

**EMPIRE VILLAGE PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING AND REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 06, 2024**

The Empire Village Planning Commission held a special meeting on Thursday, February 06, 2024, in the Empire Township Hall.

Schous opened the hearing at 7:00 PM.

ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT PUBLIC HEARING

Attorney Marc McKellar, representing TC Vision, LLC (Cherry Republic), summarized the zoning ordinance text amendment proposal of the Light Industrial District.

Karen Baja inquired if the purpose of the amendment could be accomplished by going to the Zoning Board of Appeals. McKellar responded that use variances are not allowed. Baja asked if the Planning Commission will be sending the amendment to the Village Attorney.

Tim Barr asked about the type of expansion and if there will be increased parking and cars. McKellar responded the expansion will require more employees and operations, consisting mostly of more storage and refrigeration.

Chair Schous reminded the audience that the hearing is specifically for consideration of a text amendment and there will be a chance to review the expansion project during site plan review.

Laurel Voran asked if the request was denied, where would the expansion occur, and inquired about the empty land on the Cherry Republic parcel to the north. McKellar stated that TC Vision, LLC would illuminate the self-storage and build in its place.

John Collins inquired about creating a new zoning district instead of changing the current text in the Light Industrial District. McKellar's concern was the length of time it would take to amend the zoning map, create new language for an entirely new district and the requirement to hold more public hearings.

Laurel Voran expressed concerns about the additional activity, sounds, and smells packed into a small space and the implications that will have on the surrounding residential neighbors.

Schous closed the public hearing at 7:26 PM.

ROLL CALL –Bacon, Chase, Collins, Deering, Schous, and Ford present. Ellibee was excused. Zoning Administrator Hall was not in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - Motion by Deering, supported by Chase to recommend approving the minutes of regular meeting 11/01/2023 and special meeting 12/13/2023. AYES: 6, NO: 0. MOTION PASSED.

TREASURER'S REPORT – Chase summarized the revenue and expenditure report for period ending 01/31/2024. 27% of the budget has been used to-date.

ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO THE AGENDA – Schous added Master Plan Update as an agenda item.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST – None.

PUBLIC COMMENT & CORRESPONDENCE – Correspondence from Zoning Administrator Hall was read aloud that included recommendations on how to proceed with the text amendment request, which included County Planning review, legal review, and Council adoption.

Karen Baja commented on adding a dog park to the master plan.

CHERRY REPUBLIC ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT APPLICATION

The light industrial district currently consists of two parcels and are both owned by TC Vision, LLC, (Cherry Republic 041-719-024-10 and Manitou Self Storage 041-719-024-05). In preparation for a Cherry Republic expansion, TC Vision, LLC is planning to combine these two parcels to solve issues encountered with setbacks, parking, drainage easements, etc. The text amendment proposal will allow for a mix of uses permitted by right or special use permit and will eliminate the need to tear down the self-storage units.

Proposed:

Add to Section 4.06.2 permitted uses:

6. Combination of uses, subject to Section 4.06.5.

Add a new Section 4.06.5:

4.06.5 Combination of uses: In the review of site plans, and/or special land, use permit applications for uses involving combinations of uses otherwise permitted by right or by special land use approval in the LI district planning commission shall find that all such uses be mutually compatible with one another and the all-special use standards applicable to any such component use in a combined land use shall be met. Recognizing the potential unnecessary duplication of parking requirement for each use, the planning commission may reduce the overall parking requirement by up to 25% if they are satisfied with the sufficiency of the proposal.

Planning commissioners asked about the purpose of the discretionary parking language requirements in Section 1.06.5. McKellar stated that language is subjective, but it made sense to put it in this part of the Ordinance. It gives the authority of the PC to reduce parking on a parcel that has multiple uses upon site plan review.

Motion by Chase, supported by Deering to approve the proposed text amendment adding to Section 4.06.2 permitted uses: 6. Combination of uses, subject to section 4.06.5. and adding a new section 4.06.5: Combination of uses as written. Roll Call Vote: AYES: Bacon, Deering, Chase, Collins, Ford, Schous. NO: 0. MOTION PASSED.

Motion by Bacon, support by Ford to forward the text amendment to Leelanau County Planning and to Mika Meyers for legal review. AYES: 6, NO: 0. MOTION PASSED.

ADOPTION OF 2024-25 FY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING SCHEDULE

Acton noted that due to a scheduling conflict in the Township Hall, the November meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, November 7, 2024. **Motion by Chase, support by Ford to approve the FY 2024-25 as presented. AYES: 6, NO: 0. MOTION PASSED.**

MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Bacon distributed MSU Extension Checklist #11 For Adoption of an Amendment to a Plan. Step #2 requires giving notice to other governmental agencies that the Village intends to prepare a plan amendment. Schous referred to comments made by the MEDC community planner, that in order to align with RRC expectations the following item needs to be addressed:

“While the plan identifies goals, objectives and actions, there is no timeline or responsible parties. An action-oriented plan that has timelines and responsible parties helps drive the implementation of the plan. This can be created using a separate document and reviewed annually.” **Recommendation: Add timelines and responsible parties to the implementation section of the plan.”**

Bacon and Schous both noted that while the existing plan can be used as a guide for 15- 20 years out and put in a “Plan Book”, the new plan should be streamlined and list goals that are more achievable.

Motion by Bacon, supported by Ford, that the Planning Commission begin the process of updating the Master Plan by giving notice to other governmental agencies that the Village intends to prepare an update to the plan. AYES: 6, NO: 0. MOTION PASSED.

Bacon noted that Renovare is available to provide planning services to update data pieces, create surveys, and help with any public input sessions. Bacon is recommending that they request to increase the professional services to \$10,000 next fiscal year.

Motion by Chase, supported by Deering, directing Bacon to request a budget increase from \$6k to 10k for the next fiscal year. AYES: 6, NO: 0. MOTION PASSED.

Commissioners held a discussion about drafting an RFP for planning services. Bacon noted that she has a previous RFP that could be utilized. A list of planners to send the RFP out to, should be created.

COMMITTEE REPORTS – Chase gave an update on the Short-Term Rental Ordinance Committee. Bacon reported that Council is working on the budget for next year. Bacon also spoke about the Asset Based Community Development Group that recently gave a presentation to the Village Council.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None.

PLANNING COMMISISON MEMBERS AND CHAIRPERSON COMMENTS – Schous commented that the New Neighborhood may be amending their PUD in the future.

ADJOURNMENT – There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:07 PM.

Alacia Acton, Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved at the March 5, 2024, Village of Empire Planning Commission meeting.