

**Almont Township Planning Commission
Regular Meeting
December 13, 2023**

The regular meeting of the Almont Township Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Planning Commission Chairperson, Andrea Bara, at the Almont Township Hall, 819 N. Main Street, Almont, Michigan. Pledge of Allegiance and invocation was recited. Roll call taken.

Members Present: Andrea Bara, Kevin Vallelunga., Dennis Sweers, Jeremy Yarbrough, Steve Hoffa, and Rick Dodge.

Members Absent: Traci Pewinski.

Professional Services: Planner Alex Hritcu from ROWE Professional Services.

Guests Present: John Brzozowski, Connie Brzozowski and Joe Brzozowski representing American Tree and several high school students.

Moved by Dodge and supported by Hoffa to approve the minutes from the November 8, 2023, as amended. Motion carried.

Correspondence:

1. Almont Township Planning Commission 2024 Open Meetings Resolution.
2. Davis Land Surveying & Engineering, Inc December 2023 Project Update.

Public Comments: None

Late Agenda Items: None

Introductions: None

Public Hearings: None

New Business: None

Old Business: 1. Mr. John Brzozowski (American Tree) – Proposed site updates (this is for discussion only as no application has been submitted).

Mr. Brzozowski had provided an updated site plan dated November 29, 2023, based on discussion that occurred during the Planning Commission meeting held on November 8, 2023. The updated site plan focusses on Phase I only for a covered walkway and hoop style green house.

Mr. Brzozowski was invited to address the members of the Planning Commission and he provided a description with some background regarding the cost of producing a professional site plan which could be as high as \$10,000. Mr. Brzozowski is requesting that American Tree

be allowed to forgo the site plan review process for Phase 1 and indicated the cost of a fully prepared site plan may make the project cost prohibited. Furthermore, the covered walkways and hoop house would have a very low impact to the site.

Discussion followed in support of finding a way for the Planning Commission to accept the updated site plan and allow the project to move forward without the need for a formal site plan while working through the Almont Township Building Department. Discussion also included the challenge for the Planning Commission to wave site plan requirements on an individual site plan and ensure fair and consistent treatment of all applicants. It was noted that the Zoning Ordinance does not provide a process by which the Commissioners could follow to accomplish the objective of waiving ordinance requirements and ensure consistent site plan assessment for all potential applicants.

Moved by Vallelunga supported by Hoffa to approve proposed site plan submitted by American Tree dated 29 Nov 2023 amended to include the temporary "hoop house" and walkways in Phase I of their plan, waving 4.2.A2 and 4.2.B2 all other site plan and building permit requirements apply. Motion carried.

2. Review/Update Master Plan

Discussion:

Mr. Alex Hritcu provided handouts as well as email documents ahead of the meeting. Mr. Hritcu presented and reviewed the Almont Township Draft Master Plan Structure showing the comparison between the chapters of the current Master Plan and the proposed articles of the draft Master Plan. Given that the Almont Village elected to conduct their own Master Plan update all chapters related to the Village will be removed. The Township update will eliminate a Thoroughfare Plan, add the Survey Results and the Community Facilities will be covered in the Goals and Strategies articles. There is additional information to be included and compliment the existing information under Natural Features. Commissioners should review these draft articles to ensure the updates are tracking with Township direction/desires.

Discussion followed regarding the existing land use map based on tax classification. There was some discussion as to whether this is the best approach to achieve an accurate map of current use. Mr. Hritcu indicated that although the Lapeer County is working on their GIS capability, GIS data will most likely not be available to support our Master Plan update. Mr. Hritcu provided a large color copy of the land use map based on tax classification. The Zoning Administrator provided a large copy of the current land use map dated 2018. Discussion followed concluding that the best approach for accuracy may be to update the 2018 Land Use using all zoning changes approved since 2018. The Zoning Administrator to provide zoning change information to Mr. Hritcu in preparation of updating the current Land Use Map for the next Planning Commission meeting.

Mr. Hritcu provided an updated version of the proposed Section 5, Goals, Strategies and Tasks as discussed during the November 2023 Planning Commission meeting. The update included the addition of a strategy and task associated with dealing with hazardous materials. Discussion followed regarding quality housing, and it was decided to strike this goal in it's entirety. The remaining Goals, Strategies and Tasks were discussed with no noted changes. There was some discussion regarding the Goal to encourage and promote pedestrian and vehicle traffic improvements for the health, safety and welfare of the community regarding the need for a left turn to be added the full length on M53 as there have been several accidents and at least one fatality. Task a. remains open under the goal to maintain strong working relationship with State of Michigan (MDOT) and Lapeer County Road Commission.

Mr. Hoffa left the meeting at 8:37 and returned at 8:48.

Summary of follow-on action items:

1. The Zoning Administrator to provide all zoning changes approved by the Township since the 2018 Land Use Map was established.
2. The goals, strategies, and tasks will be updated for the next Planning Commission meeting.
3. Planning Commissioners to review the future Land Use Plan and Zoning Plan for the next meeting.

Commissioners expressed their appreciation for Commissioner Hoffa's and Yarbrough's support for the Community as members of the Almont Township Planning Commission during their tenure and regret that they have decided not to seek reappointment. Two new members to the Planning Commission were approved by the Township Board during the December 2023 Board Meeting of 11 Dec 2023. The new members are Mr. Brian Blumline and Mr. Nick Giacalone.

Reports:

Planner: Covered the Master Plan Update.

Engineer: December engineering report was reviewed by Chairperson Bara as the engineer was not present.

Zoning Board of Appeals: To meet next Wednesday.

Zoning & Building:

Efforts regarding Jimmy's Storage continue by the Township professionals ahead of the SLU public hearing.

Efforts relative to the construction of a cell tower at 3600 Glover Road have begun.

2024 Open Meeting Resolution was provided to ensure the dates are correct in preparation for the Jan 2024 meeting.

Township noise ordinance was rescinded by the Township Board on 11 Dec 2023.

Issuing building permits for the Township have slowed down considerably.

Planning Commission General Comments:

Commissioner Sweers handed out a copy from a page out of an MTA training manual that described two levels of site plan review focusing on the option of an administrative review that he suggested could be included on the next Planning Commission agenda for discussion. Had this option been available, an administrative review for American Tree would have been a good option for the Township.

Moved by Vallelunga supported by Hoffa to adjourn at 8:54 PM. Motion carried.

Submitted by Dennis Sweers Planning Commission Secretary.

