

**Highland Township Planning Commission
Record of the 1425th Meeting
Highland Township Auditorium
February 6, 2025**

Roll Call:

Grant Charlick
Kevin Curtis, Chairman
Chris Heyn
Mike O'Leary
Roscoe Smith
Scott Temple
Russ Tierney (absent)
Guy York
Michael Zeolla

Also Present:

Elizabeth J. Corwin, Planning Director
Megan Masson-Minnock, Carlisle-Wortman Associates

Visitors: 30

Chairman Kevin Curtis called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Agenda Item #1: Call to the Public: Opportunity for anyone to bring forward issues of interest or concern for Planning Commission consideration. Each participant limited to 3 minutes.

No public comment was offered.

Agenda Item #2: Highland Township Master Plan presentation by Megan Masson-Minnock, Principal Planner with Carlisle-Wortman Associates followed by opportunity for public comment.

Ms. Masson-Minnock of Carlisle-Wortman Associates presented a brief summary of the Master Plan process. She explained how the proposed updated Master Plan varies from the previously approved plan, which was published in 1999, as well as the various micro-area analyses that had modified the plan to date. The map had last been updated in 2013 to compile the results of micro-area analyses to date, including incorporation of the Highland Station Master Plan. She also explained that the plan had been distributed to neighboring communities, utilities and other agencies with permission of the Board of Trustees, and that some suggestions from County agency reviews were incorporated into the plan.

Ms. Masson-Minnock explained the public input efforts of the Planning Commission during preparation of the plan, which included a resident opinion survey, that was mailed out to approximately one quarter of households in 2022. This survey affirmed the findings of previous survey efforts, demonstrating the community commitment to preservation of a rural atmosphere and preference to support local business. Ms. Masson-Minnock also described the visioning session held in 2023, where 63 residents joined the Planning Commission in discussing issues relative to residential development, business, natural features, and transportation/utilities.

The updated plan upholds long accepted planning policies of the Township, and more clearly defines goals and objectives, creating an actionable plan. Map changes are offered to acknowledge existing development patterns, and to simplify map designations. The former classification of Agricultural and Rural Residential is divided into two categories to better support agricultural activities, especially in respect to eligibility for state and federal grants and programs and to provide areas of the Township where property owners choose large lot living to protect natural resources.

Ms. Corwin noted that this plan does not alter the existing zoning scheme, but is a blueprint to move forward to the future.

Mr. Curtis opened the public hearing at 6:55 p.m.

Mr. Jay Pistana, resident of Highland Valley Subdivision asked about the designation of consent judgment at Hickory Ridge, north of M-59. Mr. Charlick explained that the decisions about redevelopment of the mining parcels had been established through the courts. The number and size of residential lots that is set in a judgment, that can only be modified through the courts. Ms. Corwin explained that the rules that apply to those parcels differ from those in our zoning ordinance such as lot sizes and setbacks, and that these properties do not neatly fit into the land use designations. Other obligations of both parties are set in the judgment as well.

Mr. Anthony Raimondo, 2148 North Hickory Ridge Road, asked about the multiple micro-area analyses for the Hickory Ridge area in west Highland Township. Ms. Masson-Minnock explained that the current micro-area plans are still valid and incorporated by reference into the 2025 Master Plan update.

Mr. Curtis closed the public hearing at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Charlick noted that the updated plan continues to respect the wishes of the public and does not include significant changes in policies. He noted that one emerging issue is for large scale utility use of solar and wind energy. He noted one goal is to develop a solar utility ordinance.

Mr. Charlick noted further that there was considerable discussion about office land use, and its viability in the future, given the movement toward online commerce. He explained that one policy had been added to allow consideration of single-family attached housing such as duplexes or townhouses as a viable transition between commercial and single-family residential uses, either through conversion of vacant space or reclassification of office/low intensity commercial parcels.

Agenda Item #3: To consider adoption of Resolution PC25-01, Adoption of 2024 Master Plan Update.

Ms. Masson-Minnock explained that Michigan Planning Enabling Act establishes that the responsibility for developing the Master Plan lies with the Planning Commission. The Board of Trustees may, by resolution, reserve the right to approve the plan. But since the Highland Township Board has not adopted such a resolution, the Planning Commission will be the adopting body.

Mr. Charlick moved to adopt Resolution PC25-01, Adoption of the Master Plan as presented. Mr. Curtis supported the motion.

Mr. York commended staff and consultants for providing the clear language of the resolution, which documents all the efforts expended in developing the plan and seeking community input in accordance with state law.

Roll call vote: Charlick -yes; O'Leary – yes; Zeolla – yes; Heyn – yes; Curtis – yes; York - yes; Smith - yes.

Agenda Item #4: Minutes: January 23, 2025

Mr. Charlick offered a motion to approve the minutes of January 23, 2025, as presented. Mr. York supported the motion which was approved by voice vote (all ayes, no nays)

Adjournment:

Mr. Charlick moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 p.m. Mr. York supported the motion, which was unanimously approved by voice vote. (all ayes, no nays)

Respectfully submitted,

A. Roscoe Smith, Secretary
ARS/ejc



HIGHLAND CHARTER TOWNSHIP
OAKLAND COUNTY, MICHIGAN
Resolution No. PC25-01

PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION TO ADOPT
MASTERPLAN

WHEREAS, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA) authorizes the Planning Commission to prepare a Master Plan for the use, development and preservation of all lands in the Township; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission prepared a proposed an updated Master Plan and submitted the plan to the Township Board for review and comment; and

WHEREAS, on October 7, 2024, the Highland Township Board received and reviewed the proposed Master Plan prepared by the Planning Commission and authorized distribution of the Master Plan to the Notice Group entities identified in the MPEA; and

WHEREAS, notice was provided to the Notice Group entities as provided in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on February 6, 2025 to consider public comment on the proposed updated Master Plan, and to further review and comment on the updated Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds that the proposed updated Master Plan is desirable and proper and furthers the use, preservation, and development goals and strategies of the Township;

THEREFORE BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. **Adoption of 2025 Master Plan.** The Planning Commission hereby approves and adopts the proposed 2025 Master Plan, including all of the chapters, figures, maps and tables contained therein.

2. **Distribution to Township Board and Notice Group.** Pursuant to MCL 125.3843 the Township Board has not asserted by resolution its right to approve or reject the proposed Master Plan and therefore the approval granted herein is the final step for adoption of the plan as provided in MCL 125.3843 and therefore the plan is effective as of the date of this resolution. In addition, the Planning Commission approves distribution of the adopted amendments to the Township Board and Notice Group.

3. **Findings of Fact.** The Planning Commission has made the foregoing determination based on a review of existing land uses in the Township, a review of the existing Master Plan provisions and maps, input received from the community through surveys, a public visioning session held May 18, 2024, the Township Board and public hearing, and with the assistance of Carlisle-Wortman Associates and Highland Township Planning Department staff, and finds that the updated Master Plan will accurately reflect and implement the Township's goals and strategies for the use, preservation, and development of lands in Highland Township.

4. **Effective Date.** The Master Plan shall be effective as of the date of adoption of this resolution.

The foregoing resolution offered by Planning Commissioner Charlick

Support offered by Planning Commissioner Curtis.

Upon roll call vote the following voted::

"Aye": :Heyn, O'Leary, Smith, Temple, York, Zeolla, Charlick, Curtis

"Nay": none:

The Chair declared the resolution adopted.

A. Roscoe Smith 2-6-25
A. Roscoe Smith, Secretary