

Crockery Township

Regular Planning Commission Meeting

March 18, 2025

Approved Minutes

Commissioner Munch called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Roll call:

Present: Commissioners Dave Willis, Robert Machiela, Mike Munch, and Ryan Kelly.

Absent: Commissioners Roy Holmes, Ryan Arends, and Jake Noel.

Planner Aaron Bigelow with Fresh Coast Planning was present on behalf of the Township. Attorney Ron Redick was present on behalf of the Township. Paige Silva was also present as Recording Secretary.

There were 3 people seated in the public gallery. In addition, Planner Julie Lovelace was also in the public seating area.

Agenda Item 2. Approval of the Agenda

Approved as submitted.

Agenda Item 3. Approval of Minutes

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Kelly to approve the Minutes as written from February 18, 2025. A second was offered by Commissioner Munch.

Agenda Item 4. Announcements

Commissioner Kelly provided updates. He said that May 3, 2025 is the scheduled trash clean-up. It is \$10 per load and there will be helpers there to unload trucks and trailers.

Agenda Item 5. Communications

None.

Agenda Item 6. Public Comments

Commissioner Munch offered public comment for any item not on the agenda. No public comments were offered.

Agenda Item 7. Action Items

A. Public Hearing - Barn Event Venues

Commissioner Munch asked Planner Biglow for an introduction to this matter. He reported that the final draft is finished after the meeting last week with the Board. There were a few updates. He asked for comments on the final draft of the Barn Event Venues.

Commissioner Munch asked about the possibility of a new structure. Commissioner Willis asked about how this will affect old and new buildings. Planner Bigelow replied that the purpose is not to hinder renovations on an existing barn, Subsection D of the Requirements section helps clarify this. Commissioner Munch recalled that the Planning Commission did not like the idea of buildings being erected for the sole purpose of being an event venue. Planner Bigelow said that the Auxiliary Structures provision allows for construction of small additional buildings, but not an entirely new building. Commissioner Willis believes the primary use should be for farming. He stated he does not want someone to buy ten acres and erect a venue. The Ordinance says that you have to prove you generated the minimum income requirement for ten years. It was asked, how would the Township know farming would continue in the event space once it is approved? The answer is: Township would have to monitor the event space. Commissioner Kelly said that this income requirement is nearly impossible to meet on a ten acre parcel, thus this provision is good because it would require there to be more land acquisition and land farmed to meet this requirement. Commissioner Kelly said that Apple Drive is already very busy. Attorney Redick asked what Roy Holmes's property is zoned right now - it is AG-2. This ordinance encapsulates both AG-1 and AG-2. Commissioner Munch had questions about page two of the ordinance amendment. It was noted that this Ordinance should include "invitation only" and no festival events. Commissioner Willis stated he does not support the construction of new buildings on agricultural land. He asked why wouldn't it just be rezoned instead of creating this ordinance. The Commission discussed how long this land (Roy Holmes's tree farm) was farmed. Commissioner Willis said he believes this Ordinance should be tighter. He believes that the old buildings should be renovated to look nicer and new buildings should not be built. His idea is to make the old barns look nice. Planner Bigelow suggested getting rid of the waiver to build a new building thus restricting this to only old buildings.

Two more public attendees arrived at 6:49 p.m.

Commissioner Kelly expressed concern over the income requirement as it relates to the Holmes Tree Farm. Planner Lovelace reviewed the application. She reports he did not request a new building to be erected although some Planning Commission members have seen news of a new building being planned.

Attorney Redick stated that said invitation only events can be left ambiguous due to social media and events can get too large very quickly. He suggested the language in subsection 5b be changed to “Individual invitation only basis” to eliminate ambiguity.

A motion to open the public hearing was made by Commissioner Kelly. A second was offered by Commissioner Machiela. The public hearing opened at 6:55 p.m. Commissioner Machiela asked for public comments. No public comments were offered.

Commissioner Kelly made **a motion** to close the public hearing. A second was offered by Commissioner Willis.

Commissioner Kelly made **a motion** to send this Ordinance to the Board. A second was offered by Commissioner Machiela. Commissioner Willis stated his disagreement with their decision. The Commissioners had enough approval to send this to the Board.

Agenda Item 8. Presentations

A. Hortech Zoning Ordinance Amendment - Draft Review

This Amendment is sponsored by Dave Mackenzie, Applicant. He was seated in the public area. Planner Bigelow stated the Applicant wants to add farm labor housing and wants to amend the Farm Labor Housing Ordinance. He read the proposed new definitions in the ordinance. The setbacks were kept the same as before and existing housing was included in the ordinance. The maximum number of people in the building is open for discussion. The employment of the people was specified. This is the first draft of this Ordinance Amendment.

The Applicant said he believes this sounds reasonable. He said that this is a back-up plan in case the company cannot get enough people. This year there are sixteen people living in farm labor housing. Hortech recently had to modify their driveway because MDOT required it for the high traffic area.

Commissioner Machiela asked what the general farm housing would look like because the proposed 75 people seems like a lot. Mr. McKenzie explained that if the owner of the property owns another farm, they are able to use the same laborers as long as it is the same owner of both farms. The housing is tight, but the people that come here to work, live in lesser conditions. Last year there were 13 people. They can only go to work and the grocery store.

Commissioner Machiela said he does not want to open the floodgates with a high capacity number. The Applicant said that they would have to grow quite a bit to reach the proposed 75 and they would prefer to hire locally. He said to the current State of Michigan standards, it is a minimum of 100 sq. ft. per person. Hypothetically, the existing 3,000 sq. ft. house could house 30 people. He said that in theory two houses could house 60 people. The State of Michigan makes the requirements about everything including bathrooms, windows, etc. He said 75 would be a nice buffer for the future. Ideally that number is as low as possible. The season for Live Roof is very short and hard work, this housing allows for more economical choices. The Commissioners say we can keep this at seventy five.

Attorney Redick spotted some errors in Section three of the ordinance. The section will be modified. This can be moved forward to public hearing next month. Applicant Dave left.

B. Attached Garages - Draft Review

Planner Bigelow began by stating there are a few barndominium applications. The current requirements do not allow for barndominiums. The drafted version of this Ordinance eliminates the requirement that the garage can only be 90% of the size of the living space. The Planners had conversations with the applicants and decided it would be best to increase the square footage maximum size. It was raised from 1,200 sq. ft to 1,600 sq. ft. The total square foot gross floor area is at 1% of the parcel size, up to a max of 6,400 sq. ft. Planner Bigelow said that Tallmadge has their ordinance at 6,400 sq. ft. and they have had no issues with it.

Commissioner Willis asked if the 1% can be increased to 1.5% and if there are 10 acres, it will be approx. 6,400 sq. ft. Commissioner Machiela asked a question about the 4,000 sq. ft. limit in R-1A. The Rural Estates would be 5 acres or more and able to be included in R-1 zoning, eliminating Section B of this Ordinance. Commissioner Kelly asked where Rural Estates are now. There are only two Rural Estates Zoning parts on the map.

Planner Bigelow said he will come back next month with the drafted version of the Ordinance. The public hearing will also be held next month.

C. Master Plan - Recreation and Implementation Chapters

Planner Bigelow introduced two chapters of the master plan and the framework for the final chapter. He reviewed the Recreation Chapter regarding parks, trails, etc. He asked if there were any specific questions the Commissioners had. This chapter reiterated the Township's desire for more recreational areas. Commissioner Machiela said that this should be updated for the North Bank Trail as it ends 112th. This will be paved but it will be graveled first.

The next chapter, Implementation, reviews the Master Plan Classifications, the Master Plan Map, a description of different areas through the Township. Finally there is the framework for the completion of the Master Plan. Adoption of the Master Plan will be in November 2025. Planner Bigelow asked for additional comments, none were made.

The map must be completed prior to the motion to move this matter to the Board. Planner Lovelace said that there are multiple maps that will be completed by GIS for presentation to the Board. She said we may be done before November 2025. The framework requires there to be a process.

Agenda Item 9. Discussion Items

A. R-5 Rezoning Discussion

Planner Bigelow reviewed this matter. He stated that there were five people that come to the meeting and the Zoning Department had some emails. The residents impacted said that the proposed changes would not benefit them directly so they do not want the ordinance to be modified. With this input, the R-5 Rezoning Discussion has concluded and the possibility of rezoning can be disregarded. On a semi-related note, a resident sponsored ordinance will be presented next month regarding live-work housing on M-104.

Agenda Item 10. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Kelly at 7:26 p.m. A second was offered by Commissioner Machiela.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paige Silva
Recording Secretary

Next Regular Meeting: April 15, 2025
Next Special Meeting: TBD