

**WILLIAMSTOWN TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
MINUTES – 1/24/24**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Williamstown Township Planning Commission convened at 7:00pm at the Township Hall, 4990 Zimmer Road, Williamston, MI. Chair Eidt called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda.

**PRESENT:** Chair Eidt, Vice-Chair Stanford, Secretary Brinker, Commissioners Poth, Giese, Weston, Flore and Trustee Creagh.

**ABSENT:** Commissioner Tocarchick. Quorum established.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Planning Consultant Chris Doozan of McKenna and Jim Howard, Planning Assistant.

Chair Eidt led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Motion by Weston, second by Creagh to approve the agenda with a minor amendment to move the Green Zone up as the first item under unfinished business.**

**Motion approved 8-0.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion by Creagh, second by Brinker to approve the minutes of 11/1/23 with a minor addition.**

**Motion approved 8 – 0.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Resident from Barry Rd. commented about the ADUs, was in favor of them and surprised they weren't already allowed.

**PUBLIC HEARING – Green Zone / Article 24**

**Motion by Stanford, second by Weston to open the public hearing.**

**Motion approved 8 – 0.**

Chris D explained the reason for the amendment, which is to better accommodate residential use, then reviewed his memo.

Resident from Barry Rd. mentioned that every requirement adds cost.

Terry Lutz, 6055 Lounsbury discussed solar and wind in the Green Zone.

Further discussion.

**Motion by Weston, second by Brinker to close the public hearing.**

**Motion approved 8 – 0.**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

◇ *Green Zone Amendment*

Brief discussion.

**Motion by Weston, second by Flore to deliberate on the issue tonight and recommend approval of the amendment to the Township Board.**

**Motion approved 8 – 0.**

◇ *Wind and Solar Energy Systems*

Chris D. reviewed his January 17 letter and the state acts which address large utility scale projects.

The Citizens for Local Choice Initiative was mentioned which just had their ballot language approved and now have until May 29 to collect 356,958 signatures for the November ballot.

MTA is developing a sample “CREO” (Compatible Renewable Energy Ordinance).

Question was raised about how to proceed:

- 1) Do we want to do a CREO?
- 2) Do we send them to the MPSC?
- 3) Do we utilize a workable agreement?

The state’s 1% strategy (of total acreage) was mentioned.

The 50 mw threshold was brought up.

AG economics was discussed and the potential local impact on specialty crops.

Suggestion was made that perhaps this is a policy decision for the Township Board.

Comment was made that developers want to stay local and not go to the MPSC.

The option of moving forward with controls for developments of less than 50 mw brought up.

Extensive discussion about the state acts ensued.

Kevin Mark, 1358 Epley commented that this is like building and flying a plane at the same time.

Kurt Guter, 4045 Cygnet relayed his experience in/with White River Township and their ordinance and stated the PC is on the right track regarding the 50 mw or less threshold.

Terry Lutz commented that wind towers reduce property values in the area, that any energy generated would be exported out of the Township and that rooftops need to be utilized for solar, particularly commercial and industrial.

Question was raised: what is the “grid” and what is a “single access point”?

**Motion by Brinker, second by Poth to table the issue to the March meeting.**

**Motion approved 8 – 0.**

◇ *Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)*

Chris D. reviewed his memo and the draft amendment language. They would be allowed as a permitted use with no site plan review / special use permit required.

Discussion:

- One unit per parcel
- Allowed in the PDs – would require internal approval by association

R. Shepard, 1430 Barry Rd. stated it was a good idea.

R. Dykeman, 1234 Wild Cherry had concerns, need strict limits.

Discussion about usable floor area. 1,000 sq ft is too small, should be 1,200 sq ft. Garages should be allowed.

Chris D. will revise the language.

**Motion by Weston, second by Giese to set a public hearing for the March 27, 2024 meeting.**

**Motion approved 8 – 0.**

◇ *Master Plan: review Scope of Work*

Meetings/workshops will be held the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of even-numbered months, starting in February.

Chris D, reviewed the Scope of Work, noted the township’s population is aging.

Discussion:

- Need input from younger people
- Safe Routes to School should be included

- Compatibility with Rec Plan important
- Use of a QR code could be very helpful
- Process for distribution and review was discussed

Commissioners will have their first meeting on the plan February 28.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### *◇ Red Cedar Bend Apartments, 2365 E. Grand River*

Chris D. introduced the project and briefly discussed his memo.

Property owner Kevin McIntyre discussed the project and the contact / conversations he has had with township staff.

Access to the river was discussed as well as the floodplain and wetlands on the site.

**Motion by Giese, second by Poth to table the project until the March meeting for a revised and more detailed plan.**

**Motion approved 8 – 0.**

## **PLANNING AND BOARD REPORTS AND REVIEW**

**Township Board Report:** Creagh reported the board tabled action on the CIP; approved a resolution to support the Ingham County Payment Reduction Plan for residents with a poverty exemption; and approved an Art Display Policy.

Chair Eidt indicated he would not be available for the February Township Board Meeting.

Commissioner Weston stated that he would not be at the March PC Meeting.

Howard mentioned that the parking requirements for multiple family housing are excessive and under review. Chris D. discussed the issue briefly. Proposed revisions should be coming before the PC shortly.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

The letters from Woodhull and Meridian Townships regarding their respective master plans were mentioned.

**CITIZEN COMMENT**

Terry Lutz asked about the location of the Green Zone District and where the Red Cedar Bend apartment project is, and suggested displaying a map would be helpful.

**REVIEW**

Chair Eidt reviewed the PC’s actions from the meeting:

- Approved the minutes of November 1, 2023;
- Held a public hearing for the draft Green Zone amendments and recommended approval by the Township Board;
- Resumed review of the wind and solar amendments and tabled action to the March 27, 2024 meeting;
- Set a public hearing on ADUs for the March meeting;
- Established a meeting schedule of every other month starting in February for the master plan update;
- Tabled action on site plan review of the Red Cedar Bend Apartments until the March meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by Commissioner Weston, second by Commissioner Stanford to adjourn.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:47 pm.

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Jim Howard  
Recording Secretary

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Secretary Brinker