

Crockery Township

Regular Planning Commission Meeting

May 21, 2024

Approved Minutes

Chairman Ryan Arends called the meeting to order at 6:29 p.m. Roll call:

Present: Commissioners Robert Machiela, Mike Munch, Ryan Arends, Dave Willis, Jake Noel, Ryan Kelly and Roy Holmes.

Planner Julie Lovelace with Fresh Coast Planning was also present on behalf of the Township. Paige Silva was present as Recording Secretary.

There were 5 people seated in the public gallery.

Agenda Item 2. Approval of the Agenda

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Mike Munch to approve the agenda. A second was offered by Commissioner Dave Willis.

Agenda Item 3. Approval of Minutes

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Mike Munch to approve the Minutes from April 16, 2024. A second was offered by Commissioner Dave Willis.

Agenda Item 4. Announcements

Commissioner Kelly introduced the topic of VRBO and Airbnb rentals. He said he was advised to bring this to discussion today. Planner Lovelace reported she wants Crockery to consider the public's opinion and if such rentals shall be specifically permitted, it should be considered in which Zoning Districts they may be permitted in.

Agenda Item 5. Communications

None.

Agenda Item 6. Public Comments

Chairman Arends offered public comment for any item not on the agenda at 6:31 p.m.

Jim Mershon - 10348 Walnut Drive and 10120 Walnut Drive. Mr. and Mrs. Mershon want to build a stand-alone, detached accessory dwelling on their property. Planner Lovelace stated that accessory land use permits for accessory dwellings are used for an attachment to a house, or within a detached accessory building, but it does not permit someone to build a detached guest house. For the additional home to be conforming to the current Zoning Ordinance, the Mershons would have to renovate the existing home to increase the square footage and then build their desired “accessory building” new/additional home. Another option they currently have is to build their new home smaller than originally desired - since the square footage correlates with the footage of the original home. The Zoning Ordinance requires the accessory building to be smaller than the original home. Chairman Arends asked how the Schoolhouse that was recently built on another property and designated as an “Accessory Building”. Commissioner Kelly asked if there are two parcels involved. Applicant Mr. Mershon clarified that he wants to add an accessory dwelling to 10120 Walnut Drive. He said their family owns three total parcels, each occupied with one home. Planner Lovelace said that this parcel cannot be split to construct a new home. She also said that this Ordinance was intentionally written to only permit accessory dwellings as an addition to the principal dwelling or within a detached accessory building with the fear that a stand-alone guest home might become a rental. Commissioner Kelly asked if there are exceptions. There are not and this will have to meet the Special Land Use Standards which would subsequently not meet the family’s needs. Planner Lovelace stated that the Applicants can decide which building would be considered the principal dwelling. There are obvious issues concerning square footage and the application of the current ordinance to this situation. Planner Lovelace suggested that the Applicants ask the Commission if they are open to considering an ordinance amendment prior to making their application. The question is: “Will this Commission allow a standalone accessory dwelling and how large?” There were no objections to the Mershons submitting an ordinance amendment application.

Karla Constantine - 16451 124th Avenue - Question concerning a possible round-a-bout on the corner of 112th and Cleveland. Commissioner Kelly answered this question. It is projected with the correct time and money both Fruitport and Nunica will be implementing round-a-bouts sometime in the mid-2030’s.

Public comment ended at 6:49 p.m.

Agenda Item 7, Action Items

- a. Master Plan Chapter 3 Agriculture

Planner Lovelace provided background on this matter. She went through the entire Master Plan and brought everything that belongs in AG (Agriculture) in this chapter. Anything redundant or outdated she deleted. She believes a lot of the existing language was well-written. There is a soils map and the previous developer of the maps overlaid land cover, which gets outdated very easily. She does not recommend updating this overlay - as it takes a lot of time. It is called a “Prime Soils Map” and is useful to have available to the public. She is looking for input regarding this entire chapter. If something should be reworded, now is the time to speak up. The Commission confirms discouraging non-farm development. Agricultural preservation should be emphasized. Commissioner Noel asked about wooded Agriculture. Planner Lovelace said that the “dark green” in the map indicates the “environmentally sensitive areas” and the map includes them. She reminded them that this will act as a guide and a defense for future decisions. The idea is to keep density where there is already density. Commissioner Munch likes the language the way it is. Commissioner Willis had questions about agricultural wells. Planner Lovelace answered that large farms can apply for a large water withdrawal permit. Commissioner Arends said that the water accessibility option through EGLE would be cheaper for the farmers that providing public water. Commissioners Munch and Willis said that the Plan should not be changed regarding the water. Commissioner Kelly said that we should encourage people to preserve the land and this allows for that. Commissioner Willis inquired if a map exists that shows what land is being used for Agriculture. Planner Lovelace said that there is and it is the Prime Soils map. This poses the question - does this Commission want current land use overlaid on the Prime Soils map? There is more agricultural zoning than agricultural use. Planner Lovelace that the map follow lot lines and use large boundaries (creek/highway/etc.) as natural borders. The Commission agrees that a land use overlay is not worth spending time on.

Bev Traxler - 13625 State Road - Question regarding wooded areas and what the provision protects.

Planner Lovelace said that she has asked the Corridor Improvement Authority to review the M-104 section of the Master Plan. She also requested the Planning Commission try to gather public feedback on this.

b. Ordinance Amendment Discussion

Planner Lovelace gave a summary on this matter regarding, “Accessory Buildings and Structures”. There is contradictory language in Section 3.02(f)(ii), “The connection is solidly covered or enclosed”. She is asking for interpretation on this matter. The Commission thinks we should delete the “portico” and “colonnade” and other conflicting verbiage. This item was brought up by a recent application for a permit.

The definition of “Structure” is also of topic. Planner Lovelace brought this to the Commission’s attention because the Subaru Dealership wants their flag pole to be taller. She said that they could exempt flag poles from height restrictions. Commissioner Kelly said it should be an accessory structure. Planner Lovelace discussed the possibility of requiring a fall zone. Commissioner Holmes said flag poles have to be engineered. The Commission agrees the following language is appropriate: “Flag poles over 50 feet must have specs or engineered plans”; “The fall zone must sit within the parcel.” Will MDOT have input regarding this fall zone? Planner Lovelace will ask what other townships have written. She will bring both of these back to see when or if we want to go to public hearing.

Agenda Item 8. Presentations

None.

Agenda Item 9. Discussion Items

a. Short Term Rentals

This discussion already happened as part of Mr. Mershon’s public comment. It was discussed that Park Township completely prohibited Airbnb and VRBO short-term rentals and they are pending litigation now. A minimum and maximum period for stay, minimum parcel size, and restrictive areas were suggestions that should it be included in the ordinance. Planner Lovelace will provide other Township’s language regarding this subject for this Commissions review.

Agenda Item 10. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Mike Munch at 7:27 p.m. A second was offered by Commissioner Willis.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paige Silva
Recording Secretary

Next Regular Meeting: June 18, 2024
Next Special Meeting: TBD