The Charter Township of Orion Planning Commission held a workshop meeting in-person at the Orion Center, 1335 Joslyn Road, as well as, being held simultaneously via video conferencing at 6 pm. Via GoToMeeting Access code 599-669-285 or VIA TELEPHONE 1-(571) 317-3122 Access Code 599-669-285 (Meeting being conducted in-person and via video/telephone conference due to the health concern of COVID-19 and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services)

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

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT:
None.

1. OPEN MEETING
Chairman Reynolds opened the workshop meeting at 6:00 pm.

2. ROLL CALL
As noted

CONSULTANTS PRESENT:
Rodney Arroyo, (Township Planner) of Giffels Webster
Eric Fazzini, (Township Planner) of Giffels Webster
Eric Pietsch, (Township Planner) of Giffels Webster
Mark Landis (Township Engineer) of Orchard, Hiltz, and McCliment, Inc.
Tammy Girling, Township Planning & Zoning Director

OTHERS PRESENT:
None.

3. AGENDA REVIEW AND APPROVAL
Moved by Vice-Chairman Gross, seconded by Trustee Urbanowski, to approve the agenda as presented.

4. NEW BUSINESS/UNFINISHED BUSINESS
A. PC-2021-07, 5 Year Master Plan Update

Planner Arroyo presented via GoToMeeting.

Planner Arroyo said he wanted to introduce the Commissioners to the next session in terms of their work sessions they are doing for the Master Plan update. The primary focus is to prepare for the upcoming open house where they are going to be soliciting public input. They have prepared some advanced boards, questions, ideas, and comments, some things that they wanted to discuss with them this evening as they move towards that preparation. He started by talking about some of the community engagement that is involved with this project. He added that there is a webpage that is dedicated on the township’s website. They have had some online surveys; the market assessment survey is now closed and is in the process of being analyzed. The Orion Township PictureThis!TM continues to be available for people to upload pictures, make comments, and make suggestions about what is working and what are some new ideas for the Township. It will be an in-person open house, they are going to talk about
getting some dates scheduled for that, right now it is looking like it is going to be somewhere in the first or second week of June. Focus groups and meetings, they already have the staff leadership advanced meeting which they talked about back in February. The student art contest has been launched as well, which is going out to the schools this week. There is a deadline before school is over right after the Memorial Day weekend for that material to be returned. It gives them an opportunity for students of various age groups to create some art that can be featured within the pages of the Master Plan once they go to press on it.

Planner Arroyo stated that in terms of the Open House stations they have eight potential stations that they wanted to talk to them about. These would be set up in the Orion Center and they would have tables with some boards at each one spread out throughout the area to maintain as much distancing as they can. Also, the idea behind this is that they are looking to have an online component that will match this, so if they are not comfortable coming in person then they would be able to go online and go through and have the same experience, they would see the same boards online, and they would be able to answer the same questions online. Even if they go in person, they are planning on having QR codes on the boards so that if they don’t want to pick up any paper or pens and fill anything out, they could open up their phone and get the questions with the QR code and fill one out on their phone, so that will be an option as well.

Planner Arroyo said that the first board is demographics and economics, the second is market assessment survey, the third is housing, the fourth is 15-minute neighborhoods, the fifth is natural features & sustainability, sixth is complete streets and community facilities, seventh is land use, and eighth is spending priorities.

Planner Arroyo stated that the demographics and economics board are probably the most straightforward, it is a presentation of existing conditions, where they will have infographics that are intending just to provide an introduction to some of the data and some of the statistics about basically where the Township is today. Some of the things they might ask, and they are going to have handouts at each one of these stations, for this station they are going to ask what type of employment centers or industries should Orion Township pursue or encourage. Looking to get some input on growth and the local economy and if residents or employers have some suggestions. Also, what other comments would they like to offer on this topic? He added that this a fairly straightforward set of questions, that would be planned for this board.

Planner Arroyo said that the Market Assessment survey would be the next board. That is an analysis that is currently underway. They don’t have the results of that but they will have it in time for the Open House. What that is going to do is they will be able to share some information for the public to review in terms of how much retail, office, industry, and residential units can be supported over the next 5-10 years based upon the market assessment. He added that was an in-process piece of information and it is primarily an informational board that will describe the results of that survey.

Planner Arroyo noted that Housing will be the next board. They want to focus on a number of different things and wanted to get their input on this. The first result is focused on the rural areas of the Township. They thought it might be appropriate to explore, how does the Township see itself evolving in rural areas, low-density areas in terms of what the area looks like from the roadway. These corridors are beautiful, they are very rural in nature, and even if they have large lot development occur it can essentially take out much of the vegetation and character as lots are built right next to the roadway. One concept that some communities have used with success is to provide for more open space development techniques, including providing incentives for that and potentially even requiring it. What that would do is that would provide for a 150-200-ft. deep buffer off the roadway, where it would either be preserved as a natural
feature with vegetation if that is, in fact, attractive, or it would be supplemented with vegetation or some type of natural feature as a way of preserving the rural view along the corridor. In exchange for that preservation typically there is a corresponding reduction in lot sizes so that the yield that they would receive as a developer would not be any less than and maybe even slightly more than conventional development as a way of providing for an incentive. They would want to ask what is the preferred road corridor or character in rural areas of the Township? Is it maintaining the status quo which would be lots located adjacent to a right-of-way or providing incentives? One of the things that they would do would show an example. So, as they drive along the roadway, they would either see vegetation trees, or they would see some type of natural feature, they don’t see lots. So, just repeating what these questions would be just trying to get an impression from those attending the Open House do they have a preference? Would they prefer to see things as they normally do? What they have to realize is that the beautiful road that they drive down in a rural area right now will likely not continue to look that way, even if it is developed with larger lots unless something is done to preserve the rural corridor view.

Vice-Chairman Gross asked if this would be a way of discouraging some strip development, non-residential development along the major thoroughfares as well, by creating this large buffer? Planner Arroyo replied yes; as a matter of fact, if they go through a type of approval process and they provide this rural strip that would have to, as a condition of approval, be placed in some type of conservation easement so that it cannot be developed. It is not intended that these areas would later be developed with some type of strip development, they would be preserved and perpetuity as open space.

Engineer Landis asked Planner Arroyo how that would fit in with the Road Commission and right-of-way? A lot of those trees end up being within the existing road right-of-way or even the Master Plan future right-of-way. They see it quite often with improvements on roads, like Gregory Rd. for instance, where a water main was installed and now, they are looking at a pathway, and with that comes tree removal. He wanted to throw that out there as a question because if they want to have pathways along roads and extension of public utilities, with that comes a lot of tree removal sometimes. Planner Arroyos said that maybe in some of the cases the vegetation within the right-of-way can't be preserved, just for the reasons Engineer Landis has mentioned, including pathways or the need for utilities. He added that is why this becomes even more important, this type of concept because the preservation that is taking place that 150-200-ft. is on the private property. In some cases, there already might be natural vegetation within that strip, in others, it might need to be supplemented. There are some good examples of actually creating vegetation and other elements, maybe it is split-rail fencing or other elements to bring forward with a rural character and include that within the private element that is being permanently preserved so they know that is not going to go away if something does happen within the right-of-way. If there is a right-of-way that is very important in terms of preservation of natural features the natural beauty road designation can assist, it is not a guarantee that vegetation will not be removed but if a road is designated through the Road Commission as a natural beauty road, special attention will be paid to the removal of vegetation within the right-of-way when improvements have to be made.

Planner Arroyo said another thing that they wanted to talk to them about is whether they are looking for any type of input on residential density. This is a comparison of the Future Land Use plan as it currently exists with their zoning starting from single-family low, which is the rural residential with the one unit per 2.5 acres which aligns with the Suburban Farms (SF) district and all the way up and down. This is what their existing plan and zoning said. One of the things that they think needs to be discussed and they were wondering if they want some input on it, is the viability of the 2.5 acres lot. There aren’t any active subdivisions that they are aware of where developers are looking to develop 2.5 acre lots. From a feasibility perspective, some would say that there is a question. It may be something that he thought considered in some
detail within this plan whether or not that lowest most rural low-density area needs to be modified to be a little bit more reflective of what is likely to be practical in terms of residential development. That is a question that he is throwing out there, in terms of, whether they think it is something to get public input on. They also went through and looked at PUD projects and Consent Judgements that have been approved throughout the Township and they compared that with the Future Land Use classification, and the Future Land Use density. He thought it was interesting that many of the PUD and the Consent Judgements projects were fairly closely aligned with the Master Plan density. He knew in a lot of cases it was different from what the property was zoned and the property ended up getting approved as a PUD which increased the density above the zoning, but in terms of what the Master Plan calls for there is some good alignment here, there are a couple of exceptions to that. He thought that it might be helpful for them to look at in terms of the approved units per acre versus the Future Land Use plan density. This is a combination, they have them categorized by single-family residential, multiple-family, and assisted living.

Planner Arroyo said that some of the slides were not in their packet because they were working on them, but will get them updated copies of them.

Planner Arroyo showed them the Future Land Use plan, they could see in white that is the single-family low density, that is the 2.5-acre areas, so they could see where they are located within the Township, just to get a reference for that lower-density area, and then they could see all the other classification based on the current Future Land Use plan.

Planner Arroyo asked if the Planning Commission wants specific public input on rural low-density or any other single-family residential density? Chairman Reynolds thought that it would be reasonable input for him to receive. One of the components that he wanted to understand was people’s feedback on current developments, of what has happened recently. He thought that would be a good chart to study, and some of the discussions that they have had at PUDs. He would also be curious about where people’s interest is, and where they live in regards to that. So, seeing an address or seeing an area, are people gravitated towards a certain region, Morgan Rd. or do they gravitate towards N. Baldwin? Some different thought processes and different densities, and thought it was worthy to say, do they still have that interest, or are they moving away from the typical Suburban Farms (SF) model and they want more of the community or neighborhood feel. Is that something that is appealing over low-density in the area? Trustee Urbanowski said she would like to hear that information as well. Secretary St. Henry thought it was important to get that information, but was curious to see or hear what they are going to do with that information? Are they going to be ok with what they hear if it doesn’t go along with what the mainstream planning focuses on these days, or the government officials take on it? If they find out that people want to keep that type of residential zoning in place, whether or not it is ever built on or not, it is available, and it keeps that country rural feel of this community, they have to accept that and not try to change people’s minds. Chairman Reynolds agreed with that and thought that the key to the Master Plan effort would be engaging people and receiving input but they are also looking to educate too. There is a large number of people that come up and say not in my backyard, but in the same regard, their development was the one just prior that has the same density and proponents there. He asked if they are hearing one thing but the data speaks to another? That is where it is reasonable to say what do you think you want, and where they live and talk about some of these different hubs and neighborhoods in their region of you say one thing but they do like the amenities of the other, this is why you would do X instead of Y.

Secretary St. Henry understood what he was saying. He said that Orion is not a transient community. Generations of families live here for a long time. Even before Chairman Reynolds joined the Planning Commission, they wrestled with all these issues with the residential PUD’s
and so forth. He thought that they have to accept the fact, if it fares out in the Open House and the surveys, that their community is not comfortable with high-density developments or messing around with Future Land Use designations they have to accept that or be ok with that. Chairman Reynolds agreed, they are there to engage and get input. They are there representing people too. They have their thoughts and there are progressive ideas out there but if they don’t fit that then they should stay the course, or right size and perfect their ordinance to fit that.

Commissioner Walker said that everyone he knows what’s to be the last one to move here. He moved here in 1988, and he was sorry all the rest of them came after that. That is just a natural inclination of people. He felt what they have done as a Township, what their biggest failure has been not listening to the people. He didn’t think that it was necessarily his fault, if it is an election, it is a big deal, if it is not an election they don’t care. He thought that there was maybe 11 or 12 people watching this meeting because they don’t care until the development hits them. He asked Planner Arroyo about the survey monkey, and thought that only 300 people responded? Planner Arroyo thought that the response was close to 600 by the time they were done, but he would have to double-check the number. They were pleased with the final responses. Typically, when they get into that 500-600 range that is an excellent return. Commissioner Walker said that he cast no aspersions on him at all, it was on the citizens, but there 40,000 people that live in this Township, and they got 600 responses. He didn’t know the best way to grab these people and say look this is what might happen, they want to know what they think.

Secretary St. Henry said he didn’t think it was a matter of not in my backyard issue, he thought it was more of, I moved to Orion Township for a reason, versus some of our neighboring communities, and they don’t want it to change, they accept progress and growth, but don’t change the general character of our community. He thought that was something different than someone building something next door to them, and they don’t want it there. Chairman Reynolds thought that the “why” is a great question to ask and could be incorporated into multiple of the stations that they are looking to do.

Planner Arroyo said another housing board that they would like to get some input and a visual preference survey regarding middle missing housing. What they would likely do is they would have a board describing what exactly missing middle housing is and would have some pictures of what middle missing housing looks like and a brief description and allow people to then place a dot on whether they see it to be a desired or non-desired type. They would make it clear that this is not everywhere in the Township this is only going to be in locations where this level of density would be planned for. Just to get an indication of what type of visual preference people have for different types of really attached and denser dwelling that tends to have more of a house scale look with most of these type units, but it is not the traditional multiple-family apartment complex. They thought that this might be a good exercise and would be supplementing it with some more description information. One of the questions that they would ask, with a small sheet where people could inquire and then provide a response, is there a need for missing middle housing types and the more densely populated areas of the Township, and what are the preferred housing types for areas planned for denser development?

Vice-Chairman Gross thought that they needed to find out how important the education system or the location of schools is to decision makers relative to housing types. He thought that ultimately, they may be looking at an increase in school location or decreasing schools in the Township, in terms of location. He didn’t know if that belonged in this part or another part but thought it was an important issue that needed to be brought up and raised by the public. Planner Arroyo wanted to be clear, he is looking for some input about how important it is for people regarding school locations in terms of where they choose for their housing location?
Vice-Chairman Gross replied yes, and the type of housing that is going to be affected by the school population or school population that is going to be affected by the housing types.

Planner Arroyo said keeping in mind that these types of units would likely go where they would typically have more of the multiple-family so that impact on the school district would likely already be there by that designation anyway, they generally have fewer children in these units. These are intended to help fulfill the demands for attached products but in a manner that is maybe different than traditional multiple-family. They might not necessarily have more units but they would have a greater variety of types of multiple-family units. If they change their code and encourage these types of units over more traditional apartment types.

Planner Arroyo said that they would like to show images for different styles of single-family homes. This has been a topic of conversation and a number of residential developments that they had come before them. They were going to have some examples of several different single-family homes, one with a side entry garage, one with a front-facing garage that extends out from the front façade towards the street, sometimes referred to as townhouses, and a front-facing garage where the garage is recessed from the front façade, and they have some ordinance requirements particular in PUD that address some of these concerns. They thought that it might be helpful to show those three examples and give people an opportunity to weigh in in terms of what their preference is from the perspective of preferred housing type. He said that the question would be should the Township pursue and encourage different types of housing forms, other than traditional single-family. Chairman Reynolds thought that the building form and shape is something that they talked extensively about, especially in the last handful of meetings. He thought that a great question to ask is not just building form and shape but maybe the priority of features with developments. They have talked about not only the form of where the garage is but would it be less of a priority if it meant more greenspace or higher or lower density, more walkability features. He said not to make this topic too complex but in an order of magnitude that seems to be a topic of discussion since they talk about a lot of these things at the PUD level, and they are talking about architectural significance adjacent to general ordinances and are they meeting the intent of the ordinance if they provide other more important things than certain shapes, forms, or garage layouts.

Planner Arroyo thought that they could maybe list out several amenities such as desirable building form, walkable amenities such as sidewalks and bike paths, open space, and get a ranking in terms of what is most important to them when they look at new single-family development. He asked if that was what he was thinking? Chairman Reynolds replied yes, or he sees where he is going with talking about general forms and architectural styles and layouts. He thought that the same topic goes for that missing middle housing type. If they have a cluster development of the Cottages at Gregory Meadows and it means that there is more green space and less paving, does that make that a style of multi-family housing more desirable or do they still hold their ground and say they don’t want it. He thought it would be a good question to ask. Trustee Urbanowski thought that might be a crazy concept to put forth, and she got what he was saying, and thought that needed to be addressed. She added that they have even said the understanding of why this garage thing a thing because that is the way it is written. She thought it should be if they are ok with that then they are going to get that kind of thing, or this is a possibility. She thought that it might be a hard concept to present but thought it was a good idea.

Planner Arroyo said next was the 15-minute neighborhood station. They would have one board that would describe what a 15-minutes neighborhood is and talk about the concepts of how 15-minutes can change depending upon the type of transportation that is being used. The first handout would be is their general support, do people like the idea of trying to build a plan based on strong 15-minute neighborhoods. The next component would be to show the four that they
discussed, so, they have the Village of Lake Orion, Gingellville area which is planned for more of a village typesetting, and then the two hamlets, the Decker area and the Friendship Woods area. Showing the 5-minute walk, the 15-minute walk, the 10-minute bike ride, and the 15-minutes bike ride showing how these really all overlap based on current infrastructure. From that perspective, they want to show them what they are thinking of that there are four core areas that would serve as the basis for 15-minute neighborhoods. Some of the questions that they thought might be appropriate are, what uses would you like to see at the center of each of the 15-minute neighborhoods, what physical improvements would they like to see, in terms of safety paths, streetlights, bike lanes, sidewalks, what are the preferred types of improvements they would like to see and are there any other comments that they would like to share about the concept of 15-minute neighborhoods. Chairman Reynolds stated that one thing he would add is the question of the walk or the electric vehicle is that something people frequently use? So, if it is primarily vehicle-based, he thought that the 15-minute neighborhood idea is strong, but it helps them understand some priorities or at least the demographic that they are working within and what the residents want. Secretary St. Henry said he would be very curious to see what people think of this whole concept of 15-minute neighborhoods. He thought it was a concept that a lot of people will have a hard time grasping here in this community, just because they are so used to driving to get to places. But they may see the value in it and perhaps they will be surprised. Planner Arroyo said the interesting thing to him is they have a strong history of supporting bicycle transportation with their safety path plan and a lot of the improvements including the natural pathways that they have existing already. He was wondering if it might influence people in terms of it being accepting of this concept based on the fact that the Township even though they generally drive to a lot of places that are the predominant form of transportation they also have built a fairly robust infrastructure of non-motorized transportation that could serve as a basis for continuing to strengthen that mode of transportation.

Planner Arroyo said they were going to include in the discussion, this is all related to the 15-minute neighborhoods, what a village is, and talk about the two examples. They are also going to have a discussion of hamlets and show them some examples of what a hamlet is and how it is different and how it is a much smaller scale with much less retail development and a different type of pattern and find out if people have support for the hamlet setting and if they believe that Decker and Friendship Wood locations are appropriate for a hamlet style neighborhoods and developments. So, they will get some good input there on those four locations. Secretary St. Henry asked how much influence do they have on the future development of the Village of Lake Orion? Planner Arroyo said they don't but that is already a given, the Village is already there. What they are looking to do is to see if there is support for making the portions of the Township that are within that 15-minute core, if they are willing to support enhancing non-motorized transportation to get people to the Village of Lake Orion, as a core of that 15-minute neighborhood. That is the one example of a 15-minute neighborhood that is based on a core that is not actually within the Township itself, it is within the Village of Lake Orion. It is something that has been there for a long time and it will continue to be there, and it is one way that they can support your neighbor by using that as the basis for building infrastructure that makes it easier for people to ride bikes and to walk to get into the Village of Lake Orion as one of the four key cores. So, it is recognizing the intergovernmental corporation and recognizing if there is an asset in an adjacent community that still benefits their community they might as well do something to try to benefit from it and make it easier for people in their community to use it. That will be one of the questions, is whether or not people support that. Chairman Reynolds said also do people like that 15-minute neighborhood or do they hate that because they can't park, or do they love it because it has character, what about it draws them to that or pushes them away from that just as that baseline. Even if though they don't rule their ordinances but there is some discussion there. He thought that there are more and more properties as a whole that might be, this stuff that is south of the Village, He asked do they want it to be any different to support that corridor or not? Even if it is on the edge of that 15-minute neighborhood. Vice-
Chairman Goss said it comes down to marketing. Secretary St. Henry thought people would embrace the whole notion of hamlets and so forth, more if they were assured that they weren’t going to be hamlets that were made up of strip malls. They would look more like traditional old school villages. He thought that was part of the pushback that they have received as a community in regards to Gingellville, that a lot of those strip malls were in place. Then they decided to call it the Gingellville zone. If they do move forward with these hamlet notions and they have at Squirrel and Decker they have a blank slate, over towards Friendship, there is some development there but there is still room. If they go that way, let’s do it the right way and not necessarily let new strip malls go in because that defeats the purpose of what they are trying to accomplish.

Planner Arroyo said next would be that Natural Features and Sustainability, this is where they are going to talk about the important natural features that are within the Township. They will show the wetlands, surface water, flood hazard areas, and wooded areas. They will talk about things that can be done to act in a sustainable manner and that includes things such as recycling and use of recycled products, energy efficiency, preservation of important natural resources, alternative forms of transportation. They want to ask how important sustainable development principles are to folks who are coming to the Open House and should the Township do more to require a developer to preserve large existing trees or require developers to pay into a tree fund to install trees elsewhere in the Township in parks or along roads? Is that something that they see support or are there any other questions related to natural features and sustainability that they would like to ask?

Planner Arroyo said next is Complete Streets and Community Facilities, this is where they talk about the non-motorized network and the connection to community facilities. By providing the map they can show where important community facilities are including parks and the like as well as the police, fire, post office, and senior center. So, all of that is shown on the map and then asked for is what enhancements would they make to improve mobility, walkability, and cycling in the Township. On a separate sheet, they will have the map and they will ask them to circle an area that they think additional transportation improvements such as bike lanes, bike paths, or sidewalks would be worthwhile. So, they can get them to take their own sheet of paper with a map of the Township on it and identify locations and then they can write in and provide information on what routes they think are most important. Vice-Chairman Gross thought that this also should indicate where the schools are at the various levels, elementary, middle, high school as a part of the community. Planner Arroyo thought that was a great plan he will make sure that the schools are on there as well. Secretary St. Henry asked if it makes sense somewhere in this plan to acknowledge, they all hear every year about the condition of a lot of their roads, and yes, they don’t have control over much of that. Does it make sense somewhere in this plan or in these discussions to address the road condition situation? At the very least provide people with accurate information about how roads are taken care of. They all know the answer but the average person in this community still thinks that the Township is in charge of Heights Rd. He said maybe this is not the right place to include a section about the road conditions but that is a big issue in the Township. Chairman Reynolds said he didn’t think that it hurts to discuss conditions and he thought for them they have different government agencies and partnerships that help them accomplish those items and keep them maintained. For him having that discussion about what kinds of transportation do they use helps aid that not that that elevates the issue but just to say are you 98% dependent on your car and you don’t even own a bike and they don’t see themselves buying an e-bike. So, therefore, potentially with their priorities of safety paths or other features that they go after maybe it doesn’t influence those discussion points to say they need to reprioritize. They can always say it is important to them whether that accomplishes their end goal. Secretary St. Henry said he can guarantee that the conditions of their roads will come up in these focus groups and Open House discussions. Because people don’t understand how roads are taken care of. He thought it was incumbent on
them to do their best to make sure by the time they leave that they have a better idea of how the roads are taken care of in this Township. Planning & Zoning Director said maybe a “Did you know” type of board. Did you know that Townships don’t own roads, it is the Road Commission here is their number. Did you know how many lakes, parks, miles of trails, so they can see on a board as they are at the Open House just to educate them. Secretary St. Henry said that they could sit there and highlight all the different partners that the Township works with on a daily basis, whether it is the Road Commission or other organizations that tie that into some of these things that they want to highlight.

Chairman Reynolds stated that he didn’t think it hurts to preamble the Master Plan can speak to that. They have other resources out there but it doesn’t hurt to discuss to say there is a Township and a Village, there are people that don’t understand that level. The fact that they have parks, they have Township Parks, there are Oakland County Parks, and not just to go on and on. They have a mixing pot of entities that support our goals and visions, they have control over some, and they like to think influence many others, and help guide them. Planner Arroyo said that they will make sure that they include some of that information on the board that deals with the fact that the Township does not own the roads, and give some background information.

Planner Arroyo said that they are showing the Land Use classification just to show them how land is currently being used. They are going to ask for input for them to mark on, they will have a copy of it on an 8.5x11. People think that there are areas that are potentials for redevelopment, where they might see something change. Where they have something currently existing that maybe can be redeveloped into something else. Are there missing land uses that the Township should be seeking to bring here? Maybe it is a type of restaurant, store, or some type of industry, or a housing type, whatever that might be, they want to ask people if there something missing that really should be here? And then are the land uses that the Township should be discouraging? Getting some input on what they would like to see less of or maybe not see in the level that they have seen in the past.

Planner Arroyo said that the final board is a lot of fun. They have used this type of board and then customize it to the community. What they like to do is give people six dots and tell them each dot represents one million dollars. These are potential spending priorities bike paths, sidewalks, shade trees, widening roads, expanding transit, natural resource protection, extending water and sewer to undeveloped areas, community art projects, police and fire facilities, new and improved parks. If they could spend their money and they had six million dollars, how would they spend it? Would they put all six of their dots in one of those boxes? Would they spread them out over several different categories? They can put them where ever they want and that is the last thing they do is tell them where their spending priorities are. It will give them an insight into how important certain improvements are in what they see as being the top priority within the community.

Vice-Chairman Gross asked if there should be another column, something that we are missing? Planner Arroyo replied that they could, what they could do is have a sheet of paper that would provide people the opportunity to write down other. They can actually have a board with post-it notes and they can write on that a different category and then pop it up on a blank board next to it.

Trustee Urbanowski asked why would they include widen roads? Chairman Reynolds replied that it is just getting an idea, not all of these things are necessarily Planning Commission items but just to understand what is important to people. Planner Arroyo said capital improvements are an important part of planning, and this is a way to start thinking about important capital improvements that might have priorities.
Secretary St. Henry asked Planer Arroyo how they manage expectations when people fill this out? Let’s say half the stickers go into one of these buckets, and the people leave and expect them to reprioritize our budgets accordingly. The only issue he had with doing something like this is that they are setting themselves up to a certain extent when it comes to the expectations of people when they see this completed. Planner Arroyo replied that the Planning Commission is looking for input in terms of what is important to the public. If they find that the majority of people say they want new parks or bike paths, then that is going to have an impact on how they look at the Master Plan and the recommendations. It might influence the importance that the plan places on certain types of amenities and some case capital improvements. He thought if they tell them what this is, it is a long-range plan, it is a guide over a 20-year period so not everything is going to happen overnight but it does give the Planning Commission information in trying to set some priorities. When they are done with the plan, they are going to have a lot of great ideas and projects but it is nice to know where people think the priorities are, so, they may use that information when they get to the very end of the plan and they are going through implementation and trying to establish what projects are going to be short-term projects and which one might be more long-term, they might be influences by this type of public input to determine which one should have higher priority. Secretary St. Henry agreed. He said that it is just a guide over a 20-year period. He thought that was important that everyone understands that when they go to complete this, that this stuff is not going to happen overnight.

Commissioner Walker asked Planer Arroyo how about one or two sentence disclaimers saying that the Planning Commission or the Township cares about what they think. They have prepared this chart asking for their opinion so that when they do their deliberations, they have their interests at heart. That way they are not promising anything they are just asking them for their opinion.

Vice-Chairman Gross said this could be kind of a segue into determining whether our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats might be relative to the Master Plan.

Chairman Reynolds said that one item that he wanted to make sure that they consider is having some prompts or some idea generators. He thought that one thing is that people are fearful of coming to these because they don’t believe that they are qualified. He wanted to make sure that there were prompts or some sort of way to preemptively encourage the discussion or help them translate their ideas. He thought that would be helpful whether that be pictures or idea cards.

Planner Arroyo said that they want to encourage people to come here and participate and do everything they can. He thought it was nice that they have the online option as well as the in-person option to this.

Secretary St. Henry asked if this was more like an Open House, where people could spend one minute at a booth, or spend 20-minutes, or are they put together in groups and every ten minutes they rotate to another section? Planner Arroyo replied it is much more informal. He said that people can come in and they will start at one, they are basically directed from a welcome station and then they start towards the next station but they are free to go anywhere they want and spend as much time at any of the stations. They would like to have a Planner Commissioner at each station, and their staff will be rotating around. They may likely do a very brief presentation once or twice during the Open House just to give people an overview of why they are here but it is much more informal and it is done that way to make people feel relaxed and make it where they can talk one on one and get some information.

Planner Arroyo said they think that it might be a good idea, they have success in the past to potentially doing this Open House between 4-6:30 pm before one of the Planning Commission
meetings. He thought that maybe the 16th could be a priority because the 2nd is only a few days from Memorial Day, which is Memorial Day week. He was thinking the 16th could be a good date. He knew that Planning & Zoning Director Girling was doing some research on the availability of the Orion Center. He said to expect to see more communication about a potential date, but that is kind of a target of what they are looking at right now.

Commissioner Walker asked if there were any plans to send out another invitation to the citizens between now and these meetings? How are they going to tell them if they haven’t told them so far about this? Planner Arroyo said to keep in mind, they are also planning a second Open House after there is a substantial draft of the plans to explain what some of their ideas are and to give people a chance to have input there, this will not be the last time for them to provide input to them.

Secretary St. Henry thought an easy way to do that, put together a short news release, get it out to not just our local community paper but also to the regional papers and some high-impact media that people go to and get it out there.

5. ADJOURNMENT
Moved by Commissioner Gross, seconded by Commissioner Walker to adjourn the meeting at 7:03 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]

Debra Walton
PC/ZBA Recording Secretary
Charter Township of Orion

May 5, 2021
Planning Commission Approval Date