



CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF CHOCOLAY

PLANNING COMMISSION

2022 PLANNING COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT

Planning Commission Actions

The Planning Commission took the following actions in 2022:

January

January 17, 2022

The Planning Commission held a meeting on January 17 in the Township Hall. There were five items on the agenda:

Unfinished Business

- 1) 2021 Master Plan and Related Appendices

Due to the absence of several Commissioners, this item was tabled until the February 14 joint meeting.

New Business

- 1) Planning Commission Training Session – What is Planning?

This training session for the Commissioners was tabled due to the absence of several Commissioners until the February meeting.

- 2) Election of Officers

Commissioners elected a new slate of Planning Commission officers for 2022. They were:

Chair	Ryan Soucy
Vice Chair	George Meister
Secretary	Donna Mullen-Campbell
Vice Secretary	Eve Lindsey

- 3) 2022 Meeting Dates

The Commissioners set the meeting dates for 2022. The meeting dates were:

January 17	July 18
February 14 (5:30 PM)	August 15
February 14 (7:00 PM)	September 19
March 21	October 17
April 18	November 21
May 16	December 19
June 20	

- 4) 2021 Planning Commission Annual Report

The Commissioners voted to send the *2021 Planning Commission Annual Report* to the Township Board for review.



February

February 14, 2022

The Planning Commission participated in two meetings on February 14 in the Township Hall. The first was the joint meeting with the Township Board, and the second was the regularly scheduled monthly meeting.

There were two items on the agenda for the regularly scheduled meeting:

Unfinished Business

- 1) 2021 Master Plan and Related Appendices

Due to the absence of several Commissioners, this item was tabled until the March 21 meeting.

New Business

- 1) Joint Meeting Discussion

Due to the absence of several Commissioners, this item was tabled until the March 21 meeting.

March

March 21, 2022

The Planning Commission participated in a meeting on March 21 in the Township Hall.

There were four items on the agenda for the regularly scheduled meeting:

Unfinished Business

- 1) 2021 Master Plan and Related Appendices

The Commissioners approved a resolution to adopt the *Master Plan, 2021 Edition* document.

New Business

- 1) Site Plan Review – 6448 US 41 South

The Commissioners approved a site plan for an addition to the Grove-R Daycare and Pre School located at 6448 US 41 South.

- 2) Planning Commission Training Session – What is Planning?

Township Manager Bill DeGroot conducted a training session for the Commissioners that provided an overview of planning and Planning Commissioner responsibilities.

- 3) Joint Meeting Discussion

Commissioners discussed the priorities and other topics addressed during the joint meeting in February. The primary focus of the discussion was the rewrite of the Township zoning ordinance.



April

April 18, 2022

The Planning Commission participated in a meeting on April 18 in the Township Hall. There were three items on the agenda for the regularly scheduled meeting:

New Business

1) Planning Commission Training Session – Zoning Ordinance Rewrite

Township Manager Bill DeGroot conducted a training session for the Commissioners that provided an overview of what to expect with the upcoming rewrite of the Township Zoning Ordinance.

2) Housing Discussion

The Commissioners discussed the various housing options that may be applicable to housing situations in the Township.

3) May Meeting

Commissioners discussed rescheduling or cancelling the May meeting, as there was a training opportunity for Commissioners on the same night (May 16). Commissioners decided to cancel the May meeting.

May

The Planning Commission did not meet in May.

June

June 20, 2022

The Planning Commission participated in a meeting on June 20 in the Township Hall. There were three items on the agenda for the regularly scheduled meeting:

New Business

1) Planning Commission By-Laws and Procedures

The Commissioners reviewed and updated the by-laws and procedures for the Planning Commission.

2) Township Zoning Ordinance Current Definitions and Current Land Uses

The Commissioners discussed the approach to reviewing the current zoning ordinance definitions and land uses in preparation for rewriting the Township zoning ordinance.

3) Planning and Zoning for Solar Energy Systems Training

The Commissioners discussed ideas related to a recent training session on solar energy systems and the ramifications on zoning in the Township.



July

July 18, 2022

The Planning Commission participated in a meeting on July 18 in the Township Hall. There were four items on the agenda for the regularly scheduled meeting:

Unfinished Business

- 1) Planning Commission By-Laws and Procedures

The Commissioners reviewed the updated by-laws and procedures text and public participation policy text and approved both.

New Business

- 1) Township Zoning Districts Maps

The Commissioners reviewed the Township *Zoning Districts* map and supporting maps. The Commissioners voted to forward the maps to the Board for a public hearing and adoption of the map.

- 2) Township Zoning Ordinance Current Definitions A through H

The Commissioners discussed each definition within the current zoning ordinance to determine if the definition was still applicable. If it was, the Commissioners either kept the definition as written, or modified the definition language. Commissioners completed a first review of definitions beginning with A through definitions beginning with E.

- 3) Agriculture / Forestry Zoning District (AF) Non-Conforming Parcels

The Commissioners discussed different solutions to the non-conforming Agriculture / Forestry (AF) parcels in preparation for discussion of the topic with the Board at the joint meeting in August.

August

August 15, 2022

The Planning Commission participated in two meetings on August 15 in the Township Hall.

The first meeting was a joint meeting with the Township Board. There were three discussion items:

- 1) AF zoning district

The Board directed the Planning Commission to address the number of non-conformities in the Agriculture / Forestry zoning district (AF) in the new zoning ordinance.

- 2) Zoning Ordinance update priorities

The discussion centered on how to proceed with the rewrite of the Township zoning ordinance.

- 3) Zoning ordinance draft approval process

The discussion developed a 14 month timeline for the release of the draft version of the new Township zoning ordinance, with a draft review within the first six to eight months of that timeline. The Planning Commission will provide regular updates to the Board regarding the progress of the rewrite.

The second meeting was a regular meeting. There were two agenda items:



New Business

1) Board Joint Meeting with the Planning Commission Discussion

The Commissioners held a lengthy discussion on the process for the rewrite of the zoning ordinance. Issues discussed included how to resolve the AF zoning district non-conformances and the initial plan for development of the ordinance.

The Commissioners decided to continue reviewing the definitions from the current zoning ordinance, and to proceed with a review of the character area maps that were included in the Township Master Plan.

2) Marquette County Citizen Planner Classroom Program

The Commissioners discussed the upcoming *Citizen Planner* training that will be held in Marquette beginning in October. Commissioners also discussed training opportunities in general.

September

September 19, 2022

The Planning Commissioners participated in a meeting on September 19 in the Township Hall. There were two items on the agenda for the regularly scheduled meeting:

Unfinished Business

1) Township Zoning Ordinance Definitions

The Commissioners continued to review the current Township zoning ordinance definitions as part of the zoning ordinance rewrite process.

New Business

1) Zoning Districts and Related Non-Conformances Discussion

The Commissioners decided to table this topic until the October meeting so that more Commissioners could participate in the discussion. At the time of the decision, there were four Commissioners in attendance at the meeting.

October

October 17, 2022

The Planning Commissioners participated in a meeting on October 17 in the Township Hall. There were two items on the agenda for the regularly scheduled meeting:

Unfinished Business

1) Zoning Districts and Related Non-Conformances Discussion

The Commissioners reviewed materials related to the non-conforming parcel sizes in the Township. The Commissioners also reviewed a proposed table of minimum parcel sizes, acreages, and new zoning districts. The Commissioners requested additional mapping information for the next meeting.

2) Township Zoning Ordinance Current Definition Review

The Commissioners continued to review the current Township zoning ordinance definitions as part of the zoning ordinance rewrite process. The Commissioners completed their first review of definitions beginning with A through L.



November

November 21, 2022

The Planning Commissioners participated in a meeting on November 21 in the Township Fire Hall. There were three items on the agenda for the regularly scheduled meeting:

Unfinished Business

1) Zoning Districts and Related Non-Conformances Discussion

The Commissioners reviewed maps and materials related to the non-conforming parcel sizes in the Township. After a lengthy discussion, general consensus was to wait until staff provided additional information related to the topic.

2) Township Zoning Ordinance Current Definition Review

The Commissioners continued to review the current Township zoning ordinance definitions as part of the zoning ordinance rewrite process. The Commissioners completed their final review of definitions beginning with A through L, and completed a first review of definitions from M through Z.

New Business

1) Land Use Discussion

The Commissioners tabled the discussion on this item to a future meeting.

December

December 19, 2022

The Planning Commissioners participated in a meeting on December 19 in the Township Fire Hall. There were six items on the agenda for the regularly scheduled meeting. Commissioners decided to do the new business first, since there was a scheduled preliminary site plan review.

New Business

1) Preliminary Site Plan Review - M-28 East

The Commissioners reviewed and made recommendations on a preliminary site plan for a project to be located on the south side of M-28 between the America's Best Value Inn and Nagelkirks Gardens. The proposed project is a training center for the Ironworkers.

2) 2023 Meeting Dates

The Commissioners reviewed and approved the Planning Commission meeting dates for 2023.

3) Industrial Zoning District Conditional Use Discussion

The Commissioners discussed adding single family residential and rentals to the Industrial (I) zoning district. Staff was directed to bring recommendations to the next meeting.

4) Zoning Districts and District Intent Statements

The Commissioners discussed the intent statements for the proposed zoning districts in the new zoning ordinance.



5) Land Use Discussion

Commissioners began a discussion of the land uses for each of the proposed zoning districts in the new zoning ordinance. Commissioners completed a first review of two of the eleven pages of recommendations and tabled the remaining pages to a future meeting.

Unfinished Business

1) Township Zoning Ordinance Current Definition Review

The Commissioners tabled the discussion on this item to a future meeting.

Planning Director Activities

In addition to preparing agenda materials for Planning Commission meetings and attending the Planning Commission meetings, the Planning Director completed additional activities and attended training and seminars throughout the year:

January

- Participated in a virtual Upper Peninsula Food Exchange meeting

Discussions extended to other entities throughout the Upper Peninsula and centered on food distribution, food connections, and regional food summits for the Upper Peninsula.

- Participated in a virtual NFIP Coastal Workshop

Workshop was focused on strategies related to the upcoming release of FEMA maps for Lake Superior.

February

- Attended a DNR Recreation Grants webinar

Focus of the webinar was how to submit grants related to the *Sparks* grant allocation for the State of Michigan.

March

- Began water study initiative

Purpose of the study was to determine areas of study for proposed water systems throughout the Township.

April

- Attended FOIA training in Marquette

Participants were given an overview of the requirements for completing a FOIA request.

- Continued water study initiative

Purpose of the study was to determine approach for a water system for area two (northeast) portion of the Township.



May

- Participated in a virtual MEDC Economic and Business Development seminar
Seminar was focused on the basics of community economic and business development.
- Attended the Small Town and Rural Development Conference in Thompsonville, Michigan
Primary focus of the conference was inter-government / public / private relationships and development ideas for small towns and rural governments.

June

No additional activities

July

- Attended the CUPPAD Property Redevelopment Workshop in Escanaba
Primary focus of the conference was brownfield redevelopment and property upgrade possibilities.

August

- Conversation with Superior Watershed Partnership & Land Conservancy
Conversation centered on scrap tire recycling within the Township.

September

- Attended a Poverty Task Force webinar
Focus of the webinar was housing, particularly in the low-income sector.

October

- Attended the MSHDA Affordable Housing Conference in Marquette
Conference focus was the lack of affordable housing in the Marquette County / Alger County region.

November

- Attended a virtual Alger-Marquette Intercounty Trail Discussion
Focus of the discussion was the potential development of trails on the eastern side of Marquette County and the western side of Alger County, with the intent to connect the trails to existing trail systems.

December

- Participated in an Outdoor Innovations discussion
Focus of the discussion was the potential development of entrepreneurial businesses related to outdoor recreation in Marquette County.

Township Plans and Ordinances

Ordinance	Type	Status
Township master plan	Update	Approved

