

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GARFIELD
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
January 22, 2025**

Call Meeting to Order: Chair DeGood called the January 22, 2025 Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:00pm at the Garfield Township Hall.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all in attendance.

Roll Call of Commission Members:

Present: Molly Agostinelli, Joe Robertson, John Racine, Cara Eule, Chris DeGood, and Robert Fudge

Absent and Excused: Pat Cline

Staff Present: Planning Director John Sych and Deputy Planning Director Steve Hannon

1. Public Comment (7:02)

None

2. Review and Approval of the Agenda – Conflict of Interest (7:02)

Chair DeGood asked to add item d to Other Business – Training Opportunities for Planning Commissioners.

Agostinelli moved and Fudge seconded to approve the agenda as amended.

Yeas: Agostinelli, Fudge, Eule, Racine, Robertson, DeGood

Nays: None

3. Minutes (7:03)

a. January 8, 2024 Regular Meeting

Commissioners asked to clarify where the word “amplified” should be inserted into the December 11, 2024 minutes. Condition #6 to the Two Brothers Dog Park item will now read as follows: *Amplified music and other amplified sound shall be prohibited in the outdoor dog park area.*

Fudge moved and Robertson seconded to approve the January 8, 2024 minutes as amended noting the change to condition #6 in the December 11, 2024 minutes which was not clear in the January 8, 2025 minutes.

Yeas: Fudge, Robertson, Agostinelli, Racine, Eule, DeGood

Nays: None

4. Correspondence (7:04)

DeGood noted he received an issue of the Michigan Township Association magazine on his desk as Chair.

5. Reports (7:05)

Township Board Report

Agostinelli stated that the water situation between Garfield Township and the City of Traverse City was discussed at length. The City is holding approval of several projects at this time until the water contract between the Township and the City can be reviewed and clarified.

Planning Commissioners

i. Zoning Board of Appeals

Fudge said that a request was denied for a side setback at the January meeting.

ii. Parks and Recreation Commission

DeGood reported that there will be a meeting next month

iii. Joint Planning Commission

Racine stated that a meeting will be held later in the month.

Staff Report

Staff had no report

6. Unfinished Business

None

7. New Business

a. PD 2025-5 – 2024 Planning Commission Annual Report (7:08)

The 2024 Charter Township of Garfield Planning Commission Annual Report was prepared pursuant to the requirements of Section 19(2) of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. Hannon reviewed the 2024 Annual Report and planning activities with commissioners.

Robertson moved and Agostinelli seconded THAT the 2024 Planning Commission Annual Report, as provided in Planning Department Report 2025-5, BE APPROVED and FORWARDED to the Township Board.

*Yeas: Robertson, Agostinelli, Fudge, Racine, Eule, DeGood
Nays: None*

b. PD 2025-6 – Zoning Ordinance Amendments on “Substantial Construction” Definition, Signs, and Lighting - Discussion (7:17)

Sych provided updates on these three areas recently discussed by the Planning Commission. Staff offered a definition for substantial construction as follows:

“Substantial construction” means the site work must progress beyond grading and completion of structural foundations, and construction must be occurring above grade to be considered substantial work.

Planning Commissioners discussed the definition and asked questions. Extensions were discussed in light of changing conditions in the economy or other unforeseeable conditions. This definition would apply to all projects going forward. Commissioners pointed out that the wording of “has not commenced” could be problematic. Staff will tweak the language and bring the definition back to commissioners and possibly add an illustration.

Site plans, including administrative site plans approved by Staff or site development plans approved by the Planning Commission, are only valid for 12 months. An extension of time can be granted in writing by the approval authority on the basis that the owner or applicant maintains a good faith intention to proceed with construction. Staff recommends applying the existing extension provisions in Section 423.K for a special use permit approved by Planning Commission to a site development plan approved by the Planning Commission or an administrative site plan approved by Staff. The Zoning Ordinance would have to be amended to accommodate this extension provision. Commissioners and staff discussed the proposal briefly and agreed that staff would bring back language for approval.

Concerns were raised about lighting at some of the newer developments in the township. Staff identified several items for discussion in Section 517 of the zoning ordinance such as neon lighting, a lighting plan requirement, lighting at outdoor recreational facilities, heights of lighting poles, possibly providing illustrations and definitions as well as updating format and tables. Staff stated that any changes regarding the lighting ordinance needed to be enforceable and further language pertaining to lighting would be brought back to commissioners.

Attorneys are still reviewing the signage portion of the ordinance.

c. PD 2025-7 – Housing TIF Potential Policies – Discussion (8:16)

Sych talked about Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act since it was passed in 1996. In 2023, the state legislature amended the act to utilize the act for housing development. With this new legislation, property is no longer required to be a traditional brownfield site if it is going to be used for housing. The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) can approve state TIF for new housing development for residents earning up to 120% of area median income. Now commonly called Housing Tax Increment Financing or HTIF, this approach utilizes the capture of new tax revenue generated through increased taxable value

of the housing development. Staff identified a need for policy regarding these Housing Tax Increment Financing projects. Staff also identified several criteria that could be included in the policy such as focusing on areas served by municipal water and sewer, and focusing on starter homes. Public improvements could also be done in conjunction with housing developments. While this is a funding mechanism to support housing, its application has impact on land use patterns in the Township. Therefore, input on how a HTIF is applied warrants Planning Commission discussion. Commissioners asked questions and discussed the proposed policy.

8. **Public Comment (8:39)**

None

9. **Other Business**

a. **Zoning Atlas – Review of *Michigan Planner* Article (8:39)**

Hannon stated that an interactive Zoning Atlas is something that the Township should collaborate on to show key housing-related aspects of zoning code. Such an atlas shows where certain types of housing can be built in an area. He added that this is zoning on a regional scale and it could uncover opportunities and challenges for housing.

b. **Review of Officers (8:54)**

Staff said that according to the Planning Enabling Act, Agostinelli is considered an ex-officio member since she is a representative from the Township Board. This may pose a problem since she was elected as Vice Chair and ex-officio members may not chair meetings. Planning Commissioners discussed the issue and decided to let staff place *Election of a Vice Chair* on the next agenda.

c. **Amendment to Planning Commission Meeting Schedule – Joint Meeting with Township Board on February 26, 2025 at 6:00pm. (9:02)**

Agostinelli moved and Robertson seconded to amend the Planning Commission Meeting schedule to reflect that the February 26, 2025 Joint Meeting will begin at 6:00pm.

Yeas: Agostinelli, Robertson, Fudge, Eule, Racine, DeGood

Nays: None

d. **Training Opportunities for Planning Commissioners (9:02)**

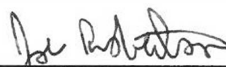
Sych would like to have training opportunities available for Planning Commissioners. He added that the Michigan Association of Planning has some recorded trainings which could be shown at study sessions. He cited several useful upcoming trainings and said that other municipalities could be invited to participate.

10. Items for Next Agenda – February 12, 2025 (9:11)

- a. Tower North Wireless Communication Facility SUP – Public Hearing Follow-Up
- b. Copper Ridge PUD Major Amendment – Findings of Fact Follow-up
- c. Ollie's Bargain Outlet – CP- Site Plan Review

11. Adjournment

Fudge moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:12pm.



Joe Robertson, Secretary
Garfield Township Planning
Commission
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Traverse City, MI 49684