

Onekama Township Planning Commission

July 15, 2021--Regular Monthly Meeting

7:00p—Onekama Township Hall

Meeting called to order by Chair Trout at 7:00p.

In attendance: Chair Trout, Vice Chair Wallace, Secretary Capper, Commissioner Hunt, Commissioner Taylor, Commissioner Volkema, Commissioner Lara Treemore-Spears.

Additions to agenda:

Under Old Business—newspaper articles discussion

Public comment: None

New Business:

Capital Improvement Plan update—Jon Phillips

Chair Trout requests of members to come up with ideas of projects for inclusion in the Capital Improvement Plan to the Master Plan. This will help determine what the plan is for the township going forward.

Amending ordinance to allow horses in RR4:

Chair Trout discussed a community member wanting to amend the local ordinance regarding allowing personal ownership of horses in the RR4 district, which is currently prohibited. It was determined that this does not fall under the Right to Farm guidelines. Commissioners Hunt and Treemore-Spears expressed neutrality to amending the ordinance, all other Commission members are not in favor of allowing an ordinance change.

Amending ordinance prohibiting private docks without accompanying primary structures:

Currently the Onekama Township has an ordinance prohibiting building private docks on riparian parcels that do not have an accompanying primary structure or dwelling on the parcel. The State of Michigan law states that if a citizen has riparian rights then that citizen is allowed to build and maintain one private dock for personal use only. Chair Trout led discussion on whether the Township prohibition should be struck down and instead defer to the state law. All members present were in favor of making this change.

Old Business:

Chair Trout shared a newspaper article about water pollution in Wellston. There was discussion about whether the Onekama Township should run e coli DNA tests on the water to see if any pollution present is caused by human use or local wildlife.

Chair Trout also shared a newspaper article regarding Township growth in a tourism-heavy area. Should growth be focused on the needs of tourists or the needs of the local population? And how does this affect the focus of the Master Plan?

Updating the Master Plan—Vice Chair Wallace

--Vice Chair Wallace stated there are things in the current Master Plan that don't quite work right or aren't fully utilized. These things should be revisited to make them more effective and efficient.

--Commissioner Treemore-Spears talked about outdated language that's too specific, rendering it too restrictive for many instances.

--A subcommittee was formed to address these issues, including Vice Chair Wallace and Commissioners Hunt and Treemore-Spears.

--There was also discussion on how best to utilize Beckett & Rader in the process of updating the Master Plan. It was determined that they will do the rewrite at the direction of the Planning Commission and will be more closely guided this time.

--If the desire is to change the community from a resort (retirement) community to a more vibrant community then the Township should emphasize both technological connectivity and an updated sewer system. These targets will encourage future growth by encouraging younger families to move to the area.

Public comment—None

Meeting adjourned at 9:19p.

Submitted by Michelle Swanson,

Recording Secretary