The Charter Township of Orion Planning Commission held a regular meeting on Wednesday, September 1, 2021, at 7:00 pm at the Orion Township Community Center, 1335 Joslyn Road, Lake Orion, MI 48360.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:
Scott Reynolds, Chairman
Joe St. Henry, Secretary
Don Gross, Vice-Chairman
Derek Brackon, Commissioner
Don Walker, PC Rep to ZBA

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT:
Kim Urbanowski, BOT Rep to PC
Jessica Gingell, Commissioner

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

2. ROLL CALL
As noted

CONSULTANTS PRESENT:
Rod Arroyo, (Township Planner) of Giffels Webster
Matt Wojciechowski, (Township Planner) of Giffels Webster
Mark Landis, (Township Engineer) of OHM Advisors
Tammy Girling, Township Planning & Zoning Director

OTHERS PRESENT:
Ashley Mack
Jason Vander Kodde

3. MINUTES
A. 08-18-21, Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes
B. 08-18-21, Planning Commission Workshop Meeting Minutes.
Moved by Secretary St. Henry, seconded by Commissioner Brackon to approve both sets of minutes as submitted. Motion carried

4. AGENDA REVIEW AND APPROVAL
Moved by Vice-Chairman Gross, seconded by Commissioner Walker, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried

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

6. CONSENT AGENDA
None

Chairman Reynolds recessed the regular meeting and opened the public hearing for PC-2021-63, Meijer Inc. #680, Special Land Use request for a 24-hour operation, located at 1107 S. Lapeer Road, parcel number 09-14-226-008, and unaddressed parcel number 09-14-226-001 (surrounded by parcel 09-14-226-008) at 7:05 pm and closed the public hearing at 7:15 pm.
7. NEW BUSINESS

A. PC-2021-63, Meijer Inc #680, Special Land Use request for a 24-hour operation, located at 1107 S. Lapeer Road, parcel number 09-14-226-008 and unaddressed parcel number 09-14-226-001 (surrounded by parcel 09-14-226-008).

Chairman Reynolds asked the applicant if they had anything to add? They did not.

Planner Arroyo read through his review date stamped received August 18, 2021.

Vice-Chairman Gross asked what their anticipated schedules of the demolition and construction of the site? Mr. Vander Kodde said they are anticipating demolition within the next couple of months, they do have a permit applied for presently, and are awaiting the Township review of that permit application. Obviously, once the building has been removed then they would begin site construction, so later this fall and the intent would be to open the store in 2022 prior to Christmas. Vice-Chairman Gross asked if they were anticipating a site plan extension? Mr. Vander Kodde replied that they are not anticipating any site plan extension requests at this time.

Chairman Reynolds said that he didn’t have any specific concerns, seeing other facilities in adjacent City’s and Township’s with 24-hour operations he hasn’t had many issues with the entity, and since it is adjacent to many 24-hour operations in that area he didn’t see it posing any significant issues or compatibility items. He felt that they have proven in other ways that it essentially meets our criteria for 24-hour operation.

Secretary St. Henry stated that when he had younger children, and they were up in the middle of the night looking for medicine or diapers, or whatever there was nothing open in the Lake Orion they would have to drive to other communities. His wife is a nurse that works weird hours and there are times when she shops at 4 am. There are a lot of advantages to having a store like this open 24-7.

Moved by Vice-Chairman Gross, seconded by, Secretary St. Henry that the Planning Commission approve PC-2021-63, Meijer #680 Special Land Use request for a 24-hour operation located at 1107 S. Lapeer Rd., parcel #09-14-226-008 and unaddressed parcel number 09-14-226-001 (surrounded by parcel 09-14-226-008) for plans date stamped received August 4, 2021. This approval is based on the following finding of fact: that this is compatible with adjacent uses within the area some of which are currently 24-hour operations; it is also compatible with the Master Plan which indicates this area as being developed with commercial land uses; there are adequate public service facilities since this is an existing site with existing public utilities available; the impact on traffic was addressed during the original Site Plan, and Special Land Use request for Meijer, and it was demonstrated on that Special Land Use and Site Plans; there should be no detrimental effects as a result of this facility being available on a 24-hour a day operation; the site has been appropriately submitted a Landscape Plan to enhance the surrounding environment; there will be no isolation of existing land uses within the area.

Discussion on the motion:

Planning & Zoning Director Girling asked if they were going to address the lighting within the Special Land Use criterion? Mr. Vander Kodde said that the way the ordinance is written, as his understanding, that if the business is open lighting is permissible and so with the approval of a 24-hour request the lighting is allowed 24-hour. He thought what Planning & Zoning Director Girling was referring to was in the event that Meijer is open
from 6a-12m would the lighting still be allowed from 12m-6a? Because as a 24-hour approved use, even though it is not currently operating that way because of the pandemic.

Planning & Zoning Director Girling said that the lighting section talks about turning off lighting after 11p or reducing it if approved by the Planning Commission it can stay on longer for security. She added just making sure because of the section that says lighting should be off after 11p or dimmed, what are their feelings on the lighting.

Planner Arroyo said that typically he is seeing more and more uses when they are not open during hours of operation go to a lower level of lighting, not necessarily having no lighting but dropping the level down, and felt that was the pattern. He asked if that was something that was a feasible alternative to have a lower level of lighting if they are not open for business but still want some security lighting? Mr. Vander Kodde replied yes; they can have a lower level of lighting with an asterisk being that in the areas that they are continuing to have operations such as their receiving area, and their front entryway where the vendors or service technicians are coming and going, and their night stockers are parking, obviously, they would want to maintain security and safety for well-lit conditions and inclement weather rain, snow, wind. They would like to have that especially adjacent to building continue to be lit. The perimeter of the parking lot they could certainly dim.

Commissioner Walker asked about something like a motion detector lighting, that if no activity is out there it would go out, and if there was activity would turn on? Mr. Vander Kodde said that the difficulty with that is they would have to have a motion sensor across the entire property, so how do they set up their motion detection system where the lights just go on wherever the motion is and off, so there is a technical challenge there, and the creation of it. It is also very disruptive when that particular light goes on if they were sleeping or getting in and out of their vehicle and adjacent residents or wherever. He felt that when the light is just at a low level that is ambient there is no interruption and no sudden shock. He stated that he is not a lighting Engineer so he would defer the meat of the question to his staff if it becomes a bigger question. He said that the way that the system functions on a photocell he didn’t think that the individual lights have individual photocells. They have wall-packs on the building, and they have lights in the parking lot, and trying to get all of that system to effectively motion detect is not something that they have considered yet.

Secretary St. Henry said that they had K-Mart there for 50-years, they had the lights on in the middle of the night for security reasons as much as anything. They have Planet Fitness right next door it is open 24-7, they have customers all night long, obviously not as crowded as during the day, but they do have customers, and he thought that they had lights that illuminate the parking lot for safety, operation reasons, to him what is the difference? This is a commercial area, the Ponds of Orion is not even built yet, there is nothing there, up until a few years ago when they started construction. They have the dealership that has their lights on full-blast. To him, the lighting issue is a moot point as long as the lights themselves meet the ordinances, the types, and directions of lights.

Chairman Reynolds said that he didn’t have any concerns with lighting. He added that it would be nice if as a courtesy if there are not operations that light levels be reduced to maintain minimal security measures. He didn't think that they needed any explicit conditions but acknowledge that lighting would be addressed 24-hours.
Vice-Chairman Gross amended the motion, Secretary St. Henry re-supported, this approval is based upon the following conditions they would allow lighting on a 24-hour basis during operating hours, and if the facility is not open for 24-hours the lighting will be reduced in intensity.

Roll call vote was as follows: Brackon, no; St. Henry, yes; Walker, yes; Gross, yes; Reynolds, yes. Motion carried 4-1. (Urbanowski & Gingell absent)

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
A. PC-2021-07, 5-Year Master Plan Update

Planner Arroyo started off with Section 13 of the Township. He noted that in this area they have some school facilities that are designated institutional and they are shown in the SW corner of the presentation. They also have the (R1) zoning which is consistent with allowing for public type uses. They have one area of interest towards the northern portion along Clarkston Rd., where they have (SE) zoning, the Master Plan calls out for single-family low-density when really the zoning is in alignment with single-family low-density, that would be an adjustment that they would make if they were trying to reflect the current zoning and development pattern in that area.

Chairman Reynolds asked what was at that eastern border of section 13, what road is that is that Kern, they have Clarkston at the top they are just east of M24 in this Section? Planner Arroyo replied correct, the next section over is M24.

Planner Arroyo stated this is mostly the Bald Mountain State recreation area. What it looks like they have is a series of historic flag lot type development that has occurred in this (SE) area. He asked if they would like to make any changes to the Future Land Use Map? Chairman Reynolds said he thought that they needed to bring some things up to speed to align with their current discussions and then evaluate some of these zoning districts as a whole, once they have gone section by section, and if there are some areas were bringing them up to speed and then discussing whether it was a good fit or what is the better vision for some of these districts was his thought.

Planner Arroyo said moving over one section to section 14 to the west. They have Lapeer Rd. coming in through the eastern half of this section as they look at it. They have a large area along Lapeer Rd. that is planned for general commercial. When they look at the Zoning Map, they can see that there is a wide variety of zoning that occurs in this area. One of the things they think that needs to happen with the description of the general commercial category in the Future Land Use Plan is it doesn’t really mention office, it doesn’t mention some of these uses, and they have some office zoning. He felt they needed to broaden the description. The fact that they have these different categories of zoning is not necessarily a bad thing, it may just be a reflection of how things have happened over time. He did think that broadening the description, and they have talked about this before, makes some sense of this particular area. They do have an area in the northwest quadrant, where they have (R2) zoning, and that is planned for medium-low density and really it would go to the medium-high density if it was aligned with the (R2) zoning. He added that there was a lot of substantial development that has already occurred there, so that would be a logical change in the Future Land Use Map in order to reflect that. They also have a number of multiple-family areas here which do seem to align quite well with zoning, the Master Plan, and the Future Land Use Plan.

Commissioner Brackon asked if his question isn’t to modify the description of General Commercial? Planner Arroyo replied to include a broader range of uses particularly office. He said that typically the general commercial district allows office, so the Master Plan just doesn’t
discuss it in that way it is much more restricted than it does. He said that Scripps Rd. is down on the bottom that is planned for multiple-family, low-density. He said that is consistent with what they already have north of there. That is an area that is emerging as either a multi-family or senior living type of district and felt that would be consistent with that.

Chairman Reynolds said that when he reviewed these, he thought that refining some of these sections and looking at more of an area or a vision for a corridor. He thought general commercial should include uses that they know were intending from the actual zoning map are included in that, and better align with their current allowable uses in the special land uses. To him it almost seemed like a commercial corridor that aligns, M-24 is different than Clarkston Rd. For him it does come down to how intensive are the uses but also what does it mean, larger facilities closer to the road, or is it smaller facilities setback that lends itself too residential. That to him was more of a discussion. Yes, update the uses to align to what they actually allow but is general commercial too broad of a topic that they are going to use as a paintbrush along M24 along with some of these other corridors. Is there a stepdown or something in between that? Maybe it isn’t as much uses for him as intensity, density, or a corridor visual. M-24 might not have that heavily wooded corridor but maybe others do, or it is a stepdown from Clarkston Rd. closer to M24 versus Clarkston closer to Baldwin Rd.

Planner Arroyo said moving on to Section 15. Here they have a couple of other alignment issues with (R1) zoning there in the NE corner that would align with single-family medium-high instead of medium. The same thing they have the (R2) zoning which also is with the single-family medium-high density rather than medium in the NW quadrant there. The other question related to that are the (SC) districts which are generally reflected Consent Judgements and others, do they want to try to bring those into the Master Plan so that they are reflecting the actual approved density. He thought they had discussed it before, and the general consensus was yes. Chairman Reynolds thought they needed to be realistic of what they have ended up with or what they have promoted in the past to decide how they are going to work with it or guide things differently in the future.

Chairman Reynolds asked in the top left corner of the presentation, he asked if that was part of public property, part of Camp Agawam, the green portion to the left of (R2)? Planning & Zoning Director Girling replied yes, it is based on how it was platted. She added that Agawam’s parcel line actually goes into Tommy’s Lake, so based on the configuration of the actual parcels.

Planner Arroyo moved on to Section 16, Joslyn Rd. going through. They have some Township property being developed in this area, so the Institutional seems to work well from a long-range planning perspective. They do have an area that is surrounded by that red-line which is interesting it is (LI) zoning there, there is actually boat storage and a few miscellaneous businesses up there. He added that it is not really consistent with the single-family medium density that is on the Master Plan, so he thought it might be time to refresh that into a research industry. He didn’t know if there has been some discussion of a vision for that area in the past? He didn’t think it would develop as single-family medium density. Vice-Chairman Gross said that it is right across the street from an industrial facility. Chairman Reynolds said correct, there is one to the north side, and then all of those parcels essentially, on Rhodes Rd., they have the boatyard. He thought the other thing too, just from a bigger picture standpoint, utilities are a concern for a couple of those parcels but he thought more important than anything is compatibility. He said even if it is a use that lends itself to some of the existing uses at least something that if it were to be redeveloped or continual use there how does it create a nice transition to the (R2) and institutional uses that are there because they have a lot of park area. For him it is either a less dense commercial use or office professional. Even if there was to be a yard or something adjacent to it that it is not the same light industrial use that they are seeing on the south end of the Township. Planner Arroyo said that they also have this (R2) alignment that
goes with single-family medium-high versus medium, so that would be another clean-up since that is all developed there.

Planner Arroyo said in Section 17 they just have a few areas here. The NW corner is actually part of the Friendship Woods hamlet area because that is on the north side, the next section up. They have an existing neighborhood/commercial at the corner and then in terms of alignment they have (RM1) but that actually needs to be changed to medium-family low-density on the Master Plan to reflect that there is (RM1) zoning there even though that is not their traditional apartment complex but it is at a higher density. Chairman Reynolds agreed with those changes. Vice-Chairman Gross asked if this was at the corner of Clarkston and Baldwin, that is the area they are considering a hamlet type? Planner-Arroyo replied correct, most of the available land is really in the NW quadrant. But still, the neighborhood center helps, they have a lot of really good neighborhood commercial uses in that center.

Planner Arroyo moved on to Section 18 on the western border. They have (R1) parcels along Baldwin that are not really supported by the (SF) medium-low Future Land Use category. It is kind of an isolated (R1) area there surrounded by different patterns of development. He thought that they needed to think about when they come back with more information on the hamlet would this area be influenced at all by that, and maybe a little higher density might be appropriate right at that NE corner there to support that. He knew there were some wetlands in that area that is going to impact the ability to develop that. He thought that was something they needed to think about and revisit that when they take a look at the hamlet in more detail. He added that they have another (SC) district in the SE corner. Chairman Reynolds asked the corner parcel that they are talking about that would be one of those parcels for him that, and he didn’t know if it was appropriate for Master Plan, but to say what could it be, and identify parcels that are “difficult to develop” or maybe promoting a (PUD) and understanding the difficulty and why they would promote a (PUD) therefrom a transition from that neighborhood community center to medium or low-density that is adjacent to it to where they need that rapid transition. He questioned if that was uncommon to do, to isolate some thoughts of when they have some of these difficult or less than ideal transition areas to identify somewhat it’s or this is a vision for an area, what could it be, and have the Future Land Use support that. Planner Arroyo said not at all, in fact, he could see them when they look at the hamlet a little bit more and look at these areas and they may say that they may actually call this out and say this is an area where likely (PUD) development might be the way to make it happen. There is nothing wrong with including that kind of a statement in the Master Plan and recognizing it. Chairman Reynolds thought to him that is one way to have themselves to either commit or publish the (PUD) tool in the way they are hoping it gets intended versus they don’t like the density or whatever, to say it is a difficult parcel, they get it, and that is where they want a rapid transition from neighborhood to larger homes, and they see this being a mixed-use development or providing something that is missing in that area, a small grocery store, a butcher. He added on top of their ordinance requirement that kind of outlines some of that vision. Planner Arroyo said it is basically telling the development community they are open to some creative suggestions that are in line with the vision.

Planner Arroyo said now they go to the next section down which is Section 19. They do have some approved (SE) districts and they also have an area that is zoned (R3) right now that would likely have to shift over to that single-family medium-high, the rest of the (R3) has got that but for some reason that one area is not planned out the same way. It seemed like it would make sense that it would be extended there since it is already zoned that way and they already have some parcels created thereof an (R3) size in that location.

Planner Arroyo said next is Section 20. Here they have a couple of observations the (R1) zoning is not supported by the single-family low-density Future Land Use designation, so that
would be one that they would suggest being changed to single-family medium-high in the NW quadrant there. The northern portion of the (R1) pocket is currently a place of worship there, so they have that already identified but the rest was pretty straightforward.

Planner Arroyo said in Section 21 they have the Civic Center Park area could go to an institutional designation, it probably makes more sense, since it is under that type of control. They have institutional just south of that that is currently zoned office and professional. Chairman Reynolds thought that his correction of institutional use on where it says Civic Center Park truly that is still a recreation parcel even with the new Township Hall on it. He thought just from a practicality standpoint or vision even though the southern institutional parcel has some Township uses, he thought the bigger picture is that it wants to be (REC), that southern institutional zoning. He thought that the zoning of (OP) that from a bigger picture standpoint is probably going to go back to park with the Township Hall moving up one parcel. Planner Arroyo said that should probably then be (REC). Chairman Reynolds said that even if it is institutional, it wouldn’t be inaccurate there is still some uses on that parcel but thought that the greater with the Township is that it wants to be (REC), DPW, and a couple of those facilities that are not going anywhere are just leading to those recreation purposes or government support versus promoting a school there or education facility. He added that a similar comment goes to that institutional parcel. At the end of the day, it’s institutional use on a (REC) parcel. Planner Arroyo said right so there is interchangeability on some of that. Chairman Reynolds said even from that standpoint how do they want to look at a couple of those entities, that is the goal of developing on that parcel was to keep it intended for recreation purposes and allow for parks and rec versus another school district. He didn’t know how they are treating all of those across the board but just food for thought. Planning & Zoning Director Girling thought that was a good point. She added that they are running into on their Future Land Use they had a lot that are churches that are labeled institutional that are smaller churches and they are closing and then they don’t have what is the Future Land Use of them. She thought that was a side direction may be looking at existing churches, she knew that they were doing sections but that would be a use that they are seeing a turnover and then what does the Future Land Use show institutional. Planner Arroyo said that one way sometimes that they address that is through a separate density map and then they actually assign a residential density to the institutional use so when the institutional use goes away, they already designated it even though it is not technically planned for residential it has a density already assigned, so that could be a good solution to that. Chairman Reynolds said even in an overlay or just a hatch or something that speaks to a special condition. He added that at the end of the day the underlying zoning with any of those it wants to be recreational. Even in the other areas where they know that churches are allowed in residential districts, it is more that it wants to be a residential district and they know in certain circumstances a church is an allowable component. Maybe as they move forward and they identify some of these corridors maybe there are others areas where they say, this is kind of where they want these to congregate around versus the middle of the corridor, they want them near an intersection or something.

Planner Arroyo moved on to Section 22, he said it was pretty minimal, they have an interesting (R1) development right in the middle of the (REC) area on Greenshield Rd., which is kind of a unique couple of few parcels there.

Planner Arroyo said in Section 23 they are back to Lapeer Rd. They have an approved (PUD) that could be called out as they have been talking about doing on the Master Plan, designating those (PUDs), and if they have an approved density reflecting that, he thought that made sense. They have an area that has a split designation with office and commercial but it is actually zoned for (OP), and then beneath that is (GB)/(GC). They also have along the southern border there they have (RM1) zoning so they would likely want to have medium-family low-density designated in that area, it is not consistently applied along that southern border if that is the
desire to match the zoning. Planning & Zoning Director Girling said that the (OP) on the zoning map was the one that was just successfully rezoned to (RM2). Commissioner Brackon asked what is that there? Planning & Zoning Director Girling said that they had and the Board of Trustees had just approved the (RM2), there is nothing there now, it is adjacent to the new (PUD), the Pulte neighborhood right at Scripps and M24, just south of that. Planner Arroyo thought it was probably multi-family medium-high.

Planner Arroyos said in Section 24 not too much to talk about here, there (R1) zoning though is not consistent with the planned single-family medium, so they would likely change that to medium-high to reflect the (R1) zoning there. Chairman Reynolds asked where that was? Planner Arroyo thought it was the neighborhood next to Round Tree. Planning & Zoning Director Girling thought it was the continuation of Bald Mountain Rd., because Bald Mountain Rd. used to cut through Bald Mountain State Recreation, basically behind the new Meijer.

Planner Arroyo said that to keep in mind they are going to see all of this and revisit this, this is kind of the first pass.

Planner Arroyo moved on to the Objectives and Goals. He stated that they took another look at this. He said that Matt Wojciechowski did a lot of work trying to get this re-envisioned and to hopefully incorporate what they were looking for based on their last discussion. They have modified the vision somewhat and they have incorporated, “Living as a Vacation”, into the vision which was something that was appropriate. They have then gone through the individual goals and attached a number of objectives to them. They have their high-quality and diverse housing, so they have their overall goal and several objectives with bullet points. They have tried to do a couple of things, one incorporates the spirit of those that were already in their plan, and then updating those and revising them and incorporating new ones as appropriate. They have supporting healthy communities by improving connectivity and access to green space and new and existing neighborhoods; ensure adequate housing styles and density are available to provide options for first-time buyers and those looking to downsize and age in the community; develop programs to maintain and enhance existing neighborhood character especially within older neighborhoods; encourage land use in accordance with the existing character of the Townships Future Land Use Plan; then promote adaptability through the use of innovative planning and zoning techniques that will result in a full range of housing types; then were they interested in inserting an objective related to accessory dwelling units? Chairman Reynolds thought that it was new, to him his only comment was to ensure adequate housing styles and densities available to provide for first-time home buyers. He thought it was important to speak to the circle of life or the process. They want people to come here and be able to buy their first home, also upgrade and find one for their family, and then potentially downsize on the backside of it. That to him could be an accessory dwelling, multi-family unit, they don’t know what that is but. For him, he thought that they keep it bigger picture not necessarily call it out. He said he would like to be open to how else do you address that desire. Planner Arroyo said that there will still be the opportunity may be in some of the hamlet areas or maybe in some of the other locations to allow for some of that creativity.

Planner Arroyos said natural and historic resources, they have updated that to rephrase that overall goal, and then they have identified several objectives including, protecting and enhancing the Township’s woodland, wetlands, water features, habitats, and open space by enforcing regulations that preserve natural features and the functions that they provide to the community; improve storm water management using best management practices, establish appropriate standards for the community in coordination with Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner; Adopt and enforce policies that minimize pollution and preserve the lakes and watershed areas of the Township; promote and communicate sustainability concepts and incentive residents and businesses to implement relevant strategies; encourage energy-efficient
and environmentally sustainable development through raising awareness and creating standards that support best practices; provide resources and guidelines for the development and application of solar, wind and other alternative energies; preserve the inherent architectural character of individual historical architecture resources throughout the Township; promote sustainable practices that craft solutions to today’s challenges that are cognizant of and sensitive to impacts on future generations; require street tree planting as part of all residential and non-residential development in order to foster environmental benefits, enhance property values, and act in support of the Township’s recognition in the Tree City USA program.

Commissioner Brackon asked how often is the Tree City USA designation given? Planning & Zoning Director Girling said she could ask that specific question. Commissioner Brackon asked what if those change? Planner Arroyo said he thought the idea was they were part of it and they want to try to continue to promote that. Certainly, it makes sense in the street trees being a critical component and it does enhance property values. Chairman Reynolds said that he liked the comment that it recognizes Tree City USA. For him, to protect and enhance woodlands, wetlands, water features, habitats, and open space. He would like a comment about trees but to him in objectives, the Tree City USA is one way that they maintain and promote woodlands in woodland areas. He thought that maybe that comment or that goal objective tends to be a little bit bigger picture and he didn’t just want to zoom in on just street trees but rather why wouldn’t you promote someone to create a woodland area on their property not just maintain it but what if they were to return it back to what it once was and go to less intrusive. Somehow even with development know that it is an important part to us in that could mean street trees, they speak to woodland areas in the first point, but he thought what if they were to promote more trees, protect the trees, want more trees. Planner Arroyo stated to require the street tree planting and promote the preservation of important woodland areas in order to foster the benefits. He said he will look at broadening that a little bit. Chairman Reynolds said not just to preserve but rather to create. If they are going to ask for street trees, why wouldn’t they ask for big woodland areas in a development that is in an open field now as an exchange? They want tree plantings they want to create that character so it is not just that they speak to maintaining it what if they do something beyond it. Commissioner Walker suggested using a word like encourage.

Commissioner Brackon asked what is an important woodland area versus just a woodland area? Planner Arroyo said they could have a small little woodland pocket that only provides a modest benefit whereas their goal would be to have a woodland area that is large enough that it actually serves as a habitat maybe for wildlife, that is what makes it more important. He said important could be removed. Secretary St. Henry said they could take the word out and call it significant. Commissioner Brackon said to take it out and say all or just take out the adjective. Secretary St. Henry asked if the purpose of this exercise was to go through the words or are they looking at the big picture. He said he could go through this document and clean it up. Planner Arroyo said right now they are looking at the big picture this isn’t the last chance. Secretary St. Henry said that they went from 30 pages down to 4 pages.

Planning & Zoning Director Girling asked if they updated the woodland map? Planner Arroyo replied yes. Planning & Zoning Director Girling asked if it was close to what it was, was it a lot of areas? Planner Arroyo said he would have to get that to her, he knows it has been done.

Planner Arroyo moved on to economic development. He said that here they have a number of objectives. To achieve a balanced variety of neighborhood-, community-, and regionally-oriented facilities that will meet the shopping and service needs of the community and nearby metropolitan area populations without unnecessary duplication; promote the physical clustering of commercial establishments by encouraging mixed use, shared parking facilities, non-motorized access, consolidated driveways, pleasant pedestrian spaces, and contextual extensions of utilities; regulate the physical clustering of industrial businesses in planned industrial parks, such as those within the southern of the Township along Brown Rd. and Lapeer
Rd. corridors rather than in stand-alone development, thereby providing for minimal extension and impacts on utilities and nearby residential uses; support residents of all ages in the local workforce by serving as an information clearinghouse on local and regional training, education, and business needs; expand the Township’s economy and tax base by supporting existing local businesses, encouraging entrepreneurship, and attracting new businesses; implement incentive programs available through Oakland County and the State of Michigan regarding emerging employment sectors; continue participation in the Michigan Economic Development Corporation’s Redevelopment Ready Communities Program; continue and refine the practice of identifying and improving key corridors and districts for growth and economic development; promote the redevelopment of obsolete sites so that they can once again make meaningful contributions to the Township. Commissioner Brackon asked what was an example of an obsolete site? Planner Arroyo replied it is a site that either has a use that is no longer viable and the building is empty that is probably the most common or significantly underused. Planner Arroyo said that they are going to do redevelopment sites and then they will have some for them, there is some in the Township. Planning & Zoning Director Girling asked if K-Mart would be one of those? Planner Arroyo said that K-Mart would be a perfect example of one of them. It has been sitting vacant it once had a use no longer has a use that is an obsolete site.

Chairman Reynolds asked regarding promoting the physical clustering of commercial establishments. A couple of things that they are saying in here promoting physical clustering would be to minimize brawl and to maintain woodland areas or island uses or at least bring common resources to promote walkability, that to him could be one bullet point. They want to promote density in an area so they don’t sprawl into wooded areas, and then the mixed use would promote that there are multiple uses within an area and they are talking about the hamlet and walkable communities and five-minute areas. He felt they might want to expand on this one or touch those two topics. Just saying the why versus the statement that they are here. Why are they doing physical clustering? Planning Arroyo said it is because they are implementing this goal up here which is the Township will promote and encourage the concept of 15-minute neighborhoods, that is the connection, that is the overall goal, this is the objective, so it is linked back to that.

Planner Arroyo moved on to Community Facilities. Facilitate multi-modal connections that provide access to residential areas, economic destinations and parks & recreation facilities throughout the Township in a safe, efficient and effective manner; ensure civic spaces, utilities and other infrastructure are well-maintained while providing sustainable strategies for growth in a practical manner; provide community support to ensure Orion Township police, fire and first responders can continue to operate efficiently in a manner that best serves all residents within the community; pursue new facilities that enhance the quality of life for Township residents and businesses including the new Township Hall (it will be opened before this is adopted); improved parks, and non-motorized facilities that connect these assets with residential and non-residential areas; actively promote and, where appropriate, require the installation of non-motorized facilities in accordance with the Township’s Safety Path Plan and establishment of the core 15-minute neighborhoods; deliver outstanding parks and recreation facilities and programs; encourage Township staff to promote ways in which all Township-owned facilities can conserve energy and serve as a model for energy efficiency in the Township.

Planner Arroyo said this is a new one Community Character and Aesthetics. It says Orion Township’s tagline, Where Living as a Vacation, encompasses a wide variety of community qualities and features that make the Township unique and cherished by those that live here. In addition to the goals and objectives, the Township will continue to support retaining community character elements and aesthetic qualities that are consistent with the vision of the Township and promotion of health, safety, and general welfare. Enforce Township regulations that reduce glare and preserve the dark sky; promote the preservation of natural vegetation along rural
corridors of Township through creative zoning regulations and coordination with the Road Commission for Oakland County; seek out preservation of important views of lakes that permit Township residents to view lakes, streams and other natural resources; require high quality finishing materials and furnishings in high-profile districts and corridors, consistent with recommendations and policies in the Master Plan; support the advancement of the four identified 15-minute neighborhoods and develop regulations that support hamlet and village-style development; encourage the incorporation of design elements into new development that reflect the historic character of the Township; continue to update and enforce sign regulations to ensure that signage in the Township is an aesthetic asset that affects communication and quality appearance over blight, clutter and oversaturation of messaging. He said that these all have a common theme, and many of those are items that they talked about before. They thought it was important that that actually had its own goal and objectives to try to make it clear that these were important to the Township and the development of the Master Plan. Chairman Reynolds asked in the high-profile districts wouldn’t they promote high-quality and long-lasting finishing and furnishing materials in all districts and corridors? Planner Arroyo replied that they could. Chairman Reynolds asked if they want to say they have low-profile districts where it doesn’t matter? Planner Arroyo said what they may say then is include that but then also recognize that there are certain districts and corridors that have unique materials. Chairman Reynolds said he would rather go with a direction like that, just establish it as a corridor vision or a district vision, or regional aesthetic or something. He thought that high-quality and long-lasting finishing materials that promote monumental, they are not talking about a 5-year material but a 50-100-year material. Planning & Zoning Director GIRLING asked in the corridors do they want harmonious? Chairman Reynolds replied yes, he thought that harmonious corridors, districts, or regions. Planner Arroyo said how about “require high-quality and durable finishing materials and furnishings consistent with recommendations and policies in this Master Plan and recognize that certain districts and corridors require unique and harmonious elements”. Chairman Reynolds said he liked that.

Commissioner Walker said that he just heard a quote that he liked, and maybe they could work it into that woodland aspect of that report, a woman told him that she was planting trees that she will never see grow, he thought that it said a lot of stuff.

Vice-Chairman Gross asked as they progress with the Future Land Use considerations will they ultimately arrive at a projection for the Future Land Use population? Planner Arroyo replied yes. Vice-Chairman Gross asked if they were going to communicate what our holding capacity in the Township will be based upon the recommendations of the Master Plan? Planner Arroyo replied yes, typically he presents it as a range because they have some of the unknowns like the mixed-use areas where they don’t even know how much residential they are going to get. He added that there would be an expectation because they will have a buildout population range.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS
None.

10. COMMUNICATIONS
A. Tree City USA
C. Communication from the Planning & Zoning Director Regarding PC-2021-57, Administrative Review of Site plan for Cell Tower change of equipment.
D. Communication from the Planning & Zoning Director Regarding PC-2021-61, Administrative Review of Site Plan for Cell Tower new equipment.
E. Communication from the Planning & Zoning Director Regarding PC-2021-64, Administrative Review of Site Plan for Cell Tower equipment modification.
11. PLANNERS REPORTS/EDUCATION
None.

12. COMMITTEE REPORTS
None.

13. FUTURE PUBLIC HEARINGS
None.

14. CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS
None.

15. COMMISSIONERS’ COMMENTS
None.

16. ADJOURNMENT
Moved by Chairman Reynolds, seconded by Vice-Chairman Gross, to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 p.m. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]

Debra Walton September 15, 2021
PC/ZBA Recording Secretary Planning Commission Approval Date
Charter Township of Orion