

VILLAGE OF ONEKAMA
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, December 13, 2022, 6:00 P.M.
5283 Main Street, Onekama, MI, (231) 889-3171

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call – Planning Commission members present: Christopher Forth, Deborah Storms, Susan Halloran, Wendy Kamaloski

Accept/Amend Agenda – Chris requested to amend the agenda to add a discussion about zoning for overnight accommodations and to request public comment during each agenda item rather than only at the beginning of the meeting. Susan moved to accept the agenda as amended, Debby supported the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Meeting Minute Approval – Debby offered a motion to approve the November 8, 2022 meeting minutes. Wendy supported the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Public Comments (3 Minutes) *on agenda items only* – 10 members of the public present; no comments.

OLD BUSINESS

The Coastal Sustainability Assessment. The study prepared by LIAA is expected by the end of the month and will be posted on the Village website when it is available. The Planning Commission will discuss during the January 2023 meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Annual Planning Commission Update to the Village Council. As required by State Law, a summary of the Planning Commission's 2022 activities will be prepared collaboratively by its members to be presented to Council at its January meeting.

Temporary Overnight Accommodations – Chris explained that County Planning Department has concluded that overnight accommodations (e.g. hotels, motels, short-term rentals) are currently not an allowed land use per the Village's current zoning ordinance. The existing motels were grandfathered in at the time the current zoning ordinance was passed, but the current zoning prevents new uses of this type from being established legally. The County Planning Department has indicated draft ordinance language could be prepared in advance of the January 10, 2023 meeting. During the January 10th meeting, the Planning Commission will discuss the proposed language and subject to this discussion, schedule a public hearing during the February 14, 2023 meeting.

Master Plan Update – Chris suggested that a planning consultant should be retained to complete not only the Master Plan but also a rewrite of the Zoning Code. An updated Master Plan is needed to establish, among others, a clear vision for the community and an updated zoning code to assist with Master Plan recommendations and address concerns such as the omission of overnight accommodations from allowed uses in the commercial zoning district. Options for funding a master plan and zoning code update could include: Manistee Community Foundation; Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Redevelopment Ready program (eligibility requires the Village to be following several best management practices).

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) – Chris mentioned the Planning Enabling Act requires the Planning Commission to prepare a capital improvement plan involving public improvements such as streets, parks and recreation, public safety, among others. The CIP would identify project costs and funding sources. Questions arose about land use law and what capital assets the Village owns. A legal opinion about the ownership of sidewalks (private or public) and other capital assets would be helpful to have prior to initiating this planning process.

Changes to the Fence Ordinance – Susan explained the reason for changes, such as barb wire and electrification. Given the other Planning Commission tasks that need to be completed, these zoning amendments were not considered a high priority.

Planning Commission Bylaws – The Commission discussed updating the bylaws to include a section on Conflict of Interest. Chris also suggested expanding the Village's webpage to include more information to keep the public better informed and documents that could be made available to the public. Transparency is important. Susan noted that changes to the current webpage is problematic. Chris suggested establishing a Village of Onekama Facebook Page but would want to have that first approved by the Village Council.

Planning Commission Member – The appointment process is dictated by Public Act 3 of 1895, the General Law Village Act, as amended. The Planning Commission and audience members all expressed the desire for another member of the Planning Commission to be appointed. Ideally, this person would then serve as the secretary. The Village ordinance approving the zoning authorizes 5 members but the State Law allows 7 or 9.

Recording Secretary – Lara Treemore-Spears is currently volunteering to take notes but would like a Planning Commissioner to do it instead.

Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) Incentive Programs – Chris provided an overview of several MEDC programs including the Redevelopment Ready Community (RRC) designation, which signals to developers that barriers to development have been removed (expedited site plan review and permitting process, clear vision and ordinances to help with redevelopment). Best practices required: (1) Plans and Community Engagement, as reflected by a current Master Plan and CIP; (2) Implementable Zoning that enables modern approaches to the type of development desired (such as, update the zoning to encourage walkability and allow for mixed use development); (3) Predictable site plan review processes; (4) Proactive and Diverse Boards and Commissions that consider multiple perspectives; (5) Economic Development plans to create a sustainable, vibrant community; (6) Identify priority redevelopment sites, marketing underutilized properties that would encourage developers to invest. Communities that obtain RRC designation are in a better position to obtain competitive grants.

Chris also provided a brief overview of the Downtown Development Authority, Brownfield Redevelopment Authority, Waterfront Tax Increment Financing District (such as to fund stormwater treatment before it enters the lake), and Commercial Rehabilitation Act. A brief explanation of tax increment financing was provided. Chris also mentioned that some MEDC programs, such as Neighborhood Enterprise Zone, require that a community be designated a Core Community. The Village of Onekama does not have this designation.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Concern was expressed about blight in the village that is not being addressed. Susan indicated any member of the public can request the Clerk or another council member to issue a blight complaint. The County Planning Department will then act upon the complaint. Sometimes the resolution of the complaint is slow because the complaint needs to go through the court system, which is beyond Village control. The judge may issue a compliance order, followed by a show-cause order if the property still isn't in compliance. Once the Village is provided with the authority to correct the problem by the court, then the Village must get a contractor to complete the work.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting the of Village of Onekama Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Respectively submitted,



Christopher Forth, AICP
Chairperson