

**SUPERIOR CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
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1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Gardner called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

The following members were present: Brennan, Dabish-Yahkind, Findley, Gardner, McGill, Sani-Yahyai, Steele. Also present was Ben Carlisle, Carlisle Wortman; and George Tsakoff, OHM.

3. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

A quorum was present.

4. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Brennan and supported by Commissioner Sani-Yahyai to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion carried.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Minutes of the November 16, 2022 Meeting

A motion was made by Commissioner Brennan and supported by Commissioner Sani-Yahyai to approve the minutes as presented. The motion carried.

6. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

None.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

None.

8. PUBLIC HEARINGS, DELIBERATIONS AND ACTIONS

None.

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9. REPORTS

A. Ordinance Officer Report

A motion was made by Commissioner Brennan and supported by Commissioner Sanii-Yahyai to receive the report. The motion carried.

B. Building Department Report

A motion was made by Commissioner Brennan and supported by Commissioner Sanii-Yahyai to receive the report. The motion carried.

C. Zoning Administrator Report

A motion was made by Commissioner Brennan and supported by Commissioner Sanii-Yahyai to receive the report. The motion carried.

10. OLD BUSINESS

None.

11. NEW BUSINESS

A. STPC 23-01 Huron Dental Mixed-Use Development Pre-Application Conference.

Brent LaVanway, Boss Engineering, presented an overview of the site, located at 5387 Plymouth-Ann Arbor Road, to the Commissioners. Mr. LaVanway explained the main use for the building will be the dental office. There will also be two residential units above the dental office and two small commercial units on the ground floor.

Mr. LaVanway added the dental office has worked with the Washtenaw County Road Commission and the neighboring Arbor Hills Animal Clinic to have a shared driveway for the two businesses. Additionally, the Health Department has perk tested the site and given feedback for the septic location.

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Mario Evangelista, Cassino Building, presented renderings of the proposed building to the Commissioners. This included elevations and floor plan.

Mr. Evangelista added the dental office is proposing significant landscape buffering along Church Street as well as an underground detention system to culvert under the road.

Ben Carlisle reviewed the Planner's Report dated January 19, 2023.

Commissioner Brennan asked if the residential units would be general leasing.

Mr. Evangelista replied the units would be general leasing.

Commissioner Dabish-Yahkind understands it is a complicated site but wondered if the applicant could orient the building toward the street for more of a village feel.

The owner of the practice, Shyroze Rehemtulla, explained the building has many architectural elements so that the side facing Plymouth-Ann Arbor Road does not look like a blank wall.

Commissioner Dabish-Yahkind asked if the applicant had reached out to residents and business owners in the Dixboro Village area. She suggested they do reach out.

Mr. Evangelista reiterated that the property along Church Street will be heavily landscaped, with neighboring residents in mind.

Commissioner Brennan remarked favorably on the architecture of the building.

Commissioner Findley inquired about what kind of retail would be in the commercial offices attached to the dental office.

Dr. Rehemtulla replied there would be medical-based office in one, and she would like the other office to have a retail-based shop with "giftables."

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Commissioner Dabish-Yahkind noted in the Planner's report there was mention of the reduction of parking spaces. She inquired about how many spaces the parking could be reduced.

Mr. Carlisle replied parking could potentially be reduced by five to six parking spaces, but the Planning Commission would need to know more about what kind of businesses would occupy the retail component of the building. Different commercial uses require a different amount of parking spaces based on the Zoning Ordinance.

Commissioner Dabish-Yahkind asked if there were concerns about elevations.

Mr. Carlisle replied building frontage on Plymouth Road needs to look like a front of a building and not the side.

George Tsakoff asked the applicant's engineer if he talked to the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner's Office about storm water piping and detention.

Mr. LaVanway replied they had. He added that next steps have not been discussed, just infiltration. Mr. LaVanway also noted the applicant has met with the Washtenaw County Road Commission and items have been agreed upon, but there are no formal permits, yet.

Commissioner Gardner noted the plan shows the removal of some regulated trees. He asked the applicant if they had considered an alternative parking lot layout to avoid the removal of the regulated trees.

Mr. LaVanway stated they did look at other layouts, but the layout depicted on the site plan made the most sense with the building configuration and shared driveway. He added parking will be reduced if they have the ability to do so, especially near the trees in the northwest portion of the parking area.

Commissioner Dabish-Yahkind shared concerns that the side of the building fronting Plymouth Road gives the look of a small country club. She understands the lot is very tricky topographically, but she doesn't want the building to create a wall as drivers come around the curve of Plymouth-Ann Arbor Road.

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Mr. Evangelista explained he feels he was receiving mixed messages from the Township. He noted the Dixboro Design Review Board responded favorably to the proposed project, but it is sounding like the Planning Commission has some reservations.

Commissioner Sanii-Yahyai recommended the applicant talk to surrounding property owners to inform them of the project and get feedback.

Commissioner Findley, who also is on the Dixboro Design Review Board (DDRB), explained the DDRB overwhelmingly enjoyed the proposed project and drawings. She does not want the applicant to feel like they're receiving mixed messages.

Mr. Carlisle commented that the applicant did not "miss the mark" with their site plan. He stated the applicant now has comments from the Planning Commission they can take into consideration before submitting for preliminary site plan.

TC Collins asked if the walnut trees currently at the site could be transplanted. He indicated he would be very interested in them for the community garden.

Mr. LaVanway replied he will speak to the landscape architect for the project but believes they may be too large to transplant.

Commissioner Steele stated the replacement trees needed for the site could be placed on Township-owned property if the applicant is unable to put all of the trees back on the site. Additionally, money can be placed into a tree fund managed by Superior Township.

Mr. Evangelista inquired about the preliminary and final site plan process.

Mr. Carlisle recommend the applicant does not combine preliminary and final site plan due to the necessity of outside agency approvals by the final site plan stage.

It was noted staff could assist the applicant through the next steps and meet virtually prior to their submittal of preliminary site plan.

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- B. TC Collins – Community Garden Presentation  
TC Collins, Willow Run Acres, presented his idea for a community garden located across three Township-owned parcels at the corner of Harris Road and MacArthur Blvd.

Mr. Collins explained the Watch Me Grow Center Garden and went on to speak on how he started a garden at Danbury Green Apartments.

He additionally explained Willow Run Acres is a non-profit organization that is community led and driven. One of his goals is to make a new model of the traditional farmer's markets.

Mr. Collins reiterated his organization would love to have the Black Walnut trees that are slated to be cut down from the Dental Office site, if they are able to be transplanted.

Commissioner Gardner asked Mr. Collins if residents would have individual plots at the community garden.

Mr. Collins replied there will be small plots available for rent, but the goal is to have people also working and volunteering at the farm. He really wants to get people interested in all steps, from planting to harvesting.

Mr. Gardner inquired about financial viability and sustainability.

Commissioner Findley replied the Board of Trustees are very interested in the project, and the organization will likely receive funds through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

Jan Piert, who is also assisting with the startup of the community garden, stated the organization is asking for startup funding from the Township. Also, Washtenaw County officials have shown interest in the project and a willingness to help find additional funding and grant money.

Commissioner McGill asked what would happen at the community garden during the off season, whether there would be classes or canning of fruits and vegetables.

Mr. Collins replied there would be classes throughout the off season, including education on canning and seed saving. He added there would

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be beehives at the back of the property, with proper fencing to keep individuals safe.

Commissioner Brennan added it is a great project and feels it would be very welcome into the community.

Commissioner Sanii-Yahyai agreed it is a great project. She asked the applicant to explain the role of Parks and Recreation with the project.

Mr. Collins explained Parks & Recreation would own and manage the land, but he would tend to the land and teach the classes.

Commissioner Gardner asked if any portion of the site would require a rezoning.

Mr. Carlisle replied the property directly at the corner is zoned PSP, and the northern parcel is zoned A-2, which are both fine. The interior lot to the south is currently zoned C-1, and depending on further details and the layout of the lot, a rezoning may be required.

Mr. Collins stated in three to five years he'd like to bring small alpacas and goats to the property for educational opportunities.

Mr. Carlisle noted staff can work through the details with the applicant to determine the proper zoning for the parcel.

Commissioner Gardner inquired about the former uses of the C-1 property.

It was explained the property was a former convenience store.

Commissioner Steele mentioned St. Joe's hospital has a similar garden project at The Farm, located on their campus. He added it might be worth the applicant checking out.

Commissioner McGill asked the total acreage of the sites.

Mr. Collins replied there are 3.1 acres total, but the usable acreage is about two acres.

The applicant also explained the garden would be a hands-on experience and a destination for families.

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Mr. Collins discussed plans for an orchard and the variety of the trees he hopes to plant.

Ms. Piert explained the Board of Trustees would like a memo of support from the Planning Commission since they are seeking ARPA funds for the startup.

Motion by Commissioner Brennan and supported by Commissioner Findley to direct Township staff to draft a memo on behalf of the Planning Commission in support of the Willow Run Acres community garden project to be located at the corner of Harris Road and MacArthur Boulevard, to be provided to the Board of Trustees at their meeting on February 21, 2023.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Brennan, Dabish-Yahkind, Findley, Gardner, McGill, Sanii-Yahyai, Steele.  
No: None.  
Abstain: None.  
Absent: None.

The motion carried.

**12. POLICY DISCUSSION**

**A. Adoption of the 2023 Meeting Schedule**

A motion was made by Commissioner Brennan and supported by Commissioner Sanii-Yahyai to adopt the 2023 Planning Commission Meeting Schedule.

The motion carried.

**B. Election of Officers for 2023**

Motion by Commissioner Sanii-Yahyai and supported by Commissioner Findley to nominate Jay Gardner as Chair of the Planning Commission.



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Motion by Commissioner Sanii-Yahyai and supported by Commissioner Brennan to nominate Dr. Rob Steele as Vice-Chair of the Planning Commission.

Motion by Commissioner Sanii-Yahyai and supported by Commissioner Gardner to nominate Tom Brennan as the Secretary of the Planning Commission.

The nominations carried by voice vote.

C. Dixboro Corridor Pedestrian/Road Safety

Commissioner Dabish-Yahkind reported she's heard many concerns about pedestrian safety in the Dixboro area. She is interested in hosting a policy discussion about the issue or recommending such a discussion to the Board of Trustees. She added she has spoken to the Washtenaw County Road Commission, and they have been unresponsive.

Mr. Tsakoff replied to Commissioner Dabish-Yahkind, stating the Plymouth Road pathway is currently being designed and permits should be issued this summer. He added the pathway will be installed next year at the latest.

Commissioner Gardner noted the Planning Commission has discussed the issue at their meetings before and they've always run up against the Washtenaw County Road Commission.

Commissioner Dabish-Yahkind feels there are options to calm traffic in the Dixboro Area.

Mr. Tsakoff agreed there are many traffic calming options, but although the County may issue permits, they may not pay for any of it. He stated he can look for grant opportunities.

Mr. Carlisle explained the Washtenaw County Road Commission is more likely to respond if the Township comes to them with a plan. The Master Plan is close to being adopted, and once that happens the Township can take the plan to the Road Commission. He added that one whole section of the Master Plan addresses improvements in the Dixboro area.

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D. Master Plan Update

Mr. Carlisle reported the goal is to have a draft of the Master Plan ready to review by March. He explained census data is slated to be released by June, but it could be pushed back again. He further explained it is not generally good practice to adopt a Master Plan without the new census data. He suggested the Township move forward adopting the Master Plan with the data that is currently available and do an analysis once the new data is released.

Commissioner Findley added the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) provides local census data and has been made available for some time.

Commissioner Gardner inquired about the process for approving the Master Plan.

Mr. Carlisle explained the Master Plan Steering Committee would review the documents first, and then it would be presented to the Planning Commission for review. Additionally, a special meeting of the Planning Commission could be held just to discuss the Master Plan draft.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Brennan, supported by Commissioner Findley to adjourn.

Motion Carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Thomas Brennan III, Planning Commission Secretary

Laura Bennett, Recording Secretary  
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