

HOLLAND CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Special Meeting (via video conference)
June 24, 2020

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Marion Hoeve at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Marion Hoeve, Vice-Chairman/Secretary Jack Vander Meulen, Members Dennis Gebben, Randy Kortering, Norm Nykamp, and Miska Rynsburger. Also present were Community Development Director John Said, Assistant Community Development Director Corey Broersma, Comprehensive Plan Consultants Christopher Khorey (McKenna), Danielle Bouchard (McKenna), Har Ye Kan (HYK Consulting), and Nick Rolinski (Main Street Studios)

Absent: Ed Zylstra

Chairman Hoeve opened the Meeting by asking Staff and the consultant team to begin. Consultant Chris Khorey began discussion with picking up where review had stopped on June 16 with review of the Zoning Plan. He noted that State law now includes a specific requirement that Comprehensive Plans need to have a zoning plan component in them. Mr. Kortering asked about uniqueness of the zoning categories; Mr. Khorey replied that the categories are somewhat unique but not exclusive to the Township.

Residential categories were then reviewed and discussed. Mr. Hoeve inquired about the numbers of units in each category, with goal of ensuring consistency. The consultant team will double-check the numbers to ensure correlation. Mr. Broersma added that the Comp. Plan helps to clarify districts, especially R2-A. A typo. was noted concerning the 550 SF (square feet) unit size minimum by Mr. Vander Meulen; the reference should say “retain” not “establish”.

Discussion then ensued regarding minimum unit sizes between the Commission, Staff, and the consultants. It was concluded that the 550 SF minimum is appropriate, and that anyone desiring smaller units needs to provide justification through the PUD (Planned Unit Development) or text amendment processes.

Mr. Khorey went on to review the proposed Mixed-Use category, as well as the Connectivity section of the Plan, as well as the recommendation to prohibit PUDs and private roads in the AG District to avoid a loophole in residential zoning requirements. Mr. Hoeve expressed his desire to eliminate any allowance for private roads anywhere in the Township, and Mr. Khorey noted that private roads can ultimately cause economic and maintenance problems for properties and communities.

Mr. Khorey next discussed PUDs, and the Plan’s recommendation that they be discouraged. Commissioners discussed the Zoning Ordinance’s PUD requirements, and some of the recent PUD projects, and agreed that the current criteria for PUDs will be best supported by the language in the new Plan.

The next topic of discussion was the US-31 Corridor Subarea. Mr. Khorey discussed the proposed land use map changes, and went on to review various blocks within the subareas, beginning with the Walmart

block. At that point, Ms. Kan described the Walmart options, which resulted from stakeholder feedback and the consultant team's analysis. The effort is to rethink the current big-box retail with large-scale parking lot model, as that may not be sustainable especially if Walmart decides to relocate somewhere else. The Commission, consultants, and Staff further discussed Walmart, retail trends in general, and development patterns including stormwater requirements. Mr. Kortering asked how the Plan options would be best used, and the consultant explained that these options provide alternatives should the Walmart area ever be vacated; the Commission supported this notion, which would allow the Township to proactively work with a developer to reuse these areas.

Further discussion then took place concerning Walmart, the difficulty of backfilling existing Walmart spaces, and concerns about Walmart trends and practices, including lease restrictions on other users. Mr. Broersma noted that the proposed limitations on further C-2 Commercial development in the US-31 corridor will help maintain a more compact environment and preserve commercial areas, thereby reducing commercial leap-frogging and increased vacancies.

Discussion of the Subarea blocks also addressed the proposed pedestrian bridges. Currently, pedestrian bridges may not be an appropriate option to traverse US-31. However, in the future, with the opportunity for introducing additional residential and mixed-use projects into the commercial superblocks, better walkable connectivity would be available with these bridges, thereby reducing the barrier effect of US-31. The Commission also asked the consultants to add an item to the Plan to review Township parking requirements.

The consultants next discussed options for greening US-31 with enhanced landscaping. Mr. Kortering inquired about the feasibility of such an effort, to which Mr. Khorey replied that it does take local investment but is feasible, as can be seen in Georgetown Twp. with Chicago Drive. MDOT approval would be required. Discussion then focused on the median landscape design concepts and benefits (including appearance and stormwater management), with comments provided by Mr. Broersma, as he had originally prepared these designs.

Mr. Khorey then began discussion of the Westshore block and remaining areas within the US-31 Corridor. The Commission confirmed that the Westshore concept was reflective of the current concept being proposed as part of the PUD for this area. Mr. Broersma also asked that the maps/graphics pages be sized as 11 x 17 in the document so that all the graphics are more easily seen; the consultant also noted that color will be added to some of the concepts for enhancement.

Mr. Khorey next presented the Federal District Subarea for discussion. Again, it was noted that drawings need to be sized at 11 x 17 for readability. Ms. Kan indicated that the conceptual plans resulted from the consulting team's review of those locations that would likely remain, and those more likely to be subject to redevelopment in the foreseeable future. Mr. Gebben and other Commissioners then discussed the boundaries of the Township, and the possibility of adding some possible amenities, such as a riverwalk, in the floodplain area north of Chicago Drive.

Next, the various 8th Street concepts were discussed, including acknowledgement that the Road Commission plans to repave in 2023, and their receptivity to a 3-lane striping with bike lanes on either side. Any Plan improvements beyond that would be subject to funding and coordination by the Township.

Mr. Khorey went on to present the Beechwood/North River Subarea for Commission review. Mr. Rolinski summarized the Douglas Ave. opportunities in the Plan, including maintaining the grid street pattern, recognizing the contamination containment areas on the Pfizer site, and the opportunities for a waterfront focus. As a result, the Plan includes recommendations for future mixed-use areas, a riverfront walk, residential uses, and even a possibility of a solar array. The concepts reflect concerns identified by stakeholders in the meeting held about this Subarea.

Further discussion took place regarding waterfront views and development, and the industrial uses within the City of Holland on the southern shore of Lake Macatawa. The roundabouts shown along Douglas were reviewed by the Commission, who ultimately agreed that roundabouts are good to recommend in the Plan although not for the Douglas/N. River intersection.

The Lakewood area was discussed next, with no specific concerns or questions noted by the Commission. Next, the N. River area was reviewed, with particular attention to Item #4. Given future possibilities for this site, it was noted that the recommendation should remain in the Plan.

Mr. Vander Meulen recommended that the City (of Holland) owned site on north side of the river, east of the Unity Bridge, should be in the Plan with a recommendation for use as a future recreational facility, such as a kayak/canoe launch. It should also be designated as park/open space in the Plan.

The next phase of discussion focused on Commissioner questions. This began with Mr. Kortering asking about the Implementation Plan and recommending that the number of "A"'s (top priorities) be reduced or re-ordered somehow. There are currently 23, and it will be difficult to handle them all at one time as top priorities. Mr. Khorey agreed to work through the list and redo where possible; this may include combining some of the similar/repetitive priority goals.

Mr. Hoeve asked about the demographic statistics and their totals. Mr. Khorey clarified that while the number totals over 100(%), this is because the Hispanic classification is considered an ethnicity, not a race (as people with a Hispanic ethnicity can be of any racial background).

Mr. Kortering asked if the Plan includes enough future housing to meet anticipated demand; the consultants replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Kortering also reminded the consultants to include a 1-2-page Summary of the Plan as an introduction and at the beginning of the Plan.

Mr. Khorey indicated that the revised Plan addressing all comments from June 16 and June 24 Commission special meetings should be completed by Tuesday June 30, and will be distributed to the Commission for their further review. Some Commissioners asked if it would be simpler/possible to just do a checklist of the items to be changed, or to provide revised pages only; Mr. Khorey responded that they should be able to get the Plan revisions completed in a timely manner. As well, the revisions may result in changes to the pages, resulting in changes to pages throughout the Plan.

The remaining steps in the Plan process were then discussed by the Commission, Staff, and the consultants. It is anticipated that the Commission will recommend, to the Township Board, approval of the opening of the 63-day State-required Plan review period. These dates will be July 7 for the Planning Commission, and July 16 for the Board.

Public Comment: Mr. Hoeve invited public comment; there was no one present from the public that wanted to speak.

Staff expressed its appreciation to the entire Planning Commission for its efforts and diligence during this in-depth Plan review phase, and that a stronger Township policy document will be the result.

Meeting adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
John D. Said, AICP, Community Development Director