Village of Thompsonville. The plan identified a short list of actionable and impactful next steps for the all-volunteer Township Planning Commission and part-time Zoning Administrator to implement, including an audit of the zoning ordinance and recommended text amendments to codify the Master Plan vision.

**East Bay Township Master Land Use Plan Community Engagement**—Placecraft led a series of focus groups to inform the 2021 update to the East Bay Township Master Plan. Each event focused on a particular topic of significance to the Township: natural environment, transportation, housing, and economic development.



# Brad Lonberger

## Architect + Place Maker

### IN BRIEF

Brad is an architect, urban designer, and policy mechanic focused on creating inviting and walkable spaces for real communities. His work has paved the way for top-rated walkable neighborhoods and downtowns that are cherished by residents and visitors alike. Brad believes in the authenticity of a community being the driving force behind attracting tourism and employment in today's experience economy.

### PRO SKILLS

AUTOCAD	<div style="width: 100%; height: 10px; background-color: #0056b3;"></div>
ARCMAP	<div style="width: 100%; height: 10px; background-color: #0056b3;"></div>
ADOBE SUITE	<div style="width: 100%; height: 10px; background-color: #0056b3;"></div>
REVIT	<div style="width: 100%; height: 10px; background-color: #0056b3;"></div>
DRAWING	<div style="width: 100%; height: 10px; background-color: #0056b3;"></div>

### CERTIFICATIONS

**AICP**  
 American Institute of Certified Planners  
 #33169

**AIA**  
 American Institute of Architects #38021631  
 Michigan Registered Architect #1301072183  
 National Council of Architectural Registration  
 Board (NCARB) Certification #100928

**CNU-A**  
 Congress for the New Urbanism Accredited  
 March 2013

### CONTACT

- Traverse City, Michigan
- 817.269.1863

### EXPERIENCE

#### **DOWNTOWN PLAN + IMPLEMENTATION** IN 2020-2021 CITY OF ALEDO

The Aledo Downtown Plan was an extension of a three-day experience district workshop. This plan identified and promoted catalytic projects within the Downtown core and provided the necessary vision for upcoming redevelopment projects. Place Strategies is continuing on implementing new zoning, parks and trails plan and acting as City's representation in discussions with master plan developments.

#### **CORINTH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN** IN 2019-2020 CITY OF CORINTH

The Corinth Comprehensive Plan showcased a TOD and City Center implementation plan and strategic actions coupled with a master plan for the study area that would prep Corinth for a successful mobility hub and infill development.

#### **OAK STREET REVITALIZATION** IN 2010-2017 CITY OF ROANOKE

Master planning, zoning support and project review on behalf of the City of Roanoke to inform, recommend and advance appropriate downtown development programs along Oak Street and in the Civic Mixed-Use expansion of Oak Street.

#### **DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN + CODE** IN 2014-2016 CITY OF ROGERS, ARKANSAS

Master planning, form-based code and implementation strategies to revitalize and strengthen the community support of Downtown Rogers.

### EDUCATION

#### **EXECUTIVE MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION** IN 2019-2020

QUANTIC SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY  
 General Business Administration

#### **MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE** IN 2006-2007 UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

Suburb & Town Design/Urban Design/Planning

#### **BACHELOR OF ARCHITECTURE** IN 2001-2006 UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

Professional Degree

### REFERENCES

**HELEN-EVE BEADLE**  
 CITY OF CORINTH  
 phone: 469.360.6618  
 email: heleneve40@gmail.com

**KYLE CLIFTON**  
 CITY OF CLAREMORE  
 phone: 918.341.2066  
 email: kclifton@claremorecity.com



# Iván G. Gonzalez

## Urban Planner + Implementor

### IN BRIEF

Iván is a planner, preservationist, and urban designer that has over seven years of experience in designing, facilitating, and implementing planning and development projects from the public and private sector. Iván is passionate about restoring urban downtown cores based on how they functioned originally. Iván has been successful in working with community groups in both his municipal planning positions with regard to land use, transportation, and development.

### PRO SKILLS

ARCMAP	<div style="width: 100%; height: 10px; background-color: #0056b3;"></div>
AUTOCAD	<div style="width: 80%; height: 10px; background-color: #0056b3;"></div>
ADOBE SUITE	<div style="width: 90%; height: 10px; background-color: #0056b3;"></div>
HTML/CSS	<div style="width: 95%; height: 10px; background-color: #0056b3;"></div>
SKETCHUP	<div style="width: 98%; height: 10px; background-color: #0056b3;"></div>

### CERTIFICATIONS

#### AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF CERTIFIED PLANNERS

Certified since June 6, 2019  
Certification #31581

#### FACILITATION TRAINING

Attended Technology of Participation facilitation training in Chicago, Illinois in 2018.

### CONTACT

- Fort Worth, Texas
- 806.317.0206

### EXPERIENCE

#### UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE IN 2021-2023

##### CITY OF ALEDO

The Aledo Downtown Plan was an extension of a three-day experience district workshop. This plan identified and promoted catalytic projects within the Downtown core and provided the necessary vision for upcoming redevelopment projects. Place Strategies is continuing on implementing new zoning, parks and trails plan and acting as City's representation in discussions with master plan developments.

#### CORINTH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IN 2019-2020

##### CITY OF CORINTH

The Corinth Comprehensive Plan showcased a TOD and City Center implementation plan and strategic actions coupled with a master plan for the study area that would prep Corinth for a successful mobility hub and infill development.

#### LUBBOCK PLANNING ADMINISTRATION IN 2018-2020

##### CITY OF LUBBOCK

Administration of zoning, platting, and building review for the City of Lubbock and all development within the core including the Downtown District, special PUD districts, and historic districts.

#### CEDAR RAPIDS PLANNING ADMINISTRATION IN 2015-2018

##### CITY OF CEDAR RAPIDS

Administration of long range planning initiatives, preservation and neighborhood programs, and housing initiatives within the core of Cedar Rapids including the Downtown District, NewBo District, and two historic districts.

### EDUCATION

#### BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN 2007-2011

##### IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Graduated with a major in Community and Regional Planning from the College of Design.

#### BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN 2007-2011

##### IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Graduated with a major in International Studies from the Collage of Human Sciences.

### REFERENCES

**BRYAN ISHAM**  
CITY OF LUBBOCK

**JENNIFER PRATT**  
CITY OF CEDAR RAPIDS





# ELISE CRAFTS

PLACECRAFT // [www.placecraftmi.com](http://www.placecraftmi.com)

*Move at the speed of trust. Focus on critical connections more than critical mass – build the resilience by building the relationships.*

- adrienne maree brown

## ABOUT ELISE

Professionally certified community planner experienced in facilitating community listening processes and coordinating teams to inform and implement equitable and actionable plans and projects. Based in Traverse City, MI.

## CONTACT

elise@placecraftmi.com  
(231) 313-7116

## EDUCATION

**Western Michigan University**  
2011-2013  
MA in Geography

**Aquinas College**  
2007-2010  
BA in Geography,  
Sociology, Writing

## SKILLS

Community Belonging  
Relationship Building  
Public Engagement  
Active Listening  
Project Management  
Meeting Facilitation  
Communications  
Team Management

## WORK EXPERIENCE

### Owner and Principal, Placecraft LLC

Jan 2018—Present

- Leverage 10 years of experience in community engagement, land use planning, real estate development, and community development to assist non-profit and municipal clients, with community listening processes, comprehensive planning, and project implementation.
- Facilitate community listening processes that foster a sense of belonging for all participants, no matter their age, ability, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, income, education level, language, and/or lived experience.
- Incorporate community feedback into meaningful action plans with clearly delineated roles, timelines, and budgets.
- Coordinate plan and project implementation and lead teams to deliver collaborative and equitable outcomes.

### Community Planner, Networks Northwest

Feb 2016—Jan 2018

- Provided planning technical assistance to municipalities and non-profits in 10-county region.
- Assessed data to identify existing conditions and opportunities.
- Facilitated community conversations regarding stakeholders' needs and priorities.
- Incorporated community feedback into strategic and action plans with clearly delineated roles, timelines, and budgets.

### Planner, Mansfield Land Use Consultants

Aug 2015—Feb 2016

- Coordinated land use approval applications, site plans, and written descriptions and represented private and real estate developer clients during public land use approval process.
- Researched land use regulations and private and public incentives to inform real estate development proposals.

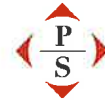
### Planning/Zoning Administrator, Peninsula Township

Aug 2013—Aug 2015

- Built relationships with residents, contractors, developers, and others to ensure compliance with zoning regulations.
- Developed policy recommendations based on land use goals, existing land use activity, and best practices.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Director, Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation
- Director, Commonplace Coworking
- Director, Garden Theatre



Elise Crafts

### **Biography**

Elise is a professionally certified (AICP) community planner with a graduate degree in geography from Western Michigan University and an undergraduate degree in geography, sociology, and writing from Aquinas College.

Raised in the rural town of Paw Paw, Michigan, only a few hours drive from Chicago, Elise developed an early appreciation for what makes places unique, welcoming, or challenging, and how this impacts the living beings within them. These elements of place—including sidewalks, open spaces, schools, homes, businesses, parks, sunsets—**and, most importantly, the people who experience them**—are what she cares about most and the foundation of Elise's work.

When not working with communities of all sizes across the Midwest, Elise enjoys interior design, meeting all dogs (and their owners), and walking everywhere much as possible. She is grateful to give back to her current place/community of Traverse City, Michigan as a director on the boards of Commonplace Coworking, the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation, and Friends of the Garden Theatre.

### **References**

Arthur Mullen, AICP (Former Client)

Wade Trim

(313) 300-6440

[amullen@wadetrim.com](mailto:amullen@wadetrim.com)

John Matthews (Current Client)

Village of Elk Rapids

(231) 264-9274

[jmatthews@elkrapids.org](mailto:jmatthews@elkrapids.org)

Sharon Oriel (Former Client)

Director, Sleeping Bear Gateways Council, Housing North

[shoriel@aol.com](mailto:shoriel@aol.com)

## Disclosures

Potential Conflicts of Interest: Place Strategies, Inc. and Placecraft have no known conflicts of interest. If any are discovered, our team will notify the Village of Empire as soon as possible.

## Work Effort

The following work effort outlines the scope of work the Village of Empire provided, with some alterations. These changes were provided to ensure the workflow of creating the materials for meetings, ensuring the maximum potential engagement for the community, and ensuring ample time and interactions with the community questionnaire occur. We are always amenable to adjustments, but we believe this outline will be more impactful and allow for an efficient process for the team to complete the work effectively.

### Part One: May (Post-Contract Signing) – 10-16 hours

1. Coordination Call with Village point of contact
  - a. Secure existing working files, plans, data, and studies.
  - b. Receive contact information for Project Management and essential contacts at the Village of Empire.
  - c. Coordinate the group serving as the Steering Committee for this initiative.
  - d. Schedule a Kick-off meeting with the Steering Committee, create an Agenda, and outline the Engagement Process.
2. Review the existing master plan and survey responses to get up to speed.
3. Coordinate objectives and input from regional stakeholders such as, but not limited to Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Housing North, Leelanau County, Empire Township, and the Asset Mapping Task Force.

### Part Two: June – 20-28 hours

1. Meeting #1 - Kick-Off Meeting, which will include:
  - a. Introduction of the team, deliverables, scope of work
  - b. Goals and Data Validation
    - i. Initial core values exercise
    - ii. Discussion on how core values shape strategy
    - iii. Review past goals and determine their validity today.
  - c. Present an outline of the community questionnaire.
    - i. Structure of questions
    - ii. Size of survey
    - iii. Mode of delivery (digital and written)
2. Assemble Community Questionnaire
3. Assemble updated demographic data
4. Meeting #2 – Questionnaire and Data Review
  - a. Introduce updated census data and projections
  - b. Review the Community Questionnaire and make any necessary changes
  - c. Present timeline for Questionnaire release and closing
  - d. Coordinate methods for receiving responses
5. Release the Community Questionnaire

### Part Three: July – 10-16 hours

1. Host Public Open House
  - a. Provide various stations based on topic areas of focus
  - b. Allow for community participation through various channels: writing, talking, reading, and questionnaire
  - c. The focus is on education, feedback, and as many written responses as possible.
2. Close the Community Questionnaire within a week of the public open house.
3. Compile data and responses to the public open house and community questionnaire

### Part Four: August – 20-28 hours

1. Meeting #3 – Review Materials
  - a. Review feedback from the Community Questionnaire and Public Open House
  - b. Review current recommendations for goals and objectives
  - c. Discuss opportunities for updates to the recommendations
2. Assemble plan updates as a draft for public review
3. Deliver plan updates in advance of Meeting #4 for review by the Steering Committee

### Part 5: September – 10-16 hours

1. Host a Public Input Session before the final meeting with recommendations for the plan updates
2. Meeting #4 – Review plan and public input
  - a. Present the plan elements and recommendations draft
  - b. Provide feedback on public input earlier in the evening
  - c. Discuss changes to the recommendations as drafted and confirm which changes to be made
3. Update final plan updates
4. Deliver final plan updates in the preferred working format(s) to the Village of Empire for a public hearing process.

### Additional Services (provided hourly)

- Additional updates to the master plan document after final delivery
- Additional meetings for public engagement or Steering Committee
- Attendance at any public hearings for master plan update

## Proposed Fee

<b>Part One:</b> Project Kick-off and Research	10-16 hours
<b>Part Two:</b> Core Values and Engagement Outlining	20-28 hours
<b>Part Three:</b> Public Open House	10-16 hours
<b>Part Four:</b> Draft Assembly	20-28 hours
<b>Part Five:</b> Public Input and Final Draft	10-16 hours
Total	70-104 hours
Average Hourly Rate	\$200 per hour
Estimated Labor Fee	\$14,000 - \$20,800
<b>Recommended Not-to-Exceed Amount*</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>

*\*This includes all expenses (mileage, travel per diem, printed materials for public meetings, etc.) This does not include any airfare or other travel expenses, which this team will not need.*

### Impact of Additions to Scope

This amount is different due to the inclusion of several items required in the production of the requested materials (i.e., the time required for writing, editing, proofing, additional internal team meetings, and supporting research).

In addition, our team has included an additional public open house, which would allow an interim public input stage for validation of the goals and core values of the community.

### Additions to the published scope

- Part one: Preparation and coordination, stakeholder organization input to process, researching current and past planning efforts
- Part three: Public open house to support written/digital survey
- Part four: Assembling the plan updates and allowing for time to review updates, proofreading plan, quality control review time
- Part five: Updating the final plan and delivery to the Planning Commission