

**CHOCOLAY TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION**

**Monday, November 20, 2023 Minutes**

**I. Meeting Call to Order**

Chair Ryan Soucy called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**II. Roll Call**

Members present at roll call:

Ryan Soucy (Chair)  
George Meister (Vice Chair)  
Donna Mullen-Campbell (Secretary)  
Rebecca Sloan (Vice Secretary)  
Don Rhein (Board)  
Stephanie Gencheff

Members absent at roll call:

Kendall Milton

Staff present:

Richard Bohjanen (Township Supervisor), Dale Throenle (Planning Director / Zoning Administrator)

**III. Additional Agenda Items / Approval of Agenda**

Soucy requested that the minutes for the September 18 meeting be added to the agenda.

*Rhein moved, Meister seconded, to approve the agenda as changed.*

*Vote: Ayes: 6 Nays: 0 Motion carried*

**IV. Minutes**

**A. September 18, 2023 regular meeting**

**B. September 26, 2023 townhall meeting**

**C. October 10, 2023 townhall meeting**

**D. October 17, 2023 townhall meeting**

*Rhein moved, Meister seconded, to approve the minutes as presented.*

*Vote: Ayes: 6 Nays: 0 Motion carried*

**V. Public Comment**

Nancy Richards, 495 County Road 480

Spoke on the desire to see the process for the agriculture district come to a close.

## **VI. Presentations**

None

## **VII. Unfinished Business**

### **A. Draft Ordinance Considerations for the Agriculture / Forestry (AF) District Work Sessions**

#### **Staff Introduction**

Throenle gave an overview of the townhall sessions and the detail that was presented at the sessions. He stated that the pin maps that were used for the self-selection at the meetings had been converted to GIS maps that were included in the packet. He added that there was an error in section VII.A.12 in the packet; about the middle of the page the text should read “3 to 15 acres” instead of “3 to 10 acres”.

#### **Commissioner Discussion**

Rhein stated that he felt the sessions went well, and that comments from the public were well received. Soucy stated that the public felt that they were being heard, and that the primary concern was to keep an agricultural flavor to all the districts. Sloan pointed out that the comments in the packet supported the concepts that some changes were desired, but that most with the larger acreages wanted to stay the same. Gencheff added that Soucy did a very good job of presenting a consistent message during his presentations at the meetings. Mullen-Campbell added that it might be good to have a townhall session again in the spring.

Commissioners addressed the maps that were presented that represented the self-selection. Meister felt that the self-selections pointed to a preservation of some areas but that others could be changed. He added that he felt the acreage sizes should be discussed to determine if they were the correct sizes.

Rhein suggested that the sizes be changed to accommodate the larger parcel sizes; he recommended that the sizes be changed to five acres for AG 1, 5 to 20 for AG 2 and 20 and over for AG 3. Commissioners suggested that maybe the three districts should be combined into two; Mullen-Campbell stated she felt that three districts were necessary to keep the distinctions in place for each district.

Sloan suggested looking at the maps to determine where the changes should occur. She stated that the area near the western end of County Road 480 be changed to AG 1 as many of those parcels were small in size; Meister agreed.

More discussion ensued regarding that area; the Commissioners agreed that area would be the best for the AG 1 designation.

Meister asked Throenle if it would be possible to draw zoning areas instead of rezoning individual parcels. He suggested that lines be drawn across parcels to accommodate a block effect. Throenle responded that if lines were drawn across parcels with different zoning, it would be difficult to determine where on the parcel one set of zoning uses would end, and where the other would begin. He stated if a parcel was zoned with one zoning designation, that the zoning areas may be jagged, but the

result would be only one zoning district per parcel as a result.

Throenle asked the Commissioners what the target date was for the completion of the agricultural zoning discussion. After discussion, Commissioners agreed that the target for the public hearing for the Planning Commission should be the February meeting. Meister stated that staff could bring back the maps showing the proposed districts at the December meeting, and that the maps could be modified at that time in preparation for the public hearing in February.

Commissioners discussed the other areas on the map, with discussion centered on the best choices for different areas in the Township. They decided that the parcels on the Sand River section located at the northeast corner of the Township should be in the AG 1 district. Changing discussion to the West Branch Road / Foster Creek section of the Township, they decided those parcels should be in the AG 2 district. Commissioners decided parcels identified in the center of the map north of Green Garden Road would be in the AG 3 district.

Commissioners discussed the parcels located on Mangum Road from Maple Road to the east and decided that the size of the parcels indicated the section should be in the AG 2 district. They then moved the discussion to the lower portions of Cherry Creek Road and the Karen Road area, and decided those parcels should also be in the AG 2 district.

Moving up Little Lake Road, Commissioners decided to put those parcels around Shimon Court into the AG 3 district. Above that, going to County Road 480, Commissioners decided that area should be designated as AG 2.

Commissioners discussed the parcels on the south side of M-28 East from Wanda Drive to the east. They decided that parcel sizes there showed the parcels should be in the AG 1 district.

Gencheff asked about changing the base zoning from the State Lands and asked how those parcels would be designated. Throenle suggested that the State Land rezoning question be addressed after the AF discussions were completed, so that the state land parcels could be designated into the previously decided zoning locations; Commissioners agreed with that suggestion.

Commissioners discussed the two parcels located between Townline Road and Old Kiln Road on the border of the Township; they directed Throenle to suggest where those parcels should be designated, as they seemed to be outlier parcels.

### **Commissioner Decision**

*After Commissioner review and discussion, Meister moved, Rhein seconded, that the next steps for the agriculture zoning district be as follows:*

- 1) *Staff should prepare a draft map for the December meeting.*
- 2) *Staff should designate on the map the areas discussed and group the agriculture districts according to discussion during the meeting.*

*Vote:       Ayes: 6   Nays: 0       Motion carried*

## VIII. New Business

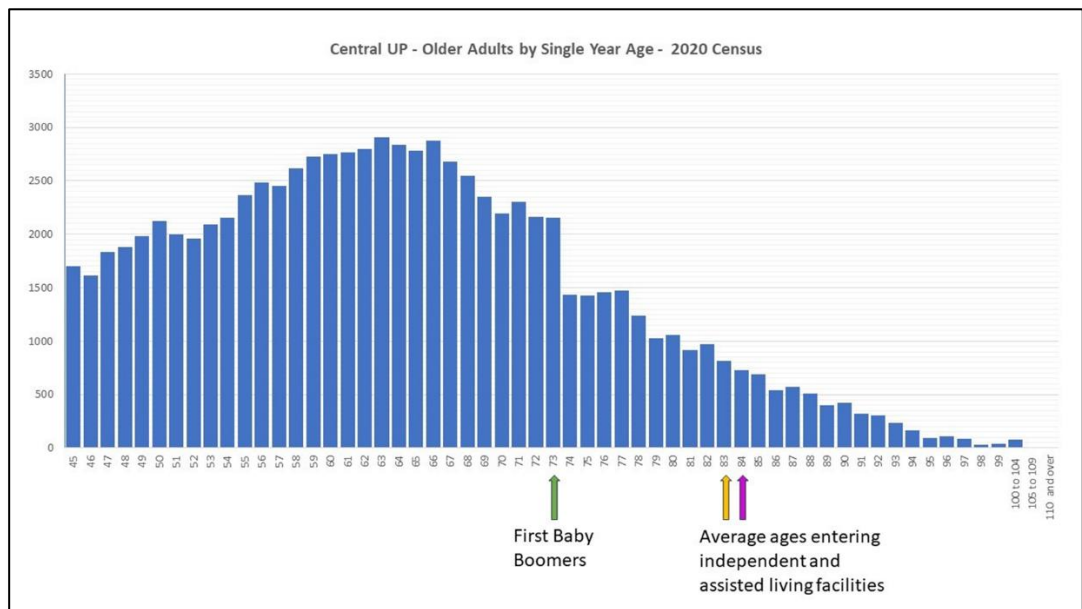
### B. Housing Discussion

Soucy stated that he had asked staff to put information in the packet regarding housing. He had acquired the information from a recent Michigan Association of Planning conference and wanted to begin the discussion of housing in the Township. He added that the primary concern from the conference was a lack of housing, especially for those that were aging, and he suggested the Commissioners begin looking at the accessory dwelling unit question.

Soucy asked Throenle for staff comments. Throenle stated that he had prepared some extracts from the census data throughout the County and had compared that data to the State of Michigan numbers. Throenle added that the numbers indicated a significant aging population in the County, with Forsyth Township showing the highest of all within the County. He further remarked that the documents in the packet showed a need for accessory dwelling units, and that a direction for most of the discussion was the ability to rent the unit after it was established. He added that considerations for accessory dwelling units in the Township should consider the cost of the units, the number of units per parcel, and how the well and septic issue would be resolved if two residences were on the same parcel.

### Commissioner Discussion

Using his laptop, Soucy showed a “Single Year by Sex” census table from the 2020 census to both the Commissioners and the public in attendance.



He described the age-related data and showed the critical timelines for accommodating accessory dwelling units within the Township to address aging in place issues.

Meister stated that he did not have an issue with accessory dwelling units; he wanted

them to be that the owner of the property had to be living on the property where the accessory dwelling unit would be located. Gencheff agreed, stating that California had a large issue with company-owned properties and the rental of the secondary units when primary owners were not on the properties.

Mullen-Campbell asked when a discussion on the accessory dwelling units would take place; Meister suggested that the conversations begin as soon as the agricultural districts discussion was completed; Soucy added that the conversations could start in March of 2024.

## **IX. Public Comment**

Michelle Weitek-Stephens, 550 Little Lake Road

Spoke about the accessory dwelling unit discussion, and asked the Commissioners to keep in mind the number of residents that leave for the winter. She spoke on agricultural uses and structures, and the need to keep space from neighbors because of those uses and structures. She also expressed concern about lot sizes for agricultural use.

Jill Bradford, 555 Little Lake Road

Spoke on making the right choices for each agricultural parcel. She also expressed concern to the Commissioners for wanting to change parcel sizes. She stated that what was presented at the townhall meetings should be what is followed as those are the acreage sizes that were presented to the public and what the public used for the self-selection maps.

## **X. Commissioner's Comments**

Rhein

Great discussion; was glad to see the mapping discussions that took place, and that the issue was coming to a close.

Mullen-Campbell

Stated that it was a good meeting of discussion.

Sloan

Felt that there was a lot of progress made during the meeting regarding the agriculture discussion.

Gencheff

Expressed that she was concerned about making sure the decisions were made to keep residents from losing use rights on their property.

Soucy

Thanked the Commissioners for a good job.

Meister

Expressed that he was looking forward to finishing the agricultural district discussion.

**XI. Director's Report**

Planning / Zoning Administrator Throenle

He stated that there would be an agenda item in December to discuss the meeting dates for 2024. He added that the next meeting would be December 18, and wished the Commissioners a "Happy Thanksgiving".

**XII. Informational Items and Correspondence**

- A. Township Board Minutes – 10.09.23
- B. Township newsletter – October 2023
- C. City of Marquette Planning Commission minutes 09.05.23
- D. City of Marquette Planning Commission minutes 10.03.23

**XIII. Adjournment**

*Rhein moved, Meister seconded, to adjourn the meeting.*

*Vote: Ayes: 6 Nays: 0 Motion carried*

Soucy adjourned the meeting at 8:04 PM

Submitted by:

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Planning Commission Secretary

Donna Mullen-Campbell