The Charter Township of Orion Planning Commission held a regular meeting on Wednesday, February 1, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. at the Orion Township Municipality Complex Board Room, 2323 Joslyn Road, Lake Orion, Michigan 48360.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:
- Don Walker, PC Rep to ZBA
- Don Gross, Vice Chairman
- Kim Urbanowski, BOT Rep to PC
- James Cummins, Commissioner
- Scott Reynolds, Chairman
- Joe St. Henry, Secretary
- Jessica Gingell, Commissioner

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT:
None

1. OPEN MEETING
Chairman Reynolds opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL
As noted above.

CONSULTANTS PRESENT:
- John Enos (Township Planner) of Carlisle Wortman Associates, Inc.
- Mark Landis (Township Engineer) of Orchard, Hiltz, and McCliment, Inc.
- Tammy Girling, Township Planning & Zoning Director

OTHERS PRESENT:
- Dave Nelder
- Alex Nelder

3. MINUTES
A. 1-18-23, Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes
Moved by Secretary St. Henry, seconded by Commissioner Cummins to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

4. AGENDA REVIEW AND APPROVAL
Moved by Vice-Chairman Gross, seconded by Trustee Urbanowski, to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried. (Moving item 8A to 7A)

5. BRIEF PUBLIC COMMENT – NON-AGENDA ITEMS ONLY
None.

6. CONSENT AGENDA
A. 2022 Planning Commission Annual Report
Moved by Vice-Chairman Gross, seconded by Commissioner Gingell, to approve the consent agenda. Motion carried.

7. NEW BUSINESS
A. PC-2019-47, Lavender Ridge Final PUD plan extension, located on a vacant parcel at the southeast corner of Silverbell and Squirrel Roads (Sidwell #09-36-226-001). (Moved from 8A)

Chairman Reynolds asked the applicant to give an overview of the request for the extension.
Mr. Manny Kianicky stated that he was there to represent Moceri and Orion LLC, which is a partnership between the Moceri Company and SR Jacobson Development Corporation. It was formed to own and develop Lavender Ridge.

Mr. Kianicky said that Lavender Ridge is a 160-unit townhome development at the southeast corner of Silverbell and Squirrel Roads. The project received final PUD approval in February 2021. After which engineering plans were prepared and due to some minor changes resulting from multiple engineering reviews, they submitted for an amended PUD approval a few months ago that approval is currently in process and thought close to completion.

Mr. Kianicky stated that they closed on the property in July of 2022, so Lavender Ridge is solely owned by the partnership. In October of 2022, they dedicated a 22.7-acre permanent conservation easement to EGLE. Over the past couple of years, they found that the time it takes to obtain approvals for a new project is essentially doubled compared to what it was before. They assume that is pandemic related. It is not just for this project they are finding this in all of their projects. As of today, the only approval they have is from the Oakland County Road Commission which is kind of ironic because that is usually the slowest permit to get. However, they believe that they are pretty close to getting the remaining approval and permits for the project that is needed to start construction and finalize their development financing. It appears that the approvals for Lavender Ridge were made substantially more difficult because they have a sanitary sewer pump station as part of the project. They originally submitted a pump station design that was typical for Orion Township, very similar to some of the other ones including the one at Pulte’s Bald Mountain Development. Due to changing regulations, they had to hire mechanical and electrical consultants to design a pump station for Lavender Ridge that has a few more bells and whistles. They believe that all the comments have now been addressed and the reviews and they are close to getting that final approval. Once they have pump station approval the Township can submit the sanitary permit which actually that application will go through Oakland County and then onto EGLE for issuance of the permit. He added that the water system design has been approved by the Township and the permit application should be submitted to EGLE by the Township shortly if it hasn’t already. With the water system and the sanitary system approved they hope to get their final engineering approval from the Township very soon.

Mr. Kianicky stated that along with working on the permitting they have been obtaining proposals for the site work for grading, underground utilities, paving, and pinning down construction costs for the actual townhome residences. They need both project approvals and solid building construction budgets to finalize and close on the development loan.

Mr. Kianicky said that their current schedule is to start construction this summer. For reasons for completing final approvals and obtaining construction permits, they wish to respectfully request a one-year extension of their final PUD.

Chairman Reynolds stated that it seemed like they are moving along. He said he would be in favor of granting a request for one additional year.

Moved by Chairman Reynolds, seconded by Trustee Urbanowski, that the Planning Commission approves the Final PUD Plan extension request for PC-2019-47, Lavender Ridge Final PUD plan for an extension of one year, until February 3, 2024. This approval is based on the following findings of facts: that the applicant has been working through engineering and additional approvals required for the project and intends to start the project in the summer of 2023.
Roll call vote was as follows: St. Henry, yes; Walker, yes; Urbanowski, yes; Cummins, yes; Gross, yes; Gingell, yes; Reynolds, yes. Motion carried 7-0

B. PC-22-21, Buckhorn Service Towing & Recovery Site Plan, located at 1258 S. Lapeer Rd., (Sidwell #09-14-201-013). (Moved from 7A)

Chairman asked the applicant to state their name and address for the record.

Mr. Ron Chiesa with R.A. Chiesa Architects. Also present was Mario Chiesa from his office, and Dave and Alex Nelder the owners.

Mr. Chiesa stated that the site is an existing site zoned General Business (GB) 1.9 acres. The site currently has two buildings on it. The front building is Moto-Medic, which is a vehicle repair building, and the back building is Buckhorn services which do towing and wrecker services for adjoining communities, as well as Orion Township. The business has been located on the site for 30 years. His client wishes to add to the Buckhorn Services building, a 5,000-square-foot addition. The building will have all utilities provided for it water, sanitary, and electricity will be piggybacked with the existing building so there is nothing new being brought in. There is a well that currently serves the Buckhorn Services building with an inch-and-a-half waterline so that everything will be dragged for the addition from the existing building. They are not bringing in any new utilities. Their sanitary and water requirements are minimal. They have provided some additional information on that. They have gone through that, and they are way under what is allowed for the services that are currently on site.

Mr. Chiesa said that the proposed building addition will be done with pre-colored block, plain-faced, split-faced, and scored. For the existing building, they are going to raise the elevation up two feet to give it a better aesthetic presence. That will be painted to match the addition because that is all just a regular block at this point. They are trying to make it look nicer and they added some amenities with the awnings and whatnot. There is no lighting in the parking lot area, so everything is on the building itself, and is a down-type light around the site. They provided a photometric plan to meet the requirements of the community for that.

Mr. Chiesa stated that because the buildings are in the back, they are not visible from the front, they added little pockets of landscaping in front of the buildings. Just because of the type of use of this site with wreckers to have additional landscaping in the parking lot would be counterproductive. They stripped areas, they didn’t provide any curbed islands there. They have a utility pole that feeds the building, so they have some bollards that they are proposing around those. They have widened the parking for wrecker circulation, and so the Fire Department can circulate.

Mr. Chiesa said that they are turning the parking lot 90 degrees just to enhance the accessibility of the building, the back, the way that it is currently set up is not conducive for that. One of the things that they have done because they can’t do much landscaping in the back, is enhancing the right-of-way area in the front, even though it is not part of this building addition in the back. They are going to be removing three parking spaces in the right-of-way area. In that right-of-way area that was improved the sidewalk doesn’t line up they are going to drag the sidewalk and align them up. They will provide sidewalks that meet the barrier-free requirements, and they are providing a couple of additional trees in the front and in the right-of-way to meet the ordinance requirements for street frontage. They are also going to provide some decorative plantings around the existing sign, and also add new landscaping in front of the Moto-Medic building just to enhance the presence of the property. They can’t do it in the back because of where it is but they want to do this in the front to give it a better aesthetical view from motorists going up and down the road.
Mr. Chiesa stated that all their utilities are provided by the existing ones, and they have no need for any new utilities.

Mr. Chiesa said that he spoke with the Fire Marshal, and they did revise some of their plans. He didn’t want to confuse the Board because they do have some improvements on the plans. They did do the circulation and tracking for a Firetruck on the site, it works fine. That was one of the comments the Fire Marshal wanted. He wanted to make sure that they had siren access on the gate because the gate is going to be electronic so siren blasts will open the gate so that they can get back there. They are going to post no parking along the masonry wall that is on the north side which currently there is a lot of parking there so that will be changed.

Mr. Chiesa stated that they have a hydrant. When they had a premeeting with everyone the Fire Marshal was good, they have circulation as needed for distance for a hose to cover the building and the addition in the back where the hydrant is located off-site. The Fire Marshal wanted some clearances and things which they could not provide. He spoke with their engineer to see what the possibility was of extending from that hydrant onto their site and putting in a hydrant and he said it is doable, they would work something with the neighbor regarding easements and access. They have provided a new hydrant on their site, and they are going to work with the Fire Marshal regarding that administratively where they can physically bring that so that he is happy with it and it is something that is doable. They did address his concerns and he was happy with what they had done to that point.

Mr. Chiesa said regarding the engineering aspect of the project, again, they have taken the front sidewalk, and they have aligned them. All they did was curved it around their sign and then lined it up with the sidewalk to the north, so that took care of that.

Mr. Chiesa stated that they had no capability of adding some of the trees in the back, per the ordinance, because of the type of use that the site has. He would ask for any relief on any of that, that is necessary. Currently, the site is developed from property line to property line, and there was no intent to modify that. His client is simply looking to add a building addition. There are no trees on the site, so they have not provided a tree survey, there is nothing there, and there is nothing to provide regarding that. Their landscaping issues are based on the limitations of the site, it is just not feasible.

Mr. Chiesa said they are willing to put in an inspection manhole for the sanitary and they have indicated that in the front yard. Engineer Landis had met with their civil engineer out at the site, and they discussed that. They are willing to do that and whatever they need to do to be complacent with the ordinance and standards as much as possible.

Mr. Chiesa stated that one of the things that will be a gray area is how much during the engineering design phase the Orion Township Engineer Standards will require them to bring with stormwater. After that engineering analysis and design, they are going to have to look at whatever is going to have to comply with their standards that may preclude this development from happening and their client will have to evaluate that. That is something that they weren’t expecting, and it is not anything that they were looking to provide, they were just looking for a building addition. If some of those updates are cost-prohibitive then they will have to reevaluate the viability of the whole project.

Mr. Chiesa said some of the other issues with the site, they have no curbs so they will provide some bumper blocks on the south property line where they do abut with the adjoining neighbor’s property. He believed that there were 13-14 parking spaces there. They will provide those they will be pinned in, so they don’t get bumped and moved.
Mr. Chiesa stated that they didn’t locate on the plans a submitted dumpster, their client has a dumpster in the back. They are looking to leave a dumpster in the back behind the existing building. They didn’t propose it to be screened because it is not visible to anyone. If it is necessary to have to provide the standard enclosure which is typically for screening purposes their client is willing to do that, but they didn’t think it was necessary where it is located behind the existing building that is servicing Buckhorn’s operations.

Mr. Chiesa said they were not able to provide any additional landscaping along the property lines because of the existing design of the site.

Mr. Chiesa stated that there are 12-13 parking spaces shy per the ordinance based on what they have designed. Their client needs 20-24 spaces for the site based on his actual employees, that is all he needs, they have 46 provided. They can give them a letter; they can speak about that, if necessary, but they have enough parking for what they do. He pointed out that they do in the back area is basically an impound and a holding area for the police and the communities that are serviced, Oakland, Orion Township, The Village of Orion, Oxford, and Addison. Any vehicles that they have in the back they have to leave them there per what they are told based on legal issues whether there are investigations going on, so that is what is there. It is a holding/impound area and that is the nature of their business with the wreckers. They don’t take cars that are from an accent, and they are brought back and held so it is not vehicle storage for that it is strictly impounded vehicles that the police that is going through with their investigation.

Chairman Reynolds asked Engineer Landis to go through his review of the project.

Engineer Landis read through his review date stamped December 7, 2022.

Chairman Reynolds stated that while they had their previous planning consultant, there were a number of items, some of which were addressed, anywhere from the covered trash enclosure to parking areas not being curbed. Just clarification on lot coverage and proposed squared footage and things, indicating wheel stops which were mentioned. Discussion about irrigation shall be noted, provide landscape screening between the spaces closest to Lapeer Rd. and also landscaping in the rear yard buffer. He wanted to point out that there are a number of Planning Commission waivers that would need to be granted with the plans as they see them in front of them this evening. He added that there was a concern about the Planning consultant about cars in the rear yard being beyond the parcel line was the concern. That was definitely a discussion and thought that they were alluding to the idea of no rear yard buffer, or anything along those lines.

Chairman Reynolds said that there were several reviews including the Fire Marshal. The first review was not approved and there were a number of comments and concerns. There was some correspondence in their packets, and it sounds like after a review of a revised plan which hasn’t been reviewed by everyone but there was the ability to address some of the Fire Marshal’s concerns. Public Services reviewed and had no immediate issue. There was a review from WRC along with a site walk report.

Chairman Reynolds asked if Vice-Chairman Gross had anything to add regarding the site walk while he was there looking at the site since it was existing. Vice-Chairman Gross replied not at this time.

Chairman Reynolds felt that they needed to have a discussion on whether it is an expansion of an existing use. Some clarification on some of the uses that he thought existed on the property
and what is going to remain. Obviously, they have some concerns that there is stuff beyond property lines, there are no buffers, lack of trash enclosures, and there are a number of waivers here that would have to be considered with the plan as submitted.

Chairman Reynolds said he wanted to turn it over to the Planning Commissioners with thoughts on stormwater management. It is an existing use, but they are asking to expand upon it. They can't necessarily expand on an existing nonconformity without bringing things up to speed. Maybe, there is some flexibility here on what they feel should be implemented here. He thought there was also a discussion about the use of the car repair shop and that kind of proposed use but there truly is outdoor storage. He thought that was another caveat here which is to remain that opens up more concern to him and the sake of approval.

Vice-Chairman Gross asked Engineer Landis what way the site drained. He asked if it drained onto any of the adjoining properties. Engineer Landis replied that it looks like it primarily flows south. He added that it is relatively flat, but it appears that the drainage is kind of south-southwest.

Mr. Chiesa said just to clarify there is an existing catch basin at the south property line. The parking lot does drain to the south to that catch basin that is on their plan. He wanted to make clear that they are not opposed to looking at what stormwater is necessary. Their engineer will work with their engineer and hopefully, there is some relief that the two of them can work out that makes the cost, once that is designed when they go for the cost of that it is viable for his client. It is not that they are against doing it, they understand that they have to do something. The fence that is there currently does go beyond the property line and their plan does call for that to be brought in and will bring that back into conformity.

Vice-Chairman Gross asked if this was the fence on the north property line. Mr. Chiesa replied it is on the north and west. Vice-Chairman Gross said the storage that is on the adjoining property would be contained on their own property. Mr. Chiesa replied that the fence line would be corrected.

Vice-Chairman Gross asked if the property to the west consists of a wetland. Mr. Chiesa replied that he believed it was a wooded wetland area that is about 500-ft. from the property line on the west until they get to the residential that is existing. Engineer Landis said it may be part of a subdivision general comment element. Chairman Reynolds said that he knew that the Planner’s review spoke to the buffer as it relates to residential. He didn't look at zoning, but he was fairly certain that was a residentially zoned parcel behind it, yes there is a large wooded buffer. Engineer Landis said due west there is a wetland and then south it looks like there is a wooded wetland area as well.

Mr. Chiesa stated that in the adjoining properties, no one has a buffer on their development to the residential because it is an existing wooded.

Vice-Chairman Gross asked when they bring vehicles in, where are they unloaded at or from, in the rear area or in the parking lot. Mr. David Nelder replied that the vehicles are unloaded in the rear area. Vice-Chairman Gross asked if it would go behind the building and be unloaded. Mr. Nelder replied yes. Vice-Chairman Gross said they don't know how long they would be stored there. Mr. Nelder replied that it varies depending on if they are an impound or an abandoned vehicle. They usually could stay up to 60-90 days. Accident vehicles usually go out as quickly as possible, sometimes the next day. Vice-Chairman Gross asked vehicles that they pick up at an accident site that is not taken to their site it goes to a repair shop or a dealer. Mr. Nelder replied yes. Vice-Chairman Gross stated they are only dealing with impound and accident vehicles. Mr. Nelder replied yes. Vice-Chairman Gross said he assumes that they don't have a
lot of customer traffic that comes to their facility they are dealing primarily with parking for the employees. Mr. Nelder said there are customers at Moto-Medic that come to get their cars repaired, that is in the front building.

Chairman Reynolds asked for them to clarify the rear building, the addition, is for the towing operation. Mr. Nelder replied yes. Chairman Reynolds said the front building will remain as the repair shop. Mr. Nelder replied right. Chairman Reynolds stated when they are referring to parking counts, the number of parking counts is both employees combined, or the number that they are speaking to that they only need 26 parking spaces are both of those combined. Mr. Nelder replied that it was for both.

Chairman Reynolds asked when vehicles are being serviced, where are those stored. Mr. Nelder replied that they are behind Moto-Medic. Most of the cars that come in will go between the two buildings and then be repaired and parked up front. The finished repaired vehicles are parked up front.

Chairman Reynolds said there is an existing trash enclosure on the property now that is currently not screened. Mr. Nelder replied correct.

Chairman Reynolds stated that he likes to support projects that are existing uses and understand that there is the ability to have a little flexibility of not implementing 100% of the ordinance to an addition. He did think that there was a long laundry list here that they needed to at least get addressed. The Fire Marshal’s comments were a big one for him. He was happy to see that there was some opportunity to resolve those concerns. To him, he would like to see some of the landscaping be added at least in some sort of good-faith effort to bring things up to speed. Would he still look favorably on a waiver, potentially, in understanding the existing use of the site. He thought that there needs to be some effort put toward stormwater management in some fashion. He thought even natural bioswales are something that is an intermediary measure without going full bore to the standards. He would be in favor of but at the same time, he wants to make sure that they are not proposing additional buildings on a site that are going to start wreaking havoc on the existing wetlands adjacent and existing property owners adjacent to that. He thought that they needed to be clear and seek the proper approval for the outdoor storage outback. That was not really clarified here, and he thought that needed to be part of this.

Vice-Chairman Gross said he would like to see more landscaping on the site, as well, however, recognizing that the site has been 30 years operating with oil and it is gravel, living landscaping would probably not survive very long. He thought that there had to be some relief given to that, recognizing that it might look nice on a plan but didn’t know if it would last very long. Mr. Chiesa said that is why they proposed to make the improvements in front of the Moto-Medic building because that is what the public will see, the back area is difficult to add landscaping, it won’t live, there are wreckers that are bringing in cars. There are going to be wreckers pulling into the building. Just adding pockets of landscaping additionally will be difficult. The area in the rear if it had landscaping that is going to impact the amount of vehicles, that is what they are using presently and beyond that, they have to bring back into their property line. That would be detrimental to his client’s business if they have to provide landscaping in the back, and no one would see it. He is all for as much landscaping as they can do but that is why they did it voluntarily in the front, that is why they took the three parking spaces that are in the right-of-way out to add more green area to make that front area as attractive as they can.

Vice-Chairman Gross said he was glad to see that they are putting all of their use on their property and taking it away from adjoining properties. The relocation of the chain link fence he thought would assist in controlling that in terms of the overflow onto adjoining properties.
Commissioner Walker said he has had the misfortune of dealing with Buckhorn a number of times over the 34 years that he has been here, and it has always been a great experience. He is all for supporting longtime businesses in the area. He thinks of this, however, as the raising of pigs. They are talking about the 6 or 9 things that sound like is doable, and that they are willing to work with the Township and address most of the issues. They can make the pig look really good; the question is are they going to turn into pork chops at the end? The big question is the runoff of the stormwater. That is his biggest concern, and it sounds like it has been working really well for all of these years. He would like to have some thoughts on that resolution. It sounds like they think that it could be possible, but he would like to see something more concrete before they proceed further down the road. Mr. Chiesa said that is an engineering phase issue, they are only at site plan approval. Their engineer is going to work with the Townships Engineer to see what it is going to take and whatever that design ends up that would be costed out and hopefully it is feasible for his client to do their project. Some of the stormwater management today is very costly and hopefully, there is a compromise that can be reached here.

Chairman Reynolds said that they typically entrust their consultants to understanding and digging deeper into an engineer review. He thought that the issue here is that nothing is proposed right now. It is not a question of does it works well or not at all, there isn’t much of anything. The question would be, have there been measures to improve, as he sees the plan right now there aren’t. Is it indeed a hard no, or is it indeed some intermediary measures, with, they know what their standard is so is there something in the in-between that they are saying they haven’t made it any worse, they have only improved it slightly, but maybe not to the full-bore engineer standards. Mr. Chiesa said the only reason they have nothing at this point was that the existing pavement area is currently going to the existing catch basin, and they have gravel in the rear which obviously excepts the moisture that occurs. The concrete that is put behind the addition matches the concrete that is behind the existing building which is just so that vehicles coming in and out are not dragging in mud or dirt, the level is the same, and they are not bringing stones into the building. That is why that is there, it is not for parking or anything else. At this point and time at site plan approval it is hard to go through and have a defined storm management system because this is not a new site, if it was a new site, he could see that. They do have a note on their plan that their engineer will go through that process and see where that goes. He was stating that because of the fact that meeting the ordinance that they have in place today may make this totally unworkable if he has to lose area for any type of site detention that limits his operation so at that point, he has to make that decision. He would ask the Board to at least get them a conditional site plan approval and then they can meet and provide additional documents for their consultants to approve. He didn’t think they were far off based on the comments that were shared. They are things they can work through. Obviously, there still has to be final approval by all of their consultants. If they don’t like what is proposed there is another measure, there is what he is trying to convey. He would get it if it was an empty site brand new, but his client is just looking to put a building addition on. Currently where the building is, is an office trailer that will go away with the addition so that the office people can be in that building instead of a trailer. It has combinations of small concrete areas and gravel. The rate of the hard surface area is really not changing that much with this building and a 5,000-square-foot addition is not a huge addition.

Commissioner Cummins said that he did agree about the stormwater, he thought that they are going to have to address something. If it is going to be a deal killer, they probably want to know about it earlier than later. He would think they are going to want something and maybe it is underground, and underground detention can be expensive. He thought that it was a necessary evil that they were going to have to cross eventually. The other thing is the fire, they have agreed to work with the Fire Department to deal with this situation that they have so they can be
satisfied. He said the site in the back he thought was concerning that those cars are even on the other properties. To him, it is imperative that they get those cleaned up whether they do this project or not. That stuff needs to be moved off, and they need the chain linked fences put where it should be. He has worked with Moto-Medic and Buckhorn, and they have always done a great job, and are great assets in the community. He would like them to move along and get it done. He was glad that they have moved their landscaping up to the front so that they have it in there and load that site up as much as they can in the front. Mr. Chiesa said they are taking everything out that is in the front and redoing it.

Chairman Reynolds asked about the outdoor storage, and he knew this was reviewed by Giffels Webster. He asked if that was permitted by right or was that a special land use if there is outdoor storage in the back. Planning & Zoning Director Girling said under the use table outdoor storage is only allowed as an accessory use. It refers to section 27.19 which is outdoor storage which gives criteria. When it is a principal use, which this is not, then the criteria are an accessory use. It is allowed as an accessory use but there are specific criteria and one of them is not a special land use. It does give a maximum area for what outdoor storage can be.

Planner Enos said fencing and a variety of other design criteria, for the most part, are in the rear yard. They should visit 27.19 in the ordinance that they are addressing the concerns of the accessory to the overall principal use. He added that the applicant indicated it is what it is, but they can make this better with these discussion items a little bit is something instead of nothing if they are talking about stormwater. When he looks at requested waivers, he usually looks at them as something that they deal with regularly in a PUD where there is a lot of negotiation back and forth. In regard to requesting waivers and certainly what they have in the back, there makes some sense to him. When they are requesting those waivers maybe they give something back to the Township, and he knew he said the front landscaping they proposed but something more robust that if they built this today, they would have a significant landscape buffer in the front yard. He would say ok if the Planning Commission is going to waive this then they are going to put some significant landscaping in the front. It looks like they did do some but revisit that and maybe if they do come back to the Planning Commission.

Chairman Reynolds thought that there were some bigger topics, and he is all for workable, but there is a balance here. They don’t have other proposals in the Township in which they just waive all of their requirements, they typically work with the applicant. He would like to see this postponed and brought back with some of these things narrowed down. He would like to get some clarification on the outdoor storage that they are meeting these items. He would like to see a dumpster enclosure or at least some sort of measure that they are providing some natural bioswales or something that is at least mitigating the stormwater than they are keeping the same and not doing much more than they have.

Secretary St. Henry said that the stormwater issue has to be addressed in some fashion. It would be difficult for him to approve a site plan where there is no stormwater system whatsoever. Come up with something to mitigate that situation. They are adding a 5,000-sq. ft. building there. He was very familiar with the area and had a lot of cars at Moto-Medic. Come up with some sort of compromise with the stormwater issue.

Trustee Urbanowski stated that the stormwater needs to be addressed. She agreed with beefing up the front. She did appreciate and understood why landscaping in the middle would make no sense. Beefing it up in the front would be nice. She doesn’t think she has ever seen a site plan without some kind of stormwater mitigation.

Vice-Chairman Gross said that this is a nonconforming use that does provide a public service to not only our community but some surrounding communities as well. He thought that there was
an attempt to improve the appearance and operation of the facility. With a little more work he thought that they could move forward with this. He felt there were a number of these waivers that could be substantiated. He added that the stormwater issue was the primary one, and a better indication as to how it could be handled, then they would be in a better position moving forward.

Chairman Reynolds stated that since it is an existing use, and yes, they are adding on to an existing building he understood that there are going to be waivers. He thought there was a compromise here, they have done the most they can while maintaining their use, or if they at least have 5-6 feet then this parking count is still maintained, and access is maintained. There has to be a little more here, there is a pretty long laundry list here and he would like to see it revised and submitted.

Mr. Chiesa said his only concern is things like bioswales, the only area they have for that is in the back, and with some of the greenery that is involved that would be difficult. He guesses he would defer to his civil engineer since he is not an engineer to work with Engineer Landis and his team and see what kind of compromise they can come up with, with satisfying some of those issues. Obviously, his client's concerns are he can't come up with a 20-ft. greenbelt adjacent to the property where it is already developed, they are property line to property line. They feel they have made a substantial change to the landscaping in the front, they are taking out approximately 1,200 sq. ft. of pavement and replacing that with grass along the front right-of-way. Adding two trees to meet the ordinance as far as frontage. Taking out all the existing landscaping in the front of the building adding landscaping all the way across the entire front. He thought they could go back and add a few more green areas or a berm area or something to jazz it up and thought his client would agree to that. They don't want to have their business suffer because they are putting an addition on, as far as the amount of usable area they have. He appreciated their comments on the fact that they have been there for 30 years, and that they are a community business. Their intent was not to do anything, their notes say that their civil engineer is going through this process and see how excessive the limits might be based on the current ordinance with this site and then coming up with an amicable solution during that engineering phase. He was hoping that something between their engineer and the Townships Engineer could work those details out themselves but that doesn't really change the cruxes of what they are here for tonight. He can submit a plan with some additional landscaping. They did put up the fire circulation, and the Fire Marshal was happy with all of that. A modified T-shape is also functional at two locations on this site, they do satisfy that. They are turning the parking lot 90 degrees from what is presently there so if they go out there the parking would change 90 degrees. That helps in the circulation of everything on the site to function. They are certainly willing to work with the community and are not looking to shortchange any of their requirements. It would be difficult to add more landscaping in the back, but the front area if they had some more planting areas, that is fine. He didn't see that as being a deal breaker. His biggest concern for his client is, yes, they are aware they have to bring the fence line in, whether this project goes through or not, obviously. They can't lose their rear holding area because that is going to hurt their business.

Vice-Chairman Gross thought that their primary concern is they don't want to see the stormwater issue become a dealbreaker, if it is going to be a dealbreaker let's find out now. Mr. Chiesa said they won't know until they go through the engineering plan design phase, which will cost them more money. Chairman Reynolds said they always see some sort of concept of stormwater management at site plan approval. Mr. Chiesa said they assumed because the back is all gravel, and they were not changing that, if it were hardscaped, he would get it.

Moved by Chairman Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Walker, that the Planning Commission **postpones** site plan approval for PC-22-21, Buckhorn Service Towing & Recovery
Site Plan, located at 1258 S. Lapeer Rd., (Sidwell #09-14-201-013) for plans date stamped received November 17, 2022, for the following reasons: to address all of the plan review comments that were brought forth along with OHM review to work towards a stormwater management solution for this parcel; to address the outdoor storage located in the rear yard of the facility to the ordinance; and allow for any additional outstanding comments to be addressed including those discussed here this evening about reducing or mitigating the number of waivers that would be requested as the site plan has been submitted as they have seen here this evening.

Roll call vote was as follows: Urbanowski, yes; Gross, yes; Gingell, yes; Walker, yes; Cummins, yes; St. Henry, yes; Reynolds, yes Motion carried 7-0

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
A. Discussion on the Master Plan.

Chairman Reynolds said they had a letter this evening from the Planning & Zoning Director Girling. As everyone recalls during the Master Plan, they had a strategy that they adopted earlier this year. They happen to have a lighter of an agenda this evening, so they wanted to circle back. They have a number of short-term items that they had identified in a one-to-two-year span, and they are now half a year past their approval, so they are halfway through their one-year and two-and-a-half years out from their three-year mark. They need to start pulling forth some of those items and discussing how they want to proceed with those strategies.

Planning & Zoning Director Girling stated that she looked, and it was a light agenda, and they usually don’t get many. They had a couple at the end of last year and the former planner said he wasn’t ready to talk about it. She has a lot of busy agendas coming up, so they won’t have this opportunity be it a 10-minute or a half-hour conversation. Let’s look at those that are one to three years. Maybe some of them might say those say by office staff, and let’s move that up, go find some time and work on it. She was looking for some guidance and discussion and no better time to start than now.

Chairman Reynolds asked if it started on page 160 of their adopted Master Plan. Planning & Zoning Director Girling replied that page 157 has the action strategies. Chairman Reynolds said they were talking about zoning, capital improvement, others, and advocacy. They also identified just with an acronym S & L, and the Ss are the ones they are looking for. They had abbreviations such as admin which would be the zoning staff, PC which is the Planning Commission, TB the Township Board, and then NA which is not applicable. He thought they could start on page 160.

Planning & Zoning Director Girling stated that they haven’t opened this since they passed it. If ready one of these strategies brings up another idea, she didn’t think that they had to 100% follow this as a script it is just an opportunity to start dissecting it.

Chairman Reynolds said that a few of these, have been talking about the goal of high-quality and diverse housing, and the missing middle.

Vice-Chairman Gross stated that for some of these, the PC has already started working as a Planning Commission on an ongoing basis. The Baldwin Rd. project is an example of some of the missing housing. The project on Waldon and Lapeer is also kind of addressing that missing housing. It is not in an ordinance yet, but he thought as a Commission they are beginning to focus on some of those issues. Those are some of the ongoing things that they have taken out of this Master Plan as a Commission and moving forward with, in terms of, implementation. Planning & Zoning Director Girling asked if they should plan better by talking about a text
amendment to incorporate what they are seeing. It is more steps than it is actually incorporating should they have something that backs it more within the ordinance. Vice-Chairman Gross said he wasn’t sure what form that would take place.

Chairman Reynolds said he thought that was where he would like to at least see them pull forth. They have their Planning & Zoning staff, and they have a new planning consultant. Part of taking advantage of them is saying, hey this is something they want to tackle first. He agreed he thought it opened their eyes significantly when working through this Master Plan. Now, do they consider the density bonuses for certain housing types? They speak right now of dwelling unit per acre, but they don’t really talk about does that change when it is those different types like the carriage house, the cottage development, or the quadplex. Maybe they consider it to be only one building but now it has four units, but they are not going to look at it in the same light. Maybe that is not a perfect example but at least an example of something to start saying they are encouraging them to gravitate towards those items. Now they are only just on the first page. A variety of housing types to him would be opening the book up a little bit more away from just single-family residential and multi-family but maybe beefing up their multi-family standards. As it contributes to a PUD what they are really looking to see, he thought that comment would even include having some flexibility on a buffer or open space or some other component of their requirement because they are seeing things that they desire.

Planner Enos said he agreed. As he is understanding this Master Plan, the master plan’s that he has developed have these kinds of implementation schedules, but they also have another column and that column is basically, hey did we do that this year? They do have five years, so this is a five-year plan how many did they do? He would hate to go back in five years and revisit this and they are looking at all of these again. He is sure that they are doing these in one form or another. He heard when they were meeting each other, initially that the PUD ordinance needs to be looked at, there are things all over the place with that. That PUD ordinance would incorporate a lot of the things that they could be talking about in regard to housing and how they incorporate the diversity of housing in PUDs and maybe they do get certain bonuses for doing certain things. Maybe they get a certain amount of density bonus for doing a certain amount of things. Maybe he talks to Planning & Zoning Director Girling and how they figure out another column in regard to what did they do or what are they currently doing, whether are they halfway through it and realizing that they are a busy community. The second thing he would say is that the Board of Trustees, Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Planning Commission have a joint meeting and perhaps at that meeting, and he didn’t know how those things run but there may be some questions from the Board in regard to the Planning Commission on what they are working on. What he would suggest too before that meeting, whenever it is, is that some of the things that they are talking about right now they would also bring up with the Board and say this is what they will be working on.

Chairman Reynolds said if they flip to page 162, adopt a corridor open space preservation overlay district. That was what they thought when they did the Master Plan may be that takes on some different character, but he thought that was another example of a concept that they don’t have right now that they looked favorably on. He thought that Vice-Chairman Gross and to his point they have seen it, Lavender Ridge was one of them and he was pleasantly surprised there is a nice berm it is landscaped there is a buffer, do they start to promote that? For example, there are corridors where there is an additional landscaping requirement. Just like they have the Lapeer Overlay District, there could be certain corridors that they are not going to change no matter how dense they become.

Trustee Urbanowski noted that they did say that. They got the Baldwin, Joslyn, Lapeer but the other east and west ones that they were thinking would define those a little bit more.
Chairman Reynolds said he wanted this to be an open discussion but if someone is passionate about something or wants to see that is where they are giving their staff some direction, they want to bring this to the top of the pile because they have a lot of Ss on their list.

Vice-Chairman Gross said they did have an awful lot of Ss when they went over this, and he thought they got to start picking the low-hanging fruit and get rid of some of those.

Planning & Zoning Director Girling said if they were looking at page 162 and they look at 2e, 2f, 2g, and 2h. Review and amend the zoning ordinance lighting, update the zoning ordinance standards to ensure they align with the county’s best practices for stormwater, require electric vehicle charging stations, and amend landscaping provisions. Again, they can’t eat an elephant in one bite, it is a bite at a time. It can be overwhelming saying that this is simple enough and they never get to. They never say of all those four that she said, hey let’s do this one first and it says that it is admin with PC and so PC is directing admin please start working on researching requirements for amending landscape provisions. Perhaps then if they look at something costly that they are not able to compare to other communities it involves something written by the Planner then they can direct her to get a quote from the Planner and get authorization for that expenditure. Everything leads to another step, and she thought they just look at saying that they are started it, what are the specific goals that they have here and let’s pick a couple and start chipping away.

Chairman Reynolds said that he knew that one of their items that he thought they really needed to dig into that addresses a lot of these as they flip through is the tree and landscape ordinances. He knew from both sides of this table from the Planning Commission and as an applicant, in the Township it is confusing and somewhat open-ended, and he didn’t think it was always clear. It could tie into when they talk about trees maybe they talk about some of the buffers or these corridors which might be the second step of the discussion but to him it made sense to edit the tree ordinance and consider some of these other goals. For example, use frontage landscaping standards to improve the appearance of commercial and industrial areas. They have had discussions on the Lapeer Overlay District. Maybe the landscape component is really what they are looking for and less so much of the fact that the Lapeer Overlay District has pitched roofs and awnings and undulation of some sort. That for him would be a big priority, it is a messy ordinance section, and it could tackle some of these items.

Planning & Zoning Director Girling said it is not only landscape it is tree preservation, which is landscape, but they are actually in two different sections. They have talked before about that tree preservation section and came up with how to read it going forward and had disagreements about how to do that and it does cause a problem on a regular basis. At one point and time, the PC said to go ahead and work on that and work on PUD, but it was right at the time that they had the RFP and looking at the planner, so it just hit the backburner. She was just talking to the Planner this evening before the meeting on both the PUD and the tree preservation section and she would like him to work up an estimate for her to get authorization to start. Even if they get that he is going to need direction. There is the landscape within each zoning section, then there is a separate landscape section and then there is the whole tree preservation. He can go out and come up with something but keep in mind that he is new, he is getting to know them fairly rapidly. She thought if they choose that as one of the top things that they want to start working on, there does have to be some discussion on what they are thinking they want to see. Are they looking to hug every tree that exists, so if he has a feeling of what they are looking for to guide him once they have the authorization for him to work on it?

Chairman Reynolds stated that he thinks one of the things they talked about was corridors so he thought that would be a good kind of addition to the ordinance to edit and talk about. Is Clarkston Rd. something that they want to preserve even if it is dense, it still has that rural
residential feel. The other piece of the tree ordinance really defines that they are a Tree City USA, and they technically say if it is within the development area it doesn’t count unless it is a historic or landmark tree. Is that something they still want to continue with, or do they want to up their ante a little bit to say they are developing parcels that are now heavily wooded and they get 50% or something of that nature? This is where they are giving them some feedback to say that they think they want to be a little more preservation forward and that right now they talk to the tree fund. They haven’t really ever implemented that; it is something that he is not in huge favor of. He thinks that they need to find a home and a direction. Those are comments when they read through those ordinances that he thought that they needed to say where their direction is headed, a little more conservative a little more direction.

Commissioner Cummings said that he thought that they should move forward with even more specimen trees that get preserved because clear-cutting the land just to put up more and more doesn’t always work. There are a lot of subdivisions that can be built where they can cut down trees and still have more adequate housing in those developments. Even in commercial or industrial subdivisions where there are some very mature trees that are in good condition and not ready to fall over and die, it doesn’t make any sense to save those. There are some very nice trees and woodlands in Orion Township that should have a little more protection.

Planner Enos said that is the old saying we are burning daylight on the amount of trees that are here. The balance is ok, they are going to allow 6-ft. evergreens and 2.5 DBH deciduous trees to be planted. He knew that they are all planners, and they are looking long term, but it doesn’t mean that they shouldn’t protect those trees that are 50-100 years old and developers can, and they know how to build around them. As he gets to know the Township and them, he is not going to be afraid to give his opinion, that is his job. He would start to look to be more conservative as far as tree protection standards.

Chairman Reynolds said if you flip to page 164 under economic development, they have implemented corridor-specific landscape and streetscape concepts. He knew that this topic is not necessarily streetscape but thought that landscape is a good way to envision that. He doesn’t know if any of them here has the answer but thought that was one of them to say hey do they have a two, three, or four-way approach of unregulated heavily, this is something that they want to see like the Baldwin Corridor. This is something that they want to preserve. This is somewhere where they want to add. Those to him are topics that they should consider and as they dig into this ordinance identify on a map where those overlay districts are going to be. He thought it was a great idea, and thought it was definitely a good way to balance out preserving the aesthetic of their community while still acknowledging that there is going to be development.

Chairman Reynolds said additional areas, he didn’t know whether they are parallel or different as they are flipping through some of these pages that they are gravitated towards for revisions and thoughts.

Trustee Urbanowski said on page 162, and she didn’t know if anyone mentioned it, to amend the provisions to encourage more natural stormwater management practices, tree canopy, and reduce overall impervious surface on developed sites. She thought that they talked about rain gardens and things like that. They have talked about that so often and it is important to all of them.

Chairman Reynolds said he was sure that Engineer Landis would speak to it, but their latest adoption of Engineer Standards Oakland County does start to recognize that a bit more. He thought when they see that, there might be some of these factors to where they just require it, and others are saying they want to put the carrot out there and that this is a really good thing. He looks at it that way in a sense of their missing middle component, of being open to new
housing types. That is back to page 160. When they apply this per unit per acre, when they  
looked at those requirements and he thought they talked about it at the open house, just  
because they are keeping within that number doesn’t mean they are ending up with the best  
product possible. If anything, they are getting to the point where they are seeing projects having  
to kind of back into economics and all of these other things and they are under the dwelling per  
acre and some he thought were really successful and others they check the boxes and maybe  
are not our most desirable solution that they want. He thought they needed to create a little bit  
of hierarchy or bonus or something along those lines that they were willing to give up a little  
open area if they have the buffer along the road and some other credits because they have  
implemented 4-5 of those action items.

Vice-Chairman Gross said that recognizing that once they give up density to get more  
improvements along the right-of-way it is pushing the development further inward towards other  
subdivisions.

Planning & Zoning Director Girling said they had a case recently that talked about mature trees,  
and they were going to lose them to the safety path. Realize that the buffer they are having at  
the front is beyond what might be a mature tree line that is necessary to come down for a safety  
path. Again, it is going further into their development and pushing things back further.

Chairman Reynolds stated that the other thing to recognize where they have TB is not to be  
determined that is who is saying is going to help the accomplish these goals (Township Board).  
On page 160 it was invested in existing walkways and paths, and the comment earlier was  
something to make sure they are doing. There are a number of subcommittees that will likely  
come out of their joint meeting this year. He knew safety paths were one of them that was very  
strong. He asked if there was anything else that they needed to consider or encourage them to  
do differently that can be more succinct of what they are looking for and what they are hoping to  
encourage. Maybe there is a little bit of flexibility when they have had the proposals along  
Clarkston Rd. where there is a safety path on one side of the road and not the other. Do they  
consider it a good reason to not require it on both sides of the road because one can maintain a  
nice buffer? Those are comments that they need to lead that conversation or encourage that to  
occur. He thought that their joint meeting would be an example of that.

Planning & Zoning Director Girling said she actually has an appointment tomorrow with Deputy  
Supervisor Timko to discuss some dates and times. There will be something coming out and  
then when they set the date there will be an email saying if they have any agenda items that  
they want to add, please respond to that so they can set the agenda and make sure they hit all  
the topics they want to.

Vice-Chairman Gross said regarding the PUD ordinance, he has tried to work that ordinance  
and read it and he doesn’t understand it. He knows what it is supposed to do but that needs a  
major overhaul. He didn’t know if Carlisle Wortman wrote it in the first place or not. Planning &  
Zoning Director Girling said it has been amended so many times over the years that it just got  
discombobulated. She thought if they could put it back and maybe look at where they inserted  
things, they might see that they were just inserted in the wrong place. It was discussed  
correctly but just not put in the right place in the existing ordinance.

Vice-Chairman Gross stated that he thought it was wrong to try to create an ordinance around a  
specific issue or project. He thought it had to be a generalized ordinance that applies to similar  
properties not just we are going to put this in the ordinance because I don’t like it in this project.

Planning & Zoning Director Girling said as she has looked at it, it is not necessarily thinking that  
what is written is wrong, it is just poorly stated. It might not need a whole revamp of exactly
what it is saying can be done and how it can be done, it is just how it is on paper. There are sections that they just skip because they don’t have any idea what they are saying. Vice-Chairman Gross said, or they are conflicting sections.

Trustee Urbanowski said on page 164 3f to consider permitting additional height and or density in the RM-2 district. They keep getting requests for it. Chairman Reynolds said he wanted this to be conversational so everyone can just jump in. He thought the point with that would be, is there something that they are open to but because it is in a certain matter? The appearance of two stories from the road, and the three stories are backing up to the other three stories. He thought that was some of the things that they have tried to encourage at a conversational level here at the PC, but they are not requiring it. That to him is an interesting approach. They are maintaining the scale especially when they are open to three stories and additional height when it is not adjacent to a lower density parcel or there is enough transition buffer or something along those lines that they want to start lining up those requirements.

Planning & Zoning Director Girling stated that they had a presentation done by the former planner she thought pre-covid when they first had started and showed the different types of multi-family. Just the way it looks you would assume that one was much denser than the other. That gets into the different types of housing. Sometimes the numbers are truly the numbers they got to realize that these different housing types create different things. She had an open Planning Commission project, a text amendment, back pre-covid and it was talking about density and multi-family. They decided at that point and time to talk about increasing density in Gingellville which they did, and they never went back and talked about multi-family as a whole. At that point and time, she had been told by many developers that they are extremely low in their multi-family and the number of units per acre that they allow. It doesn’t mean they have to, she knows they are Orion and they will do what they do but just wanted to throw that out there that she is hearing compared to other municipalities that it is significantly lower. They have the RM-1 and RM-2 and thought they only have two parcels that are RM-2 and everything else is pretty much all RM-1. She felt at that time they stopped talking about it to talk about Gingellville it said that the answer is they increase the density in RM-2 which would then give somebody that is RM-1 the opportunity to maybe say that they want to rezone to RM-2 to get additional and maybe there are some criteria on that.

Chairman Reynolds said maybe the density bonus is because it is a cottage unit or a quadplex. He thought they might see in PUDs some more favorable development styles because they are allowing that flexibility versus someone coming in and saying that they got to get 36 units on this little site and the garages are going to be facing the street, or whatever the issue is. They can see a little better outcome because they had that flexibility in their ordinance.

Planning & Zoning Director Girling said that they have dictated what they really want to see. Maybe there is a type of housing that they don’t have that they would really like to see. Maybe within the ordinance, there is some kind of bonus if you do that because developers shy away from that if there is not a good reason, and they want to see it. Maybe they do get a little bit more if they do that type that they are seeing that they don’t have.

Secretary St. Henry said that they have addressed a lot of these issues over the last few years in different developments. Planning & Zoning Director Girling replied not in the ordinance. Secretary St. Henry stated that he understands that and perhaps they tighten those up a little bit. What they have seen over the last two years alone, since COVID, is significantly different than what he saw the first 3-4 years that he was on the Planning Commission. He has seen very few single-family home developments. He has seen a ton of PUDs and multi-apartment plans; it is changing there is no question about it. He thought that because a lot of those developments come before us as PUDs, they automatically have our antenna go up and they
pay a lot more attention to them recognizing at the same time that there is some room for creativity and some compromise back and forth. He didn’t think the exercise, the way they are talking about it now is going to amount to much. He is not downplaying any of the work that they did, he is just saying that they might be able to tighten these ordinances here and there. He thought that the ability of this group with the assistance of their consultants is more important they focus on making sure that they look at every development that comes before them and treat each one of them the same way with as much care and attention to detail as they have before. If necessary, they go back to the Master Plan. They are automatically addressing some of these objectives and strategies, especially in the last couple of years. The issues with housing, and the trees, have come up with all of these developments lately.

Chairman Reynolds thought that they have implemented something that they are all believing in. Talk is the next step. Can they get their ordinances tightened up so that when they do have PUDs, they can treat them more equally and they can push what they are looking for because it is in the rule book and that is what they are asking for? They have had some good developments come in here that are doing it already but not because they necessarily have it outlined it is because the developer is seeking that. The ask would be, do they start to encourage more of those directions by amending ordinances to continue to better that and continue to see better projects coming through their doors?

Planner Enos added that Carlisle Wortman is beginning work on the update of the Parks and Recreation plan of Orion. That is a cool project and they wanted to share the goals and objectives with the staff that is going to be working on that. He thought some of those things could and should be incorporated into that Parks and Recreation plan. Parks and Recreation are much more than their parks, it ties into trail feasibility and corridors, and a variety of other things that maybe they are not doing but their other body is doing which they can incorporate into their stuff. He thought that was important to remember they have a great plan, and they are going to update it and they will have an opportunity to review it.

Planning & Zoning Director Girling said what she would like to do is have these broken into different goals but as they are looking through there might be something under economic development that has to do with trees, and buffers. Another one under a different category or another goal also has to do with trees and everything. She heard that one of the first things they would like to start talking about is our tree preservation and their landscape section. She is going to go through this and pick out, no matter where it is, and come up with a list that comes from these that have something to do with landscape. So, they can say when they are modifying or talking about a text amendment on that here are the things, they said were their goals make sure they incorporate them, and guess what when they are done with that text amendment, hopefully, they have five or six that they say they have accomplished.

Chairman Reynolds stated that he thought that was a really good one to go off of. They have been talking about a lot of these but talking about landscaping or trees is hitting about six of these.

Vice-Chairman Gross said they have talked about the tree fund that doesn’t seem to exist. Maybe the tree fund isn’t to buy trees, maybe the tree fund is to buy land where there are existing trees that then become the focus. Chairman Reynolds said that is like the latest and greatest, what was it about the tree clearing? Planning & Zoning Director Girling said there was a court ruling on trees, and tree funds. They have to tread lightly and get legal on that. Chairman Reynolds said to his point there is an ordinance section he thought in economic development that they were saying that they want to partner with the Township Board on it was the talk about identifying projects was one of them and another was like targeting projects of contribution. To him, that was like when they have a PUD if there is a lack of trees, ok they
have to address that, but the community benefit could be kind of the bigger vision goal and maybe it does tie into the Parks and Recs Master Plan.

Trustee Urbanowski said that the pocket park is going to now be more of a landscaped area. They spoke to Parks & Recs Director Whatley, not about the tree fund but actual trees, and they do have the ability to store trees. Planning & Zoning Director Girling said that they were wanting to start their own little nursery. With them being parks and trails that if there is one that needs replacing, they have a little nursery in a corner of Friendship Park that they spade up and replant it. That was a conversation related to the fact that they really don’t have a tree fund and they really don’t want to start one. How do they end up with the ability to get trees instead of money, and can they be used, and the park Director said definitely.

Chairman Reynolds asked for additional areas that they want to pull forward as priorities.

Trustee Urbanowski said maybe the EV charging stations maybe add that since they are sort of kind of going in that direction. Chairman Reynolds thought there had to be something that speaks to parking and things, and it doesn’t have to be an overhaul and this point but at least acknowledging that they exist and that especially here in Orion are going to be a little more prevalent.

Vice-Chairman Gross stated that there is a standard for handicapped parking there is a standard for EVs. Chairman Reynolds said handicapped people can still buy an EV. Trustee Urbanowski thought that was a good question, what if they have someone who normally parks and needs a ramp, but they are driving an EV?

Chairman Reynolds said that they got some general direction. He would encourage everyone to take a look at these five or six pages when they have their joint meeting. There is a handful that would be a really good thing to discuss and ask of their Board or other commissions or committees. There are some of them that they are not tackling solely themselves if they need a teammate or someone else to take the lead and for them to weigh in on. It might be good pages to bring to that.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS
None.

10. COMMUNICATIONS
None.

11. PLANNERS REPORTS
None.

12. COMMITTEE REPORTS
None.

13. PUBLIC HEARINGS
None.

14. CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS
None.

15. COMMISSIONERS’ COMMENTS
Commissioner Walker said he thinks they should put a tip jar out here somewhere so people can put donations in to keep the heat in the building past 8 p.m. He added that he watched a
three-hour program on the Discovery Chanel about architects, the thought process more importantly. He was terribly impressed, not that he didn’t think well of architects, but he thinks a whole lot more of them than he used to.

Vice-Chairman Gross said that they have been implementing this plan as they go along and one of the things that came up during their survey was the need for additional grocery stores. He thinks they all can be very proud of the fact that they have a new grocery store in the community that is putting all of the others to shame. He hoped they could continue what they have opened the doors to in terms of their stocking and their staffing because it is a heck of a lot different than the other stores we have had.

Chairman Reynolds thinks that it is a really cool concept that they can say they have in their back yard too. He is not a fan of shopping at Meijer because it is so big, and thought it was a nice change of breath.

Trustee Urbanowski said she appreciates that Meijer embraces local food producers and that they said that they want to be part of the community, which they already did with their $10,000 donation to the Food Pantry across the street. She was part of the pre-app meeting for that and was losing her mind because she thought it was going to be awesome, which it is, and they said back then that they were community focused and they will be a community partner. They had already started to do that, and she appreciated it.

Secretary St. Henry said that the Meijer development is one of the best projects that this Planning Commission has been involved in within the last few years. In terms of the output the final product was exactly what they said it was going to be. His biggest concern is that it is so crowded that there are parking issues.

Chairman Reynolds said they got rid of a building that they have been struggling to occupy for years. They addressed a community concern about a lack of grocery stores. It is a great developer and a Michigan-based company that will be here for a long while.

Commissioner Cummins said he is learning a lot more as he goes through the Master Plan, ideas, and things that they think are important to the Township. He wants to start looking at how the density relates here if they are trying to get a higher or lower density. They have a mix of projects.

Secretary St. Henry said that they look at all these different projects and in some of them the density is through the roof and at other times they are manageable. They are open to high-density developments but if they go back in time over the last couple of years they have got to be in the right place. That is probably the biggest struggle if they know that this is a winner, it will sell, or it is attractive, but it has to be in the right place in the Township.

Chairman Reynolds stated that density is a number it doesn’t mean it is a good development. Maybe it is a higher density number but of a specific kind because it relates to transitioning to single-family homes. If they really look at it like Planning & Zoning Director Girling said, if they really look at those and say that is 12 units per acre and this is 6, what. One is double but one is probably a more desirable product sadly enough probably next to a lower density than the other one. That is something to look critically at and that is where if it is one criterion and maybe it is within their real house and missing middle it is another.

Secretary St. Henry said to keep in mind that it can go just the reverse too because as this community ages and our family grow and there are empty nesters and seniors they always want
the single-family homes they are looking for something else but they want to stay in the community.

**16. ADJOURNMENT**
Moved by Chairman Reynolds, seconded by Trustee Urbanowski, to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 p.m. *Motion carried.*

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Walton
PC/ZBA Recording Secretary
Charter Township of Orion

February 15, 2023
Planning Commission Approval Date