

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GARFIELD
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
April 23, 2025**

Call Meeting to Order: Chair DeGood called the April 23, 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, Pat Cline, John Racine, Cara Eule, Chris DeGood, and Robert Fudge

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

1. Public Comment (7:01)

None

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

DeGood declared a conflict with agenda item 7a.

Racine moved and Robertson seconded to approve the agenda as presented.

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

Nays: None

3. Minutes – April 9, 2025 (7:01)

Fudge moved and Agostinelli seconded to approve the April 9, 2025 minutes as presented.

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

Nays: None

4. Correspondence (7:02)

None

5. Reports (7:02)

Township Board Report

Agostinelli stated the Grand Traverse County Prosperity Plan will be rethought with more input from township supervisors and Garfield Township will have a new website. Sych added that the new website will be ADA compliant and is under the new URL of garfieldmi.gov.

Planning Commissioners**i. Zoning Board of Appeals**

Fudge stated that there was no meeting.

ii. Parks and Recreation Commission

DeGood stated that there was no meeting, but a special meeting will be held on May 5 to discuss the Commons Natural Area trail.

iii. Joint Planning Commission

Racine stated the Joint Planning Commission received updates on the water pressure at Historic Barns Park as well as the Commons Natural Area trail activity. The Grand Traverse Commons Master Plan will be on future agendas.

Staff Report**i. PD-2025-25 – Planning Department Monthly Report – April 2025 (7:05)**

Sych indicated Staff are organizing a meeting of stakeholders to discuss issues and ideas for the Logans Landing area. The meeting will include the Grand Traverse County Road Commission, several Grand Traverse County departments, TART Trails, and others.

6. Unfinished Business**a. PD 2025-31 – Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments on “Substantial Construction” Definition and Lighting – Discussion (7:06)**

The Planning Commission has been discussing the definition of the term “substantial construction” which is in three primary areas in the Zoning Ordinance. Staff offered the following definition: *Substantial Construction: Substantial construction means the site work must progress beyond grading and completion of structural foundations, and construction must be occurring above grade.* Section 423 J. and K. *Period of Effect* and *Expiration of Approval* and Section 425 L. are proposed to be altered to delete the word “commenced” and change it to “occurred.” Section 424.K was also proposed to be altered. Commissioners discussed the proposed changes. Staff will incorporate the Commissioners’ input and prepare the language for introduction as a proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment.

Staff also presented the proposed changes to Section 517 of the Zoning Ordinance regarding lighting. Proposed changes include accounting for indoor artificial lighting and exceptions as they relate to lighting flags and neon lighting as part of a sign. The lighting requirements for recreational facilities are proposed to be covered via the special use permit process. Sections on accent lighting and interior lighting visible from the outdoors were both proposed as additions. The new language would prohibit any accent lighting unless it is shielded as part of a site plan. Lighting visible

from the outdoors would also require shielding. A new Section 517.G is proposed to require lighting plans for review and approval as part of the site plan review process. The Planning Commission discussed “spillover illumination from neighboring properties.” Staff will review the wording of that portion in preparing the language for an introduction as a proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment.

7. New Business

a. PD 2025-32 – East Bay Township Beach District Plan – Review (7:33)

In their letter dated February 25, 2025, the East Bay Charter Township Planning Commission provided notice that they are preparing to amend the 2023 Master Plan to add a subplan for the East Bay Beach District – the U.S. 31 N corridor that runs through East Bay Township. The public comment period for this subplan is currently open and concludes on April 28, 2025. Following the public comment period, the East Bay Township Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the subplan on May 6, 2025. Sych showed a video to Commissioners in which John Iacoangeli, a consultant on the East Bay Beach District Plan, outlines the project and gives an overview of the implementation of the proposed Beach District.

Commissioners were favorable to the idea of a Corridor Improvement Authority as outlined by Iacoangeli in the video and thought such a tool may be useful for improvement to the South Airport Road corridor. The Planning Commission asked questions about the span of the Corridor Improvement Authority in East Bay Township and the area it covered. Commissioners had no specific comments on the East Bay Township Beach District plan as presented and Staff will respond to the East Bay Township staff noting this.

b. PD 2025-33 – 2025 Planning Commission Priorities/Master Plan Implementation Matrix (8:28)

The Township Board adopted an updated Township Master Plan at their regular meeting on July 9, 2024. This updated Master Plan included an Implementation Matrix listing the Goals and Objectives of the Master Plan as well as the responsible parties for implementing each objective. The Master Plan indicates that the Planning Commission will determine the priority goals and objectives each year via the Annual Work Plan, using the Implementation Matrix as a guide. Staff offered potential priorities being a corridor plan for South Airport Road and creation of Mixed-Use Zoning Districts. Commissioners commented on the matrix and added that housing and transportation were important topics. Staff stated that these changes will be incremental. Staff will move the suggestions of housing and transportation forward for future study sessions.

8. Public Comment (8:48)

Haden Northrup commented on corridor planning.

9. **Other Business (8:50)**


Racine will chair the meeting on May 28 in DeGood's absence.

10. **Items for Next Agenda – May 14, 2025 (8:50)**

- a. Scussel Property A-Agricultural Rezoning – Public Hearing
- b. Gauthier Site Multi-Family Development Special Use Permit – Findings of Fact
- c. Oak Hollow Planned Unit Development Major Amendment – Introduction
- d. High Tops Cherryland Center – C-P Planned Shopping Center Site Plan Review

11. **Adjournment**

Fudge moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:53pm.



Joe Robertson, Secretary
Garfield Township Planning
Commission
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