

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF ORION PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
PP-2021-07, 5-YEAR MASTER PLAN UPDATE
PUBLIC HEARING – WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 2022

The Charter Township of Orion Planning Commission held a Public Hearing on Wednesday, July 20, 2022, at 7:05 p.m. at the Orion Township Municipal Complex Board Room 2323 Joslyn Road, Lake Orion, MI 48360.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

Scott Reynolds, Chairman	Derek Brackon, Commissioner
Don Gross, Vice Chairman	Joe St. Henry, Secretary
Kim Urbanowski, BOT Rep to PC	Don Walker, PC Rep to ZBA

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT:

Jessica Gingell, Commissioner

CONSULTANTS PRESENT:

Rod Arroyo, (Township Planner) of Giffels Webster
Matt Wojciechowski (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:

Jonathan Forrest	Laura Schueller
Matthew Koneda	Heather Smiley
Pat Ebner	Carol Ebner
Tina Hein	Sandy Walker
Ray Malikis	Delore Malikis
Marilyn Hester	Dan Hester
Tom William	Katheryn Kennedy
Joseph Salome	Sandra Vanderlaan

PC-2021-07, 5-Year Master Plan Update

Chairman Reynolds asked Planner Arroyo to give an overview of the Master Plan.

Planner Arroyo said that Matt Wojciechowski and Eric Pietsch were with him all from Giffels Webster. He was pleased to be working with the Planning Commission on their update to the Master Plan. He had a few slides he wanted to go through to provide an overview of the process.

Planner Arroyo said he thought it might be helpful to talk about what is a Master Plan. Number one it is a long-range vision for the future. It enables the Planning Commission to look beyond what they typically do at a typical meeting which is looking at site plans and looking at current conditions, and rather look to the future. This plan is prepared in conformance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act which sets forth the procedures and standards. The Master Plan itself provides a guide for the future. He thought it was important to point out that a Master Plan is not a zoning ordinance it does not impact the zoning of their property directly, it does not change any ordinance, it is a policy document. The State Statute says that the Planning Commission is the body that prepares that document, and the Planning Commission approves that document. Any change to a law, in this particular case they are talking about land use law, would be the zoning ordinance, that would require a different process, first coming to Planning Commission, then having a public hearing, and then ultimately the final action would be the Township Board would have to amend the zoning map and the zoning ordinance. That is not what this is about tonight, this is about the Master Plan. It provides a framework for looking at long-range decisions. It provides a way of looking at how various areas of the community have different characteristics and different abilities to potentially have different land uses. That is part of the study that goes on as part of this process and it also encourages partnership, looking at opportunities for the community is often engaged with other entities and for example recreation. They have state recreation areas here, they have

county parks, they have local parks and recreation. All of those coordinates provide an opportunity to serve the residents of the community.

Planner Arroyo said the plan itself starts off by describing the purpose it has an executive summary. It also gives a brief history of the community, the regional setting, and how this community is in relationship to the surrounding area. It discusses existing land use which is how land is being used today, and it talks about demographics, so they have a profile, and it has been updated to include 2020 census information. It also has some forecasted information in terms of changes and demographics. It looks at the local economy statistical data regarding the local economy, they have community facilities, a description of the various facilities that are provided such as police stations, and fire stations, all of those things are documented in the report. Then it talks about the environment and natural features.

Planner Arroyo stated that the next stage really starts to get into the plan, looking towards the future. One of the most important things about doing a plan is public input. He will talk about all of the steps that were taken to get public input throughout this process. Goals and Objectives are the statements that the Planning Commission develops that help establish the framework for the Master Plan. Then the various chapters, the key elements of the plan including housing and density, economic development, complete streets which is essentially the transportation element, and then the future land use, and the future land use plan now. Then finally there is a guide towards implementation, once they have a plan in place, they want to be able to implement it. In this case, they have what is called a zoning plan which is something that is required by State Statute and that just describes how the Master Plan aligns with the zoning ordinance and how changes might occur in the future as the plan is implemented. It also includes action strategies, which are specific things that can be done by the Planning Commission and by others to implement the plan.

Planning Arroyo said starting off at the beginning they have a brief history, there are some photographs and some stories behind the history of the Township just to provide a setting for the discussion that is included in the plan. Existing conditions talked about demographics and economics, and they are summarized hopefully in a way that makes it easy to read. They used to do Master Plans they had a lot of text, and it wasn't always that exciting to go through them. Now they have some infographics and some other charts, and it just makes it a little easier to understand the information.

Planner Arroyo stated that natural features there quite a bit of mapping that was done as part of this to document where, for example, flood hazards areas are, where wetlands are, where woodlands and all those other important natural features that are included in the community.

Planner Arroyo said public input and community engagement. He did want to spend some time addressing this because there has been a considered effort to involve the public in this process. For one thing, the Township website has been a resource from the very beginning, there has been information on the Township website about the plan. One of the first things that they did when they started this plan was there was an online survey that was prepared, and they had a very good response they had over 600 responses from residents in this community to the survey. That is more than they typically see, so congratulations to the community for really reaching out and responding to the Master Plan survey.

Planner Arroyo said they also conducted two Open Houses, which is also somewhat unusual. Usually, with a Master Plan, they might have one Open House, in this case, they had two. The very first one was in June 2021, and because of the COVID pandemic, they actually did that when they had an in-person version and an online version. If they wanted to come in person, they could, and if they wanted to participate online, they could. They had about 45 people come in person to the Orion Center where they held that and then they had approximately 30 people participate online with the Open House.

Planner Arroyo said they also had a series of Planning Commission study sessions. He showed them the dates that those occurred, as well as when the Master Plan was on the agenda for the regular meeting. There was a total of 13 workshops starting in February of 2021, where the Planning Commission met here

11 of those were 6 p.m. work sessions, and the other two were the Open Houses. During those work sessions which were open to the public and they had the public attend, in some cases, they went through the process of studying the Township, looking at the information, and going through the Future Land Use Map. Rather painstakingly looking section by section at how the community is developing, how it has developed, and what the future was. Once again 22 meetings it has been on the agenda for the Planning Commission as they have gone through this process.

Planner Arroyo stated in addition they had some special focus groups in meetings, they had what is called a staff leadership advanced meeting where the Township staff came together and provided input, that was back in February of 2021. They had a student art contest where students in the area were allowed to submit some art related to the plan, some of that is included in the Master Plan. Then they had another Open House in this building in May 2022, where they had approximately 25 people attend, and another opportunity for people to see the draft plan and discuss that. Today is the Public Hearing on the document.

Planner Arroyo said one of the things they tried to do with this Master Plan versus the previous one is to try to make it easier to digest, and easier to understand. In the previous Master Plan from 2015, if they wanted to read about the goals and objectives, they had to go through about 27 pages. They found as they were reviewing it, particularly when they were looking at developer projects, trying to get the information from the plan was a little difficult when the goals and objectives are spread out over 27 pages. They thought about how they might do that a little differently, so they compressed things and kind of revisited how it is approached. They have a vision statement, and goals on one page, they consolidated approximately 30 goals into five key topic areas. Then they put the objectives on three pages and then they moved the action strategies to the end of the plan along with the zoning plan to provide a good outline that makes sense and is hopefully easier to follow.

Planner Arroyo showed them the vision statement that was grafted as part of this and thought it was helpful for the Planning Commission and set the stage for the planning work that was done.

Planner Arroyo said he wanted to show them the chapters. They have a housing plan where they focused on housing. This does include a residential density plan, so that is a separate map that shows density ranges for various locations within the community. He added that these ranges are there for a reason, this is a long-range plan, and they need to look at areas in more detail when it comes time for consideration of a change in zoning for example. They may not be guaranteed the highest density in the range they may end up at the lowest density in the range, or even somewhere in the middle. That will be a decision that will be made once a zoning application is made to the Township, the Planning Commission holds a public hearing they then study it and then make a recommendation to the Township Board, and then the Township Board makes the ultimate decision. This sets a range of potential densities depending upon the location within the community.

Planner Arroyo said they also have an economic development plan. One of the things that the Township is striving to do is to become certified by the Michigan Economic Development Corporations, Redevelopment Ready Communities Program, part of that is to have an economic development plan. An Economic Development Plan is included and part of what they did with this process was they actually did a market analysis and looked at the real potential for various housing, retail, office, and industrial growth over the next ten years, and that is documented in the plan. They also included, because it is a requirement of the Redevelopment Ready Communities Program, they looked at three different potential development sites, the information is documented there, and they talked about some development potential on those sites.

Planner Arroyo said that the Complete Streets Plan, which is also a requirement of the State Statute, that they look at their transportation, that they look at both motorized and non-motorized transportation. They have a separate plan that has the safety path plan, as it has been traditionally known, that is the complete

streets plan. Then the thoroughfare plan or the master right-of-way plan tends to deal more with motorized vehicles and how they travel through the community.

Planner Arroyo said that the Future Land Use Map is a policy guide that directs certain locations within the community where certain land uses make the most sense and there is a link. When you look at this it does reference back to the residential density plan because if they are trying to understand what the residential areas mean in terms of density go look at the residential density plan.

Planner Arroyo said they also see circles on the Future Land Use Map there are four of them, one is within Lake Orion, so it is technically outside of the boundary, but it is a hub obviously of activity. Then they have three others and those are what they call 15-minute neighborhoods. The concept of a 15-minute neighborhood is that as the community grows the Township would like to be in a position where they would like to get to these certain core areas that offer basic goods and services, like a grocery store, or a place to go out to eat, or a small market, it would be nice if they had the opportunity to take another form of transportation besides their car. The concept behind this is these 15-minutes are defined by how long it would take them on a bicycle to get from the edge to the core of the 15-minute neighborhood. It is ruffly a three-mile radius traveling at about 12 MPH, which is a typical speed for being on a bicycle. What that looks like is when they spread it out over the Township, they can see that these four areas, the four concentric circles, which they are not really because this is showing real travel time today, do overlap. They almost have 100% of the community covered where they could ride a bike to one of these four locations. Right now, some of them already offer those basic goods and services, in fact, three of them do, and one may have more of that in the future. It provides an opportunity to potentially either walk, ride a bike, or take a car in order to visit all of these so, opening the opportunity for different forms of transportation. Gas prices are up they may want to look at something different, maybe that is the time they ride your bike to go out to eat or to go pick up something at the store, you need a gallon of milk they can throw it on the back of their bike and go back. It is nice to have those options as world conditions change and impact how the cost of living within the community might change.

Planner Arroyo said he did mention action strategies, they do have the zoning plan and then all of those action strategies, are broken out into different types of actions. Some of those actions may involve amending the zoning map, others may involve taking an advocacy position, trying to promote for example the protection of certain natural features, and sometimes the Township reaches out to other organizations. Whether they be nonprofit or other governmental entities and try to work together to try to preserve some the natural features or work together to try to preserve a trail or some other features such as that. Some of them are related to capital improvements, those are large expenditures that the Township or other governmental agencies may have to incur, and some of them fall into what they call, the "other category".

Planner Arroyo stated that some previous actions that have happened, as required by State law the Township Board authorize the distribution of the draft plan to reviewing agencies and adjacent communities, so all adjacent communities got a copy. The various reviewing agencies like the County, SEMCOG, the Road Commission, MDOT, and other entities like that all were getting copies in accordance with the typical process. There was a 63-day review period, during that period the Master Plan was also available on the Townships website. And as required Oakland County did review this, the Townships are required to send their plans for review, that is a State law requirement. The Oakland County Coordinating Zoning Committee found that this draft is not inconsistent with any city, village, or township plan, that received notice of the draft plan. Then they also received other comments that were included in their packet.

Planner Arroyo said the next step in this process is to conduct the public hearing and then ultimately when the Planning Commission is ready, they would then adopt the Master Plan.

Chairman Reynolds said he would like to open it up to citizens who are present for public comment. If they would like to make a comment, they can step up to the podium please keep your one trip to three minutes so they can give everyone the opportunity to speak. If and when they step up to the podium,

please state their name and address for the record, and clearly speak into the microphone so they can have them on record.

Ms. Katheryn Kennedy 690 Rochester said she did submit emails to them before coming here. She would actually request that they reject this plan in its entirety, it is supposed to be a long-term plan. In the very beginning, it says that it was intended for 10-20 years but they just did one in 2015, and this one was started in 2020, however, it was only started with Giffels Webster, Planning Commission, and three citizens throughout the planning period. When the hearing for the Open House she attended on May 18th, they already had it all put together. There really wasn't the type of citizen input that there should be. They also had a Coordinating Zoning Committee, that he mentioned, yes it was held on July 7th and the packet they received that evening at 7 p.m. was different than before, it was now a revision seven. The packet that was sent to the County was a revision six. She did attach a file with some of the notes. She had some real serious concerns about a lot of things beyond the point that it wasn't done by the citizens. It seems to be geared towards the objectives of Oakland County to urbanize this area. They have continued to have a Regional Transportation Board even though they vote against it. She would point their attention to the thoroughfare Master Plan, they expect to have these roads in this way in the next five years and maybe that is what the five million that is probably being borrowed for the State. Lapeer they are expecting as an interstate, now, she knows Lapeer she didn't know where they could put an interstate and all of those businesses would be wiped out, what are they thinking. They also have listed Baldwin Rd. as a major thoroughfare 150-ft. right-of-way. Again, where do they put it, they just did all of the roads, they just did all of those roundabouts, and they have a business up against them. The two signs across from Friendship Park are for sale signs, and in this plan, it shows high-density housing. They have created new higher density than they have ever had for residential housing. The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act that he mentioned, she actually mentioned too because the Legislative Committee on July 12th tried to pass a resolution to go forward at Oakland County, they tabled it for now, but they are trying to take control of all of their real estate from a State level. She did attend a conference where they explained what they are doing even though MICHA they have a website they can type in, but she didn't have a chance to compile it but would be glad to meet with them separately. She asked them to please reject any of these changes. A lot of these roads are wider than what they have available unless they wipe out the lakes.

Mr. Jonathan Forrest 1701 Oneida Trail asked what is a small town? Why is it such a perverse notion to what to keep one the way it is? Though many contemporaries think small towns of America are backward, uncultured, and uncivilized, the truth is the opposite. Small towns have an identity that makes them unique. The people in small town communities know each other, care for each other, and love each other. Orion Township is no exception, nor should it be, they mustn't allow outside sources to dictate Orion Township and its citizens. They are not Pontiac, they are not Rochester, they are not Royal Oak, Flint, or Detroit, they are Orion. People come to live here because it is less busy than the big cities. If they adopt this Master Plan, they will become like every other community that developed into a world hub devoid of identity. They implore them to keep Orion Township how it should be a place where living is a vacation.

Ms. Heather Smiley stated she has been an Orion Township resident for the last 21 years. She is a Detroit native so coming out here she knew the first couple of months were a little difficult to sleep because of the frogs and the natural elements. Every day she gets upset seeing the new zoning changes, seeing the destruction of their woods before there is even a purchase of a property. They have areas that are already cleared of trees that are able to be developed but yet there are builders that want to come in and take what little habitat and natural development areas that they have available. It really upsets her because she sees a vision of a dollar is stronger than the vision of their community. She didn't know if people are familiar with Rochester and Rochester Hills, but Rochester pretty much used their last part of the parcel for development because they just grew too big too quickly. She knew that living off of Clarkston Rd. that there are some parcels around her that they want to put in multiple homes that they don't have the infrastructure for, and she is scared to know how it is going to affect their well and septic, and things of that nature. She moved out here to make a better life for her family to enjoy the natural element that they call the Village of Orion Township, and it really makes her sad to see it being destroyed. She hoped that the love of the community is stronger than the love of the mighty dollar on this

Commission. She wasn't saying that they don't have room to grow because obviously, they can't stop growth, but she thought that they needed to be mindful of the citizens and the residents that live here, why they live here, and why they moved here, and why they continue to love their community. It is not because of the duplexes and the high 15-minute density places, it is because you can drive for 15-minutes and see nature, see a hawk, turkey, and deer, that is why they live in Orion Township. If she wanted to see concrete, she would just go back to Detroit quite frankly. She thought the Planning Commission did a great job, honestly, she really appreciates all the ways they try to incorporate saving nature. She knew they had a tough job, but there are just some things that they have to stand firm in.

Ms. Marilyn Hester 1207 Hemingway stated that in this Master Plan she didn't see anything about what they are going to do about their first responders as far as fire, police protection, and EMS. She was concerned about all of the development going on. They are going to need more support.

Ms. Carol Ebner 768 Sherry Dr. said she agreed with all of these other comments. They moved out here because it was rural, not urban not a city. She could see in doing some of these improvements, but she is also concerned about the traffic. She lives off of Clarkston Rd. and they are talking about putting in multi-family dwellings. The traffic is already terrible on that road, and everybody cuts down their road. They have complained to the Township, and to other people about the amount of traffic and the speed on their road. The road is in terrible condition because of all of the traffic. The other multi-family developments around here have all kinds of crime. There are all kinds of problems off of Kimberly Rd. in those apartments, her niece lived a ½ mile from the Sheriff's Department, there were shootings and stabbings in those apartments, and she just heard there was a murder there last week. She was very concerned about the crime and everything else going on around here with all of this building and concrete.

M. Tom Williams 1160, 1180, 1998, 1212 Hemingway said on their street at one point Silverman wanted to develop the whole thing and he ended up buying the property from Silverman from keeping them from developing their street. How many more people does it take, like him, to invest in the community to stop some of this development? The traffic is horrible down their road anyway, and they have a dirt road, people fly down through there, and he didn't see anything in the Master Plan that addresses any of that.

Mr. Matt Konedo 474 Green Hill Lane said he was born in Detroit his family was kind enough to move to Novi to get away from Detroit in the mid- '70s. His wife and he were able to get married and they moved to Troy in the hope they could find a quiet neighborhood, it lasted for about two years, and then the sprawl happened. They were grateful to find and be able to afford a home here because it reminded them of Novi and Northville where they spent their youth. There were parks, it was green, and there was a community. What he was afraid of here with all of the proposals of low-income high-density mass transit is none of those things equal safety, they never have in any community, any city, any urban area. Why do they think that they are going to be different? Like one of the other speakers said there is no facilitation or increase in police and fire that they can see that was readily apparent. They would have to increase the fire and police significantly to provide the level of safety that they have learned to love and appreciate here. Again, their job is not easy, they are citizens just like us, and they probably don't get paid much at all if anything to do this job. He truly appreciated them working on this his job he also has to do 5-year and 10-year plans it is part of what they do. He would just like it to be something that really means something. They are a place where living is a vacation. He feels that if they continue to go down the road of suburban sprawl that will not be the case.

Ms. Tina Hein 630 N. Blocki said that from everything that she has listened to, and she had spoken last time when she was at the meeting to definitely, please reject this plan. She stated last time they need to have a balance, not too much overgrowth. She did want to bring it up because they are talking about the development and bringing in more housing, people, stores, and restaurants. Have they thought about a level one trauma hospital here? Have they thought about that? If they are going to bring more and more people here, they really need to think about that. She did hear that they plan on cutting safety, someone else mentioned that a couple of other people, cutting the safety budget, the policing, fire, and EMS, is really not a good idea. As far as the hospital if something happens lots of car accidents here, Lapeer Rd.

is a nightmare, especially heading north on Lapeer to get to Oxford. It took her almost 30 minutes one time to get to an appointment for 3 miles. That is really something that they need to think about. The nearest hospital they have to go to is Lapeer, Troy, or Pontiac.

Ms. Sandra Rahman 9308 Oakmont Dr. said she was here to piggyback on everything everybody is saying. Number one she would be precautious of their development here. They have a lot of people on their board that are builders, and developers and they have relatives in Rochester, Auburn Hills. In the little circle, they are building our Board Members have been doing this for years. She worries about their conflict of interest developing around here, the kickbacks, and the marijuana situation in the County here. For one they have had so many accidents now on Lapeer Rd., deadly accidents, and they don't have a rush hour hospital to go to piggybacking to that. Everyone is in a hurry to develop but nobody is paying attention to what is going on right now. She would precaution them to worry about what is going on in their community right now rather than worrying about rushing through this thing that they can think through a little longer. And to consider what is really going on with the developers, the board members, and the circle of friends running this community.

Mr. Noah Stevens 3507 Pasadena stated that he was the last house on the left the dead-end Cottages of Gregory Meadows are being built right next to him. It didn't appear that based on that development and this Master Plan that they are taking into consideration the current homeowners. Kind of like everybody that is stating stuff here today. Infrastructure is a huge thing, traffic, fire, EMS, and police, but he was also a younger guy he has a family they don't have children in schools yet, but they will soon. All of this extra development concerns him about what is going to happen with all the extra students in the schools, and if his children will be able to get the same level of education that Orion Township residents receive today. He would appreciate that if they took into consideration all of the infrastructure not just hospitals, and traffic, but also the schools as well.

Ms. Sandy Walker 2565 Mueller Rd. said she believed that the property that she and her husband own for over 20 years is the only property on Judah Lake that has a creek coming off of Judah Lake running through their property and going into the nature center that she saw on the document. She was a little concerned about all that she was hearing here. She used to be the last house on the left just like that gentleman just said she used to be that house until they built that big giant neighborhood and plowed all the woods down. Now the traffic just flows down here street. Over the bridge, they had to build over the creek. She works for the largest telephone company in the world, she was sure they knew who that was. There are over 30,000 people in here division, if she only got 600 surveys back from sending out something to those 30,000 people she would be concerned, if that survey was only 600 people came back or only 45 people attended a meeting of her 30,000 people that she works with. Another time 25 people showed up they have 23 people here tonight, and she just heard about this. She was sorry she didn't know about this sooner she saw they had a 63-day review period. She guesses she didn't read the Lake Orion Review or wherever else she was supposed, to know when this was going on. She would like to keep their little town rural. Baldwin is a disaster she has to go up it every day it is just a massive piece of cement that just has cars whipping all day long. She said she was going to gracefully ask them to reject this plan.

Ms. Chris Broquet, 110 S. Newman Rd. said she wasn't prepared to speak so bear with her. She noticed on the Master Plan they believe there are only 17 acres of rural property in Orion Township. 1990's her family moved to Rochester and there was a lady on Crooks or Livernois she forgot it had a barn, farm, a pony, and a pottery studio. She used to put a sign out, advertising that she sold pottery. As the place developed, they told her she couldn't have the sign anymore. She told them this is my livelihood and farm and so what she did was she changed her last name she hyphenated to Pottery so she could have Pottery on the mailbox. Then Rochester City said they don't allow ponies and farms anymore, so they were pushed out and they were there forever. What she was thinking was that there are many more people in Orion Township that farm, not all people commercially sell things they may make milk, honey, or vegetables for their family but either way if the Planning Committee only thinks there are 17 acres of farmland are they going to say the same thing to them because they don't feel that they exist at all. That

is what she is worried about in the Master Plan. She believed that there should be a plan saying, hey well this area can't be for big commerce, or that area can't be for big commerce. Let's be sensible and not grow willy-nilly she understood that but when the plan initially doesn't actually reflect what is in Orion Township that is what she worries about. As far as low-income housing a lot of people think that more people should be allowed to live in the area, she agreed, but a lot of times they cut corners on that housing, and the buildings don't last. Ask people that live in moderately priced apartments in Lake Orion, they are having a problem finding custodians and janitors to work to keep it nice, this is moderately priced, not a luxury, not low income, just people earning a living. She wondered how this is all going to stay nice if people can't find custodians now. Speaking about the hospitals they just lost another urgent care that closed up because there is no staff. Those are just a couple of things to keep in mind that they might not have thought about.

Chairman Reynolds asked Secretary St. Henry to do a tally of the citizen letters they received.

Secretary St. Henry stated that they have received a number of comments from citizens, and he was going to read their names. All of them are opposed to the Master Plan. The names of the folks that wrote to them are Kathryn Kennedy, Stanley and Carolyn Stevens, Andrea Pupkiewicz, Aubrey Zufelt, Jan Kruszewski, Tina Hein, Karen Koneda, Joyce, Linda Greer, Bob Steinheiser, Adrian Ratza, Kevin Breslin, and Timothy Munsell.

Secretary St. Henry added that they also received comments from Donni Steele, Gary Roberts, Water Resources Commissioner, and the Oakland County Road Commission submitted comments.

Trustee Urbanowski said a couple of people said something about public safety concerns. She had the same concern, and she did sit down with their Fire Chief and their Lieutenant and expressed her concern. She has gotten no information that they would be any kind of trouble with their plan. They are confident that the staff they have now and the capability that they have is going to continue to be sufficient for their community. Someone mentioned talking of cutting their safety budget, she is a Township Trustee, and she can tell them right now she has never heard that not at all. In terms of hospitals, they have to have a certificate of need for that that has nothing to do with anything that they do here, that is a difficult thing to get for one thing. Then for infrastructure, she is also the representative of the Public Works department, so she frequently talks to the people in Water in Sewer Department. They have one of the newest systems in the County and they have no issues in terms of water and sewer infrastructure issues and they always look at that when they look at these plans.

Commissioner Walker said as opposed to what Trustee Urbanowski just said his comments are going to be more to the heart of the matter. He is a 34-year resident of this Township. He would love to be living in the Township that he moved into, he truly would, it is not going to happen, it is dreadful. You are all correct about the traffic, the number of people, the number of subdivisions, the number of buildings, every one of you is right, but that is called progress. He wasn't saying it was a good thing, but it is what it is. None of you will be able to turn the clock back, he can't, this Commission can't. While they are talking about the clock, he thought he was the only one here last time when the last Master Plan was submitted. He was still appalled at you and your neighbors, they are telling them they didn't know about this, it was the same thing 5-years ago. The populous said they didn't know, they put it in the Orion Review, they put it on ONTV they put it wherever they could put it, but they can't make them listen to it, they can't make them think about it. Now when the time is nye now you are all upset. He didn't blame them for being upset if he could be he would be upset also but he can't be, so he isn't upset. It is true it is how it is and even now adding the 23 of you, how many people have they heard from, very few of the 38,000 people that live in this Township. Shame on all of you. They should have been here quicker and more. He wasn't sure if it would have made a big difference, but it might of.

Secretary St. Henry stated that he appreciated everyone coming out here and the comments from people during the Open Houses and during the other opportunities to provide input for this report. His wife and their two families have lived here for over 90 years. His wife's family moved here in 1972 and he moved

here in 1982 with his family from out of state but was actually born in Detroit. If any of them had followed this Planning Commission over the last couple of years especially they would notice that they have the very same concerns that they do in regard to traffic, utilities, density, general overall growth and population, the importance of preserving the natural character of their community. If they go back through the couple hundred cases that they have reviewed over this time they would see that many times they have shot down developments for all of those concerns. Unfortunately, in some cases, one of the gentlemen that came up and mentioned Gregory Meadows for example. They rejected Gregory Meadows, the Township Board rejected Gregory Meadows, unfortunately, the developer decided to take this to the courts. Every time this has gone before the courts since he has been on the Planning Commission since 2013, he was involved in that Master Plan, courts rule in favor of private property owners every time. They come back to them, and they say they are not going to like how they are going to rule against this it is time to make a compromise with the builder, for example, so they do that. Often times they are able to negotiate different amenities, and different plans that address some of their initial needs. If they don't do that the builder goes back to their original plan and the courts approve it. That is a challenge they face, and they get frustrated every week when they are looking at different plans.

Secretary St. Henry said he will say this about this Planning Commission, and he has seen people come and go over the last 7 or 8 years except for Commissioner Walker. This group is probably the most conservative group that he has ever been involved with in terms of trying to preserve the natural/historical character of their community Orion Township and development in progress. It is true that in the past they had builders on this Planning Commission, they have had Civil Engineers, they had developers, and he sat back, and they were very competent and very personable, and they knew their jobs, but he wondered if there was a conflict of interest. He could tell them that they don't have current professionals on this Board that is involved in any of that with the exception of their chairperson who is an architect, and it is very good to have him on this Board because he understands plans probably better than any of them. And Mr. Wortman is retired, and he has been in the planning industry. He appreciates the fact that they don't have what he would consider in the past ulterior motives, and that is not even right, because the people that were on this Board before did a great job. From an optics perspective, he could understand where people would have concerns. This group pays more attention to the needs of their community, and the historical makeup of their community than any group that he has ever been a part of. There are people asking if this is going to be the next Rochester or Troy. When his family moved here in 1982 his aunt was a realtor in Ortonville and his father looked around for a home his friends told him he should move to Troy or Novi, and his dad said he couldn't afford that. He talked to his aunt who was a realtor in Ortonville, and she said that, in the early '80s, you want to look at Lake Orion, Clarkston, Oxford, that is where the growth is going to happen next, and she was dead right. When he moved here there were about 20,000 people in the Township now, they are up to 38,000 or 40,000 people in the Township it is not a small town anymore. The signs of growing beyond a small rural community ended in the late '80s when the building boom started to take off. Quite frankly if you didn't see this coming you were living under a rock. That being said they have to recognize they have over 100 tier one and tier two auto suppliers supplying not just the Detroit three automakers but the entire world automotive industry here. They are a major economic development hub for the state of Michigan and North America especially as it relates to the automotive industry, and robotics industries, growing quickly in aerospace and defense. If they want those industries to flourish, and he thought they did, and a lot of them work at those they have to address some of the housing issues in their community. The bottom line is there are not enough places for people to live in northern Oakland County. They work in northern Oakland County, but some people travel far distances to come to work. The younger professionals and the younger families don't necessarily live in \$400,000 - \$500,000 houses or they can't afford them just yet, someday they will. That is why, over the last couple of years have taken a close look at a lot of the housing developments, and Planner Arroyo has spoken about this many times with that middle-level housing, and it is something they lack in this community. His parent moved back from up north and they could not find a place to live in Lake Orion as retirees. His older daughter is just starting a family, and he has a grandson now, they wanted to move to Lake Orion, but they couldn't find a place to live, so they are ready to buy their first home. This is the issue they are wrestling with. Yes, they know that apartments, townhomes, and other middle market housing developments are new to a large extent they have to find the right place for them in their

community. They have shot down a couple over the last 6-7 months because they recognize their value of them, and the demand they just thought they were in the wrong place. They told the builders to go back to the drawing board here are some other options to consider, and they hope they will consider them, it doesn't mean they will approve them next time, but they are always open to ideas for responsible development. That is what this group is most interested in is responsible development. Balancing the need for what they call progress with trying to be responsible for the needs and desires of their current residents. It is a balancing act, and it is not easy, but they have to think about when they are not here anymore in future generations and balancing progress with the natural habitat of their beautiful community and what their residents want now, and it is not always easy. He thought personally this Master Plan was put together with a heck of a lot of thought by many people much more so than the Master Plan he was involved with before and part of that was because they had a new Planner come in with some new ideas. Every page of that Master Plan was reviewed by all of them, all of the maps, they did make changes where it made sense to reflect the current situation in Orion Township, is it perfect, probably not, but he didn't know any document like this that is perfect. He thought it was a good guide to move them forward as they continue to look at development that comes before them, developments that they can be aware of by attending their meetings as Commissioner Walker mentioned, it is a guide for them. Please take that into consideration as they think about the work that they have done.

Vice-Chairman Gross said that Orion Township consists of 36 square miles of real estate. They don't own the real estate, they don't own the property, the Township doesn't own the property, they own some of it and they have done a good job of developing that into open space, parklands, and the like. The purpose of the Planning Commission under the State Statute as the Planning Consultant has indicated is to prepare a Master Plan and review it every 5-years to update it to see if there are changes that are needed to be made or if there are things that need to be considered in a new updated Master Plan. Their purpose as a Planning Commission is to review that previous Master Plan and update it to current conditions, to review and control development on private property in a manner that is consistent in reflecting land use laws, and individual property rights. As Secretary St. Henry indicated the Master Plan does provide them with a guide for the Planning Commission to review projects that come before them to see if they are consistent with the plan and in accordance with the Zoning Ordinance which is the regulation portion of their responsibility. To make sure it is consistent with the ordinances that they adopt relative to the development of the property. This is an ongoing process they will be reviewing the plan again in another 5-years to see how it needs to be revised, reconsidered, changed, added to, or deleted from. It is not something that is adopted today and in place for the next 15-20 years, it is a plan that they review on a regular basis on a 5-year interim.

Chairman Reynolds said that he appreciated all the public involvement that they have had through this entire process. A couple of comments were made just with that involvement, and he commended themselves as a Commission to get the involvement that they did have in this public involvement process with the Master Plan. Many townships and municipalities don't go out of their way they just meet the minimum requirement and that is all they do to essentially gather input. He has been part of the Master Plan and discussions in the Village of Lake Orion, he sat on that Commission also. They pride themselves on getting 20-30 responses. Yes, it is a different scale of a community but in the bigger picture, they really did go out of their way many of those times during COVID. They ran meetings in hybrid formats to make sure that people had the opportunity if they were not comfortable in person to come, show up and provide comments. They went out of their way to run five screens to make sure people had the opportunity to chat, email, and live format, to make sure this was involved in a very open book process. He was proud of the Master Plan that they have put together and they have gone page by page, and he knew personally he has spent hundreds of his own hours looking at this, to the comment, no he really didn't get paid to do any of those additional hours. He encouraged everyone to stay involved no matter where this Master Plan may come. They typically see a huge outcry at the very end. They didn't have more than two or three people in the room to start this process. As a Chair of a Planning Commission it is disappointing, but they publicly advertised, and they did encourage involvement. That wasn't because they wanted it to be that way. He encouraged everyone to stay involved and to stay involved with what projects are going on in our community, our website is constantly being updated. The Planning Department goes out of its way to

make sure that all that information is available to the public at all times no matter what project is at any stage even ones that are in the works and potentially coming back. The Planning staff will readily bring that forth to them and make them stay aware of those things that they would like to be. He would like those people who would like to stay vocal about where our community is going not to stop showing up to their meetings. Just because they are done with the Master Plan to Secretary St. Henry's point they see hundreds of cases a year and better yet that doesn't necessarily come to this Commission for a final ruling or a review that is shot down long before they ever even appear in front of them. From a community involvement standpoint, yes, he would encourage all of them to stay involved and apply to be appointed to one of these commissions, these are not elected positions. They see this all the time; they get to this big hot topic someone stirs up the community to come with an outcry and then everyone disappears once whatever that item is off the agenda or election season upon us, they see a room full of people and then everyone disappears. He appreciates public comment. Please stay involved he appreciates their involvement and coming here tonight.

Commissioner Brackon stated that they can't stop progress and the story he thinks about is having lived in Orion Township for 22 years now he had the opportunity to be on Lake Orion many times and bring people that don't live in Lake Orion onto the lake and give them tours and tell them about the history of why they are called the Dragons. Specifically, about the history of Park Island and how it was an amusement park, and that story just fascinates him. Every time he sees those pictures it just makes him think of how wonderful a time that was. He can't imagine the pressure or the public outcry that occurred when Park Island was being taken down and turned into a residential community. They are not trying to take down their Park Island they are trying to move forward. They have all of their interests in mind and if they attend any of their meetings and see what they have turned down. He didn't know the percentage but from what he has seen from his being on a little over a year on this Commission, more than 50% of the plans get turned down, at least initially. They are on their side; they appreciate everything that they are saying and truly this Master Plan is an outline to preserve Orion Township the best they can but also understand that progress has to be made.

Chairman Reynolds closed the public hearing at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Walton
PC/ZBA Recording Secretary
Charter Township of Orion

August 3, 2022

Planning Commission Approval Date