

**EATON COUNTY  
PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
October 24, 2023**

**Call to Order:** Brian Ross, Chair of the Eaton County Planning Commission called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Board of Commissioners Room, Eaton County Courthouse, 1045 Independence Blvd., Charlotte, MI.

**Pledge:** The Pledge of Allegiance was given by all.

**Roll Call:** Ben Tirrell, Scott Hansen, Lisa Lewitzke, Bruce Porter, Mike Hosey, Tim Cattron, Brian Ross

**Staff Present:** Brandy Miller

**Agenda Approval:** A motion was made by **Commissioner Hosey** to approve the agenda for the October 24, 2023 meeting. **Commissioner Cattron** supported. Motion carried.

**Commissioner Ross** asked if notices have been posted and sent. Miller stated yes.

Mr. Jason Ball reviewed the maps and their updates in the 2023 master plan update packet. Ms. Miller spoke on the meetings held with the individual townships. Some townships opted to make changes, a majority didn't. She stated the townships did appreciate being included in the process.

Mr. Ball continued reviewing the map changes in the packet. Mr. Ball asked if anyone had any questions.

Ms. Miller wanted to add that the individual township maps will be included in the master plan.

**Commissioner Cattron** stated that the maps do look much better. He is happy with the work that was done with them.

Mr. Ball then discussed the draft of the master plan, specifically the future land use chapters. He stated they did add the analysis regarding building permits that have been issued. The number of permits issued has been trending upward for new residential dwelling permits. The analysis gives an idea where the most construction is happening in the county, excluding areas not within Eaton Counties jurisdiction. Mr. Ball also stated that clarifications have been to the future land use in the plan, and a new classification was created for the mixed-use transitional zone. Mr. Ball stated he did also update and provide clarity around recommended zoning changes, which are to establish the mixed-use transition zoning district. Mr. Ball stated that the last two new chapters in the plan

are solely for information purposes; they are regarding transportation chapter 8 and public services chapter 9. Mr. Ball discussed each chapter.

**Commissioner Lawitzke** inquired about figure 8-3 on page 8-2, in chapter 8 regarding transportation. She stated that it would be beneficial to have some indication of what the ratings are, whether 1 is the best or 4 is the best on a scale of 1-4. Mr. Ball clarified the ratings.

**Commissioner Catron** asked if pacer rating could also be defined in chapter 8 regarding transportation. Jason stated that pacer rating is used to rate the quality of pavement and its status. Jason stated he can provide a definition for that.

**Commissioner Lawitzke** stated on page 9-1 of chapter 9, Olivet College needs to be amended as a university. It is no longer a college. She stated on page 9-3, regarding the recycling, there is a recycling site in Olivet and Bellevue that are not listed.

**Commissioner Catron** stated that Eaton Rapids no longer has a recycling site. Ms. Miller stated that because Eaton Rapids has listed the change as temporary, she did not have Mr. Ball change that. She stated they are hoping to readdress the recycling site in the future. Mr. Ball stated that Hospital Names may need a revision as well.

Mr. Ball continued his presentation, stating that the next step is to continue with open houses on the master plan, scheduled for the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> of November. Locations and times for the meetings were discussed. The final master plan meeting was also discussed. The planning commission decided on December 5<sup>th</sup> at the monthly planning commission meeting as the final master plan update meeting as well.

**Commissioner Ross** asked if staff had any questions. There were none.

**Commissioner Ross** asked Ms. Miller if any of the planning commission members should be present for the open houses. Ms. Miller stated that it would be beneficial for planning commission members to attend, as the public would appreciate seeing them in attendance.

#### **Public Comment:**

Barb Vandermolen of Eaton Township stated that the zoning regulations are putting some people in a difficult position. She stated that she and her husband live in Eaton Township. Ms. Vandermolen stated that many people she knows who have lost their spouses have had to sell their family homes, but then have no where to go. She stated they cannot afford a \$300,000.00 condo, nor want a condo where a washer and dryer are in the basement. Ms. Vandermolen stated the widows and widowers also do not want to spend \$1,500.00 or more renting an apartment, yet they make too much money to qualify for rent assistance or subsidized housing. Ms. Vandermolen proposed building several \$220,000.00 duplex homes that she would call four W; widow, widowers, walkers, and wheelchairs. Each unit would have 900 square feet on a crawlspace with one bedroom. The homes would be handicap accessible. The homes would also

include an attached garage and a front covered porch. Ms. Vandermolen stated there would be some type of homeowners' association that would take care of the lawn work and home repairs. Ms. Vandermolen appealed to the planning commission to make affordable duplex homes for senior citizens allowable in Limited Agricultural zoned areas in Eaton County. She stated that these duplex homes would not be high density housing, especially at one duplex per parcel. Ms. Vandermolen said these homes could even be an allowable variance. Ms. Vandermolen provided a copy of a floorplan for the proposed duplexes to the planning commission, and she reviewed the floor plan for them.

**Commissioner Ross** asked for any other comments. There were none.

The meeting adjourned at 6:34 p.m.