

CITY OF BUCHANAN PLANNING COMMISSION

TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 2025 - 6:00 PM

CHAMBER OF BUCHANAN CITY HALL - 302 N REDBUD TRAIL, BUCHANAN MI

MINUTES

I. Regular Meeting - Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Ralph McDonald at 6:00 PM.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

McDonald led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. Roll Call

PRESENT: Chairman Ralph McDonald, Vice-Chair Tony Houser, Secretary Jen Garry, Commissioner Dan Vigansky, Jacob Brown, Peter Lysy

CITY STAFF: Community Development Director, Rich Murphy; Administrative Assistant, Emma Lysy; City Clerk, Kalla Langston

ABSENT: Matt Pleasant

VI. Approve Agenda

Motion made by Vigansky, supported by P. Lysy to approve the agenda as presented. Voice vote carries unanimously.

VII. Public Comments - Agenda Items

VIII. Approve Minutes

A. Consider approving the Regular Meeting Minutes from February 11th, 2025.

Motion made by Houser, supported by Brown, to approve the minutes as presented. Voice vote carries unanimously.

IX. Old Business

X. New Business

A. Zoning Project

1) Review the administrative process for Neighborhood Plans and how they compare with the PUD process.

Murphy and E. Lysy reviewed the questions raised by the Plan Commission at their previous meeting the Placemakers, who confirmed that while neighborhood plans would be available by right in parcels over 3 acres, they would still be subject to review.

A difference between neighborhood plans and PUDs is that neighborhood plans can be done through administrative approval, where the zoning administrator is able to determine if the plan is in compliance with the zoning ordinance and approve or deny it. They would still be able to consult the Plan Commission, though compliance would be determined by the zoning administrator to avoid discretionary decisions. Neighborhood plans are designed to allow for variation while still adhering to the larger master plan.

McDonald prefers the PUD system, where plans must go before the Plan Commission for approval. There are more eyes on the project this way and encourages innovation. Placemakers prefers the

neighborhood plan because it avoids the process becoming discretionary and the new zoning ordinance will already allow for developmental features that would have been innovative under our current ordinance.

2) Review the latest draft of the proposed new zoning map.

Houser finds the colors hard to differentiate. P. Lysy had a list of small edits, including moving the creek to be accurate. McDonald asked about municipal districts. This was a district that was recommended in the future land use map, but Placemakers thinks it is unnecessary to enshrine municipal properties as they may not always be so, such as Stark School. The cemetery and E. B. Clark & Spafford Woods should be Natural (N) instead of residential as they will never be developed. There was discussion of particular lots and their zoning designations.

The next update will come with the final draft of the zoning ordinance from Placemakers.

XI. Public Comment - Non-Agenda Items Only

Kim Moyer – would like his parcel to not change its zoning.

XII. Community Development Director Comments

Murphy and E. Lysy will now focus on assembling their notes and Plan Commission feedback and sending it to Placemakers so they can complete the final draft.

The Trail extension groundbreaking was Monday, and it was a well-attended event that went very well. The project will open further opportunities for continued expansion of the trail, including connections to nearby trail systems. A large coalition of people, groups, and organizations contributed to the project.

XIII. Commissioner Comments

Garry – Appreciated the marked up zoning ordinance and working on the zoning map.

P. Lysy - Enjoys working with maps.

Houser – Wondered what the next steps are. E. Lysy said that if there was anything else the Plan Commission would like to discuss, they could hold another meeting, otherwise they were ready to send their notes to Placemakers to begin the final draft.

Brown – Thanked staff and the Plan Commission for the work they do.

Vigansky – Echoed Brown's comments.

McDonald – Also appreciates the effort and discussion brought forward.

XIV. Adjournment

Motion made by Houser, supported by Brown, to adjourn at 7:08 pm. Voice vote carries unanimously.