

**EMPIRE VILLAGE PLANNING COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2023**

The Empire Village Planning Commission held a special meeting on Wednesday, December 13, 2023, in the Empire Township Hall.

Schous opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

ROLL CALL –Bacon, Chase, Collins, Deering, Ellibee, Schous, and Ford present.

ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Schous added presentation by Cherry Republic for a zoning ordinance amendment request to the Light Industrial District. Bacon combined agenda items for the recommendation of 2 commissioners to the Short-term Rental Registration/Ordinance Development Committee and a zoning ordinance amendment to allow for short-term rentals in residential districts.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST – None.

PUBLIC COMMENT & CORRESPONDENCE – None.

RENOVARE PRESENTATION

Renovare team members Jill Ferrari, Shannon Morgan, Jennifer Acosta, and Brad Lonberger introduced themselves as they have been hired to do a site feasibility analysis for a new village office. Conceptual design, site planning, financing and grant opportunities, and public input will be key parts of the analysis. The scope of the project will allow for data gathering, site visits, surveys and interviews and attending meetings to present their findings to the community. Examples of new municipal centers from other communities were presented. Renovare answered general questions from commissioners.

CHERRY REPUBLIC ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT REQUEST PRESENTATION

Attorney Marc McKellar, representing TC Vision, LLC (Cherry Republic), summarized the zoning ordinance text amendment proposal of the light industrial district. (See attached letter dated December 12, 2023). A pre-application meeting was held with the Village, but a formal application for the text amendment has not been received. The proposal will allow for a mix of uses permitted by right or special use permit once parcels 041-719-024-10 and 041-719-024-05 (Cherry Republic facility and self-storage) are combined. In preparation of an expansion, Cherry Republic would like to combine of these lots to help solve issues encountered with setbacks, parking and drainage easements, etc. Currently the ZO allows for only one permitted use on a single parcel. The proposed changes of Zoning Ordinance Section 4.06 would allow for more than one use and are in bold:

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.”

McKellar explained this concept was also proposed and adopted in East Bay Township for another of his clients.

Members discussed that a Cherry Republic expansion of 10-15k sq. ft. will increase parking, employees, and traffic. Chase noted that extending Fisher Street to M-22 would significantly reduce truck traffic on LaCore Road and would benefit Cherry Republic and the Village.

McKellar stated that a formal text amendment application will be sent to the Village. Once it is received by the Village, it may be determined that the planning commission hold a special meeting in January.

RECREATION PLAN

5-year recreation plan update requirements and grant compliance information from MDNR grant coordinator, Alex Galloway, was reviewed. The DNR publication “Guidelines for the Development of Community Parks and Recreation Plans” details the steps that must be followed to apply for specific MDNR grants. Steps taken must also be documented and submitted in the DNR Migrants portal. **Motion by Deering, support by Ellibee to incorporate the recreation plan data and significant project updates that Bacon submitted for consideration into the 2024 5-year update. AYES: 7, NO: 0. MOTION PASSED.**

SHORT-TERM RENTALS

Motion by Bacon, support by Ellibee to recommend to Village Council that Carey Ford and Bob Chase be appointed to the Short-term Rental Registration/Ordinance Development Committee. AYES: 7, NO: 0. MOTION PASSED.

Bacon submitted zoning ordinance amendment language to be considered that would allow for short-term rentals in the village. Bacon shared that in a communication with Zoning Administrator Bob Hall, he indicated that short-term rentals are not currently permitted in Empire, as they are not listed as a possible ‘use’, either by right or special use permit in the zoning ordinance. Bacon reiterated that “nothing in the suggested revision is intended to limit the Village’s authority to regulate Long-term Rentals, Seasonal Rentals or Short-Term Rentals, either in this Zoning Ordinance or a separate ordinance duly adopted by the Village. This would be to allow our long-standing practice to continue.”

Bacon requests that her recommendations be brought forward by the newly formed Short-term Rental Registration/Ordinance Development Committee.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None.

PLANNING COMMISSISON MEMBERS AND CHAIRPERSON COMMENTS – None

ADJOURNMENT – There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:12 pm.

Alacia Acton, Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved at the February 6, 2024, Village of Empire Planning Commission meeting.