

Crockery Township

Regular Planning Commission Meeting

April 15, 2025

Approved Minutes

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

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

Absent: None.

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 8 people seated in the public gallery.

Agenda Item 2. Approval of the Agenda

Approved as submitted.

Agenda Item 3. Approval of Minutes

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Munch to approve the Minutes, with revision from March 18, 2025. A second was offered by Commissioner Arends.

Agenda Item 4. Announcements

Commissioner Kelly did not have any updates to provide.

Agenda Item 5. Communications

None.

Agenda Item 6. Public Comments

Commissioner Arends offered public comment for any item not on the agenda.

Jeremy Wilds on Leonard Rd - had a question regarding attached garages. He wanted clarification on what he would be allotted. He wants to build a building 400 square feet larger than permitted. Commissioner Arends said that they will discuss this later.

Noah Felicioni 11291 Michigan Ave - Introduced himself as the former applicant regarding the rezoning of the “downtown Nunica” area from R-2 to R5 - in accordance with the Master Plan. He reported that his neighbors were concerned with their backyard sizes and the change thereof was a deterrent to people that may have agreed otherwise.

Agenda Item 7. Action Items

A. Annual Election of Officer

Chairman Arends reviewed the current positions with the Commissioners. Commissioner Noel made a motion to approve and renew the current positions. Commissioner Kelly seconded.

Commissioner Holmes no longer wants to be secretary. Commissioner Noel made a **motion** to modify his motion for Commissioner Holmes to assume the position of Vice Secretary and Commissioner Machiela to be Secretary. A second was offered by Commissioner Kelly.

B. Public Hearing - Farm Labor Housing Ordinance Text Amendment

Planner Bigelow provided context for this matter. He said that this was spoken about at the last hearing. He outlined what changes are in the Amendment. He said that the Commission specifically agreed to these provisions. He asked the Commission if they have any questions.

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

No public comments were offered.

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

C. Public Hearing - Hortech Rezoning

Planner Bigelow said that this rezoning would allow for the farm labor housing to be built and allow its current use to match the proposed zoning. Chairman Arends asked for questions and comments from the Commissioners.

A motion was made by Commissioner Machiela to open the public hearing. A second was offered by Commissioner Kelly.

Public comment was asked for. None was offered.

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

Planner Bigelow showed the Planning Commission the aerial photo (on GIS) of the property in question.

Commissioner Willis made **a motion** to approve the Hortech Rezoning as written. A second was offered by Commissioner Machiela.

D. Public Hearing - Barndominiums (Attached Garages) Ordinance Text Amendment

Planner Bigelow stated that this was discussed last month with the Planning Commission. He recapped the previous conversion, stating how the barndominium trend is impacted by the Amendment. Per the Commission's request, "Rural Estates" was removed. The 1% was modified to 1.5%. He asked the Commissioners if they had any questions.

Chairman Arends asked if it would help Jeremy's situation - he made a public comment earlier. He wants to build a garage first to store the lumber. He plans to tear the barn down. Planner Bigelow said he can come by tomorrow and discuss this with him. If he does not tear it down, it would be problematic. The Commissioners suggest a bond be put in place in the case he does not tear it down. He said he currently has things stored in there and cannot tear it down until the other building is built with the stored materials. Commissioner Kelly suggests a time frame be put on this. Perhaps, six months. Attorney Redick said that a longer time can be allotted. Planner Bigelow said that it is possible for him to build two barns. The aforementioned public speaker, Jeremy also had questions regarding the placement of the barn. Chairman Arends said that it must meet the set back requirements and he suggested getting the proposal to Planner Bigelow for review and discussion between the two. Commissioner Arends asked for any planning commission comments. Commissioner Noel asked if this situation should be addressed now because

it may come up again in the future. The Township Supervisor, Eric said that this is why he told Jeremy to come into the Planning Commission meeting. Commissioner Willis asked why Jeremy cannot just build a “detached garage”? And name it that so he is allotted another accessory building. If he does this, he cannot add a garage if he is taking up all the allotted square footage. Mr. Jeremy asked if he can still build both new buildings if he tore the barn down? The Planning Commission stated he could. Planner Biglow said currently 576 square feet will not count towards the accessory buildings. This is already in the ordinance. Jeremy said he does not need anything over 1,600 square feet. Planner Bigelow said that the detached garage can count towards the accessory building - it can be combined.

Commissioner Noel made **a motion** to open the public hearing. A second was offered by Commissioner Munch.

Supervisor Erik Erhorn was present in the public seating area. He said that there were concerns regarding a sliding scale so the amount of square feet allocated is not unproportionate to the area of the parcel. The Commissioners considered 2.5%. Planner Aaron offered to rewrite the Amendment to reflect a similar version of Chester Township’s Ordinance.

Commissioner Kelly made **a motion** to table the matter until it is rewritten. A second was offered by Commissioner Noel.

Planner Bigelow presented the Chester Township Ordinance. They do not have specific accessory square footage. He said there is a maximum lot coverage permitted - at 30% for the lot. This includes everything such as driveways, septic fields and buildings. There is a 25,000 square foot maximum. The Commission did not like their inclusion of the word “impervious” in the Ordinance. Their thoughts were that if setbacks are met then it will not matter what the square foot allotted is.

The Commissioners liked the idea of 5% being the permitted amount. Planner Biglow said that Tallmadge also has a sliding scale. He presented the Commissioners with it and said that he does not like the septic being included. Chairman Arends suggested the Commission stick with the original language and increase the percentage. Planner Aaron said that 2.5% would allow for twice as big as allotted now. 2.5% on one acre is 1,089 square feet. After one acre - 3% across the board. If you are under 1 acre - it would be 1,600 square feet. The minimum would be 1,600 square feet, Commissioner Willis clarified. The Commission agreed to this change. Commissioner Willis asked how these tall buildings would impact the community. Planner Bigelow said that there will still be a height limit of 35 feet. Would the Township want all of these small buildings? Supervisor

Eric asked who on 20 acres needs three buildings? Commissioner Willis suggested that for over 10 or 20 acres there shall only be three buildings. The Commission agreed for every 15 acres there will be a limit of three buildings. Planner Bigelow asked if this would apply to all zoned districts. Commissioner Holmes said that we are opening a “can of worms” regarding commercial storage. Why can’t we do the 3% with a maximum square footage? Maybe 6,400 square feet and beyond has to be approved by the Planning Commission. Planner Biglow said that Tallmadge Township has a maximum of 6,000 square feet. Allowing 6,400 square feet makes more sense. Commissioner Arends asked if the Commissioners wanted to leave it at 6,400 or bump it to 3% and include the stipulation that a third building must pass the Planning Commission approval.

Planner Bigelow will revise and bring this back next month.

Attorney Redick stated that another public hearing is not necessary.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kelly to open the public hearing. A second was offered by Commissioner Machiela.

Jeremy Wilde - Leonard Ave - asked if the building can be a detached garage.

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

Agenda Item 8. Presentations

A. PUD Ordinance Text Amendment - Public Utilities

Planner Bigelow provided an introduction to this matter. The Applicant was inquiring about a deep property on M-104. They are exploring their options and want a Planned Unit Development (PUD). In the current ordinance, one cannot have a PUD without public utilities. This ordinance amendment would eliminate the requirement for sanitary sewer and water. The Planning Commission may require future connection. The proximity to the utilities, the master plan and the cost of hookup should be considered by the Planning Commission and Township Board. The current Ordinance dates from a time when Crockery Township had its own sewer treatment plant. It was acknowledged that any PUD will have to be approved by the Commission. The Commission can still require that buildings hookup to water when present. Michigan Department of Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) and the Crockery Township Fire Department will also require certain people to hookup to public utilities. The Commission originally thought that this would drive development.

Commissioner Willis asked if the building could be public or private and if it is a duplex or apartment. Planner Bigelow said that it can “be a lot of anything”. The proposal was for a live-work environment on M-104 across from Priced Right Auto. The Commission will still have the ultimate authority for what and how things are done. There will be limitations for septic in a bigger development.

Commissioner Noel asked if the Township allows PUD’s on a case-by-case basis, will the Commission’s authority disappear because of their previous approvals? Planner Bigelow said there are density restrictions on PUD’s. There is only one in Crockery Township. The Health Department also has to approve them and they do not have a notoriously easy approval threshold. Commissioner Arends said that he was told his lot is unbuildable.

Commissioner Arends asked for any other questions or concerns. Commissioner Noel asked if anyone else can hookup to the existing sewer or is it only sized for Hathaway? Supervisor Erhorn responded that it is limited to the current contract, further, there is capacity available but it is on a first come, first serve basis and a question as to who will pay for it.

Planner Bigelow stated that there are determination factors to help make a decision in a case by case basis. Attorney Redick recalled that the determination factors are only triggered in situations not already required to hookup to sewer/water. Commissioner Kelly clarified that water or sewer are not available on the side of the road the PUD is proposed for. The cost for hookup will continually change. Planner Bigelow said that not having a specific square footage in the ordinance allows for leniency. Commissioner Willis said that there should be a minimum for example, if the building is 200 feet from the hookup, hookup should be required. Attorney Redick said that this is the living ordinance. Reiteration of this is redundant.

Commissioner Arends suggested that this be moved to Public Hearing in May.

Agenda Item 9. Discussion Items

A. Master Plan Map

Planner Bigelow presented the Master Plan Map which consists of Crockery Township and colored sections of the suggested zoning. Former Planner Lovelace and himself put it together. There were two copies behind him, one with less color than the other. He said the areas in section 8, 9, 16, 17 and 20 are zoned R-2 and also R-2 on the proposed map.

He said that some of them are down zoned to R-1 which restricts a few things currently allowed. C-2 remains the same and it now includes Subaru, the golf course and M-104. Commercial Horticultural, Agricultural and all the other colors were reviewed the Planning Commission. Planner Bigelow expanded the Industrial Zoning to include things already industrial - for example Meekhof's. Nunica will remain R-5 on the Master Plan. The Planners matched parcel lines and did not cut any parcels with property lines.

Regarding Rural Estates, Planner Bigelow wanted the Commission's input: should Rural Estates be expanded, instead of expanding R-1. He said that pretty much all of AG-2 is in question and can be changed to Rural Estates. The difference between AG-2 and Rural Estates is primarily, Rural Estates allows a lot smaller parcels. It would change the minimum parcel from 10 acres to 5 acres. Commissioner Kelly asked what is the purpose of Rural Estates - the answer: Smaller Parcels. Planner Lovelace previously recommended moving all public land designations. If Ottawa County wanted to sell it - it would create problems when transferring the land. The land should be zoned consistently around it. They suggest keeping it as Agricultural and getting rid of the public land designation. Planner Bigelow asked the Planning Commission what they wanted to do with the uncolored areas - sections 4, 3, 2, 9 and 11, there is a mix of AG-2 or R-1. Planner Bigelow said that one or the other should be picked. Commissioner Arends said that we should leave it AG-2 and around public utilities go R-1. Supervisor Erhorn stated in Sections 19 and 20 the Township is putting the transmission water main. There was an updated water map presented. Planner Bigelow suggested R-1 around the public utilities and said that he would adjust it and present it at the next meeting. Commissioner Noel asked if Rural Estates can be redrawn for a better transition - instead of R-1. The majority of Crockery Residents like to see the Agricultural land, so it would be best for the land around the utilities to be Rural Estates.

The question was posed, should AG-2 be rural estates in the master plan map - Section 19 and 20? A lot of those sections were rural estates in the 2003 Master Plan Map. It eliminates the Agricultural spot zoning in those sections. Planner Bigelow asked the Commissioners how hard they want to lean into Rural Estate Zoning? It is pretty built up now and there are not many building opportunities. It was suggested to leave the Northernmost properties in Section 19 Agricultural and a portion of Section 36 should be changed to Rural Estates. AG-2 in sections 19 and 30 were suggested to change to either R-1 or Rural Estate zoning to allow development due to the proximity of Spring Lake Township. The Commission discussed the recent changes in the sections at hand.

Commissioner Willis asked about the "open" section 18. Planner Bigelow said that this spot is currently R-1, does the Commission want to keep R-1 or go R-2? This Section consists of State Road where there are a lot of one acre lots already. Planner Bigelow

asked if everything West of 96 should be R-2? Commissioner Willis said no, only section 18, some of 17 and leave the top ones as is.

The Commission discussed the AG land and the possibility of changing more of it to Rural Estates.

Planner Bigelow said that the Planning Commission will look at it next month. Supervisor Erhorn reiterated that public utilities and roads should be synonymous with zoning.

There was a public comment from Tom Farage - 16648 Sagewood Ave. He said his properties are not in the overlay. He asked why he is not in the overlay. Why are the other property's in the overlay? What benefit is in the overlay? Planner Bigelow said that this would mostly be for access management. He said that it is for traffic management. The Commission said that he does not have frontage but he still has access to M-104. He wants to be added to the overlay. He accused this of being spot zoned. He previously spoke with Julie about this and she called the Township Attorney who denied that he had access. Mr. Farage said he spoke with his attorney and he said he was right - the Township was wrong. Commissioner Arends said that they will take a look at it next time. Planner Bigelow will send a Master Plan Map in the packet next month.

Agenda Item 10. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Noel at 7:51 p.m. A second was offered by Commissioner Munch.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paige Silva
Recording Secretary

Next Regular Meeting: May 20, 2025
Next Special Meeting: TBD