



CASS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

January 24, 2024

Chair Dan Stutsman called the meeting to order promptly at 4:00 pm. Roll was taken and in addition to Stutsman, Richard Palmisano, Jayne Bailey, Roseann Marchetti, Sam Barrera, Dianna McGrew, Char Hiemstra and Tyler Augst were present. David Kring entered at 4:10 pm and Annie File was absent. Guests were Sandy Seanor and Dawn Bolock representing Ontwa Township and Emily Palacios, representing Brian Shier of Eddies Market, and Brian Shier.

Approval of Agenda-McGrew moved to approve the agenda and after a 2nd by Palmisano the agenda was approved.

Approval of Minutes-Augst moved to approve the November 2023 minutes and after a 2nd by Bailey, they November 2023 minutes were approved.

Public Comment-There was no public comment.

NEW BUSINESS

- a) Marcellus Updated Zoning Ordinance-Palmisano spoke in favor of the request, saying it was a brilliant document. He had three questions: 1. To determine the height of the building, do you look at the exterior wall, and do you include the eaves? 2. The diagram shows the lot line stopping at the sidewalk. Doesn't it go to the center of the street? 3. Enterprise district, what are you trying to do? This part needs more strength. What will you accept? It was agreed to send the questions back to Marcellus.
- b) Eddies Market Place-Sandy Seanor explained the information in the packet that the Planning Commission received. The developer requested a rezone for the two front parcels to commercial and the northern most parcel to multi family. Ms. Seanor explained the southern parcel as commercial is in line with the future land use plan. The northern parcel is single family

residential/Ag. Currently, the Ontwa Planning Commission is undergoing a review of the master plan. The reasons for the no vote can be found A-E in the Ontwa Ordinance book. The Ontwa Township Planning Commission does not have the ability to change the request. There was also a concern for farmland. Fire and ambulance could not handle the extra residences. Discussion followed. The Ontwa Township Planning Commission found the request was inconsistent with the future land use plan. The vote was five no's and three yes's. More discussion followed.

Attorney Emily Palacious spoke and gave some background and mentioned that initially a PUD was sought. The first step would be to have a rezone. The property is not surrounded by AG, there is school property across the street, sports complex next door and a church to the east. It is not in the rural part of the township. A complaint has been about the traffic, and a traffic impact study was done by Abonmarche who relied on current data. MDOT has the final say which could include turn lanes and/or a traffic light. The Ontwa Planning Commission is not bound by the master plan to put MF where the plan says MF should go. The MF in the current master plan is not suitable and Ontwa PC Chair made that point. Shier's property is good for MF. A basic rezone is first. Feb. 12, 2024 public hearing at the Board of Trustees is scheduled. We had consultants at the December meeting. Their report was not complete in the minutes. There is a critical need for housing. The current master plan is not that old. We want the Township to give additional thought to the project.

Ms. Seanor took the floor to follow up on Attorney Palacious' comments. The PC did not ask the developer to initiate. They are in the middle of the update of the master plan. Ms. Seanor further mentioned the studies as well as a conditional rezone. Discussion between Ms. Seanor and Attorney Palacious ensued.

PC member Palmisano asked to speak, and commented this is the worst type of applications and he sees both sides. It is thwart with an exceptional amount of confrontation and he won't pick sides.

More discussion followed and Chair Stutsman called a halt to any further back and forth.

Palmisano made a motion to agree with the Ontwa Township Planning Commission's motion to turn down the conditional zoning request. Bailey offered a 2nd and a roll call was requested: Stutsman-abstain because as an Ontwa trustee he has to vote at the February 12, 2024 meeting, David Kring abstain because he was late and did not get the material, Bailey-yes, Palmisano-Yes, Marchetti abstain because she is related to the Ontwa Supervisor, Hiemstra-no, Barrera-no, McGrew-no, Augst-yes. Motion failed with a three to three vote-deadlock.

Member Comments-Augst asked if election of officers will be considered since it was the first meeting of the year. The PC had election of officers a while back. It was agreed to go with the current officers.

Next month the PC will talk about the master plan update. Rebecca Harvey introduced herself at the January COW and is willing to meet by Zoom which will help with the cost. Ms. Harvey discussed the proposal from McKenna at that BOC Committee of the Whole and it is on the agenda for the February 1, 2024 regular BOC meeting as part of the consent agreement.

There being no more business before the County Planning Commission, the meeting adjourned. The next meeting will be February 28, 2024 at 4:00 pm in the Kitchen Conference Room.

Roseann Marchetti