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Supervisor Pat Hohl Clerk Mike Dolan Treasurer Jason Negri Trustees Bill Hahn, Patricia Hughes, Chuck Menzies, Cindy Michniewicz

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## PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Wednesday, May 21, 2025, at 7:00 PM  
Hamburg Township Hall Board Room

### MINUTES

#### CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Muck called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

#### PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

#### ROLL CALL OF THE BOARD:

1) **PRESENT:**

John Hamlin  
Patricia Hughes  
Victor Leabu Jr  
Ron Muir  
Jeff Muck, Chair  
Joyce Priebe

2) **ABSENT:**

Deborah Mariani

#### APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA for tonight.

**Approval Motion** made by Commissioner Hamlin, seconded by Commissioner Priebe, to approve the agenda with a discussion of the compliance of 7749 E. M-36 site that was presented by Commissioner Hamlin. It was added under new business as item #4.

#### **VOTE: MOTION CARRIED**

## **APPROVAL OF THE MEETING MINUTES**

**Approval Motion** made by Commissioner Priebe, seconded by Commissioner Muir, to approve March 19, 2025, Planning Commission Meeting Minutes as presented.

**VOTE: MOTION CARRIED**

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC-** No public response

## **OLD BUSINESS**

None

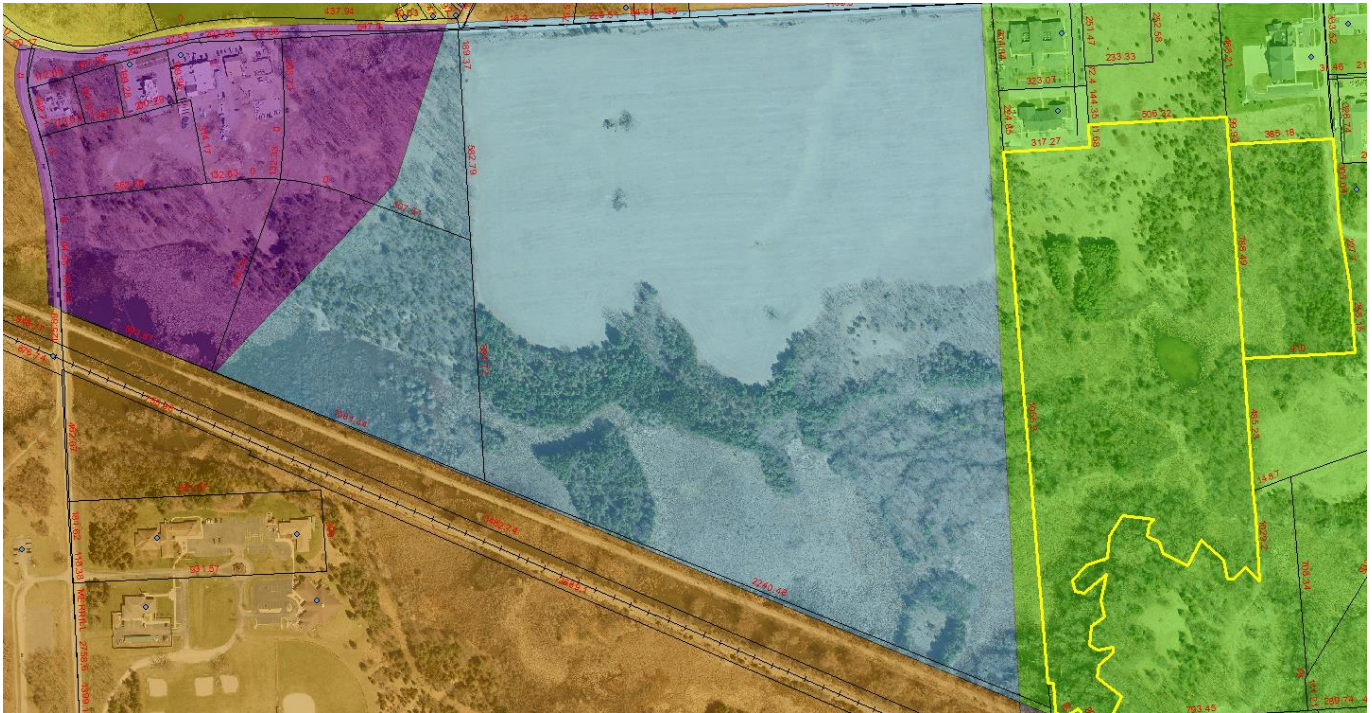
## **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Conceptual Review New M-36 PUD, Tax ID# 4715-25-100-091 Hamburg, MI** which exists to the south of M-36 on 39-acres of vacant land, between the Hampton Manor Assisted Living and the Hamburg Township Fire Station to the east and two professional buildings to the west.

Chair Muck opened the public hearing to David, the Planning and Zoning Director. David presented his staff report to the PC board. David explained that the developer presented a site plan of this PUD which will consist of mixed housing. It has several two units, several four units and 69 single family residential units on 50 ft X 100 ft lots. The southern portion of this development consists mostly of wetlands and marshes that abuts the Lakeland Trails, which is a good potential feature here. The applicant provided a basic site plan, landscape plan, and stormwater management plans as well. The architecture design would be modeled like Regency Village. David said this conceptual review gives the Planning Commissioners the opportunity to review this development with regards to the Village Center Master Plan and making changes to that area plan. Chair Muck reminded the commissioners that there would be no motions or formal actions, just an opportunity to make comments and feedback to the developer.

Chair Muck welcomed the developers up to the podium to address the commissioners. Brent Levan from Boss Engineering was the first speaker. Brent explained the location of this development and the specifics mentioned above. He stated that this will be a walkable community with sidewalks on both sides of the streets within this development community that connects it to the other viable sidewalks outside this community. The roads within the development will continue the fire stations road further south and connect to the two professional building's road as well. Brent said that they will be talking to MDOT and the Drain Commissioner. MDOT will have to do a traffic study to see if they want some improvements to those western and eastern roads.

Chair Muck opened the meeting to the commissioners. Commissioner Hamlin asked a clarifying question of the developer about this community being the most western area of the Village Center Master Plan. Chair Muck said it goes all the way to Merrill Rd. Brent stated that he meant that this community is at the western edge of the Village Center (green) zoned district for the Village Center Master Plan. Village Center Map continues westward with Village Residential (light blue) and Community Service zoned district (purple) east of Merrill Rd. See the image below.



Commissioner Hamlin continued to ask, clarifying questions of David, about the PC having to approve the GPUD. David explained that this community is a GPUD because of the mixed residential types of housing. He said the developer will need a reduced parcel size to cluster those homes together at the north end of the parcel. Hamlin asked if the Village Center allows 10 units per acre. David said it is only for multifamily units. For single family units, they can get down to 10,000 sq ft only if they are community sewer. As for the east and west connecting road plans, by connecting to the east, people can access the Village Center Dr as well, for walking and driving needs. Hamlin asked about the southern road intersection of two homes. He wondered if they could eliminate one of the housing units to allow for a future road to any development west of this PUD. Brent said that he could create a 66-foot-wide gap for future development. Hamlin asked what percentage of these new units would be rented and what portion would be owner occupied. Brent stated that single-family homes would be sold. He said that they still hadn't decided if the multiunit housing would be rented or sold outright. Hamlin stated that there were 60 multi-units and 69 single-family units here. Hamlin asked where any recreational or park space would be put in this PUD. Hamlin asked if there would be a planned trail to get to the Lakeland Trail. Brent said that they have not done a detailed wetland delineation yet. After this study, they will have a better understanding of what kind of wetland exists here and then they could better plan for recreational aspects here. Hamlin reminded the developer about Hamburg's wetland setback requirements. Brent said that they will implement a buffer between the housing and the wetlands, once the delineation study has been completed. Hamlin asked David under the Village Center plan, how many multiunit could the developer get on 39 acres. David said they could outstrip this number of units with such a dense development. David said that they are trying to mimic the Regency Village layout with smaller lots for single family homes. Hamlin asked about what type of parking would be planned here. Brent said that they were thinking of a single-family unit with a two-car garage along with two car parking area in the driveway. They are considering either creating a visitor parking area or widening the street on one side to allow for additional parking for visitors. With the multi-unit area, they know from experience that they will need to create a visitor parking area.

Commissioner Priebe asked about their terminology of “usable open space” and that they don’t see a club house or a park for the development. She said that they expect to see these features there. Brent stated that they would implement a boardwalk trail through the wetlands, which will connect into the sidewalk network. There is an open area off the southern road where there are no planned units due to the close approximate to the wetlands. They might implement a gazebo and a boardwalk to overlook the wetlands. In the single-family units, there will be a wide mix of family types (families, single people, married couples, and seniors) who will decide to live here. They are considering a playground area here. Even in senior communities, there is a need for a playground for when grandchildren come to visit. It might not be a huge playground but something that will entertain children. The multifamily will have a different need for recreation. Some of the area along the M-36 frontage will need to be buffered from future commercial development along that strip of vacant land. Brent said he could imagine this area being dedicated to seating benches, gazebos, sidewalk network and boardwalks. Priebe reminded Brent that the PC would expect to see such recreational necessities for this development to get approved. Ron mentioned that the township owns 7 acres of land south of the wetlands by the Lakeland Trails that will give this development of access to connect to the trails there.

Chair Muck shared his parks and recreation background. He stated that he agreed with Hamlin and Priebe that the community will need to have some dedicated space for children. We don’t see young families taking a hike down to the township property by the trail. He recommended the developer consider parceling off a small area for a playground. Ron mentioned having park benches along the trail for people to be able to sit and rest while walking.

Commissioner Muir reiterated that the developer keeps an open, dedicated space to connect to future development down the road on the west side of this community. Muir mentioned that the Village Center Plan showed a road that ran from CVS to the Hardware Store. The developer mentioned that having such a straight connected road through there wasn’t always the best thing to keep traffic calm. Breaking up this connection will keep people from going 40 mph through Village Center neighborhoods. Brent stated that they would be willing to work with the township to ensure that the connecting road to the west was wide enough for other future developments according to our road standards.

Commissioner Leabu mentioned that he agreed that having such a connector road to the western vacant parcel would be helpful in attracting future development within the next 25 years. He agreed that they needed to have this connective road deeded. Ron stated that he did not think that a development would have an issue getting MDOT to approve two more curb cuts off M-36. Ron said currently there are no utilities in that parcel. Leabu said the idea for creating a connective road in the Village Center Master Plan was to keep people from constantly going back out to M-36. Leabu agreed with Brent that if this connector road was too nice of a straight shot, people would constantly speed through this area to get to the major fairs.

Trustee Hughes asked how many of the units were going to be one story and two stories. Brent said that they were still trying to determine how many levels the single-family homes would be. Brent said that there is a huge demand for single family ranches. Pat and David reminded their development that people are aging. They are selling their 2-acre parcel home because they don’t want to mow anymore. They don’t want two stories anymore. Ron mentioned that Regency Village sales consisted of 50% of Hamburg Residents that wanted to downsize and remain living in the township. Hughes said she was asking as a person who doesn’t want a second story home. Hughes asked about basements with these

units. Brent stated that it would be determined by soil studies. Priebe mentioned that many individuals who live near water can't have a basement due to the water table being so high.

Commissioner Leabu mentioned that 208 apartment units were approved for the Village Center, being named after the Lakeland Crossings that they are working to connect to. He mentioned that getting access to these trails is a big amenity. Leabu said it would be advantageous for this development to gain access to Lakeland Trails. Leabu mentioned using the 14 ft high street lighting called for in the Village Center Master Plan for the residential areas, rather than the 20 ft lights used for the connector roads. Leabu mentioned that the PC was given architectural control for Regency Village, so they developed a Plan Book for smaller houses with front porches, and 2 car garages set back 2 ft behind the home. Mitchell Builders sold the homes before they were finished building them. Ron said that they wanted to mirror what Mitchell Building did. Leabu said he would be willing to share their building plan book. Ron said he would appreciate them sharing this planning book. David told Ron that he had sent him those planning book images earlier.

Trustee Hughes also let the developers know that they were planning to review the Village Center Master Plan later in the meeting. She stated that roads were important, but she hoped that the amenities provided in this PUD development would include walkable as a top priority. She would like to walk from her home to CVS or a restaurant rather than take a car there. She stated that Lakeland Trail is nice, but it has become very busy with walkers and bikers alike. Brent mentioned that they were planning to provide sidewalks on both sides of the streets as well as street trees.

Commissioner Priebe mentioned that she is the Chair of the Zoning Board of Appeals. She mentioned to these builders that she had told the developers for Regency Village that she did not want to see them at the ZBA meetings to seek any variances since these were small lots. We want these homes to be desirable as they have built because we are not looking to give any variances in the future. Commissioner Leabu clarified that she doesn't want to receive 69 deck variances in the future. We want to state that they want what you see is what you get.

Commissioner Hamlin mentioned that the lots are small, they don't fit the requirements, but the density fits the requirements of Village Center zoning district. He said having small sellable single-family homes is much better for the township, than apartments would be. Hamlin said that he felt that this was the start of a good development. Trustee Hughes said it is good that no existing residents reside on either side of this proposed development as there was for the Lakeland Crossings, where people had a long time to get used to vacant land abutting their single-family homes. She said that this is a good way to do this type of development.

Chair Muck wrapped up this meeting by summarizing the Planning Commissioners' recommendations:

- Good starting plan with multiple housing options.
- Prioritizing access to the Lakeland Trails.
- Contemplating the open space recreational uses internally rather than focusing on the connecting township parcel. As the township, we would not want to propose to put anything that will require a lot of maintenance regarding vandalism. He recommended focusing on boardwalks only.
- Deeding a western connection.

**2. Village Center Master Plan-Five Year Review.** Discuss and review the Village Center Master Plan (VCMP) regarding future growth and development in the Village Area within the Township.

Chair Muck opened the meeting to David to discuss the Village Center Master Plan Review. David said that he listed the 5 general talking points that were highlighted at the March 12 PC Meeting. The first talking point was regarding the Village Center area size, and if the plan area is too large or too small? Is the plan area the right size? Muck said that he agreed with David that we have a lot of development proposed in this area so right now is not the best time to revise this area plan. He agreed that the talking points were a good starting point to have conversations regarding this Village Center Plan. Muck asked David if he got any comments from any of the Planning Commissioners. David said no. Muck asked the PC members to give their immediate feedback on these talking points from a high level.

Trustee Hughes stated that she spoke with David to better understand how the commercial aspect of this area plans mentioned buildings facing the road with parking spaces behind the structures. She mentioned the Citizen Planner Class that she took, where she learned about having bigger buffers along the roads with sidewalks that have grass on both sides of it. She mentioned that she thought it would be good if Chilson Commons did not sell the two lots that border M-36. She said that walkability and green space work well together.

Commissioner Muir stated that he feels like they are putting pieces together overtime. Tonight, we are playing with possible road connections. We made a certain agreement with a developer. If the chess pieces move toward the cambium all is good. Chair Muck asked Commissioner Hamlin if he had something to share. He said he had some notes. Hamlin said he felt the PC was too much of an enterprise. There are all these pages of details and instructions, like how to build a home. The master plan has many different zoning districts within its area plan, for example, *Village Residential 2* and *Village Residential 10*. All of this covers only these 1200 acres of our township. Hamlin feels that the PC could simplify the requirements of the Village Center immensely. Our township has been here for 190 years. Commissioner Leabu said that he doesn't favor revising the Village Center Area Plan. Leabu said they tried to envision the open space 25 years ago, in the outlying areas. Usually when a municipality tries to build a center, their government buildings are in that center. Ours are not. During this time, there was a proposed Busch's next to the Hardware store. The Village Center is still like it was when he was 5 yrs old, except there was more going on down there. Leabu said that the goal of the Village Center Area Plan was to create a walkable area. This new development presented tonight could be the first step in creating a walkable community. There are no communities in Hamburg where someone could walk anywhere. Leabu asked he doesn't mind simplifying the VCMP. Leabu asked Hamlin if he felt the density was too much. Hamlin clarified he doesn't have any issues with the density of this plan. He supports the walkable community with commercial and different types of residential. Hamlin said he feels the VCMP hasn't been helping them with their center development. The gas station going in doesn't follow the VCMP.

Chair Muck asked Commissioner Priebe if she had any comments. Priebe said as far as having control over the architectural stuff for a given development, it is through the PUD that the PC has some flexibility on such elements. The PC can say that we want this type of architecture for this PUD, and we have more say on such matters. Priebe stated that the PC had enough on their monthly meetings to do that they didn't have enough time to brainstorm and try to simplify the VCMP right now. Priebe looked at David and said that she is very interested in talking more about the Hall Road Zoning. She said that when David mentioned that the PC had some flexibility since the VCMP was written as it was, residential that is also industrial. Priebe said that she didn't feel the need to amend the VCMP right now. Both Muir and Priebe said that there really isn't much to add to the VCMP, only take away from it. Hamlin mentioned that they only need to have one type of zoning district in the Village Center

rather than 10 different zoning types in this area. Certain areas would need a special land use permit. With a four-way stop light at the gas station at M-36 and Hamburg Rd, there is vacant property across from there. He proposed that the township purchase this land. David told the members that Ronnie Hamana purchased that land to keep the competition out of this area.

Trustee Hughes is new to the Planning Commission. She mentioned that the Hoskins property could be used as a park. The Village Center should have sidewalks and streetlights. She also mentioned that the Historic District doesn't have many buildings in it. Hughes mentioned if more businesses are situated on the Haskins site, where will they park? Chair Muck stated the same thing. There will be 2200 new residents moving into Hamburg Township with apartments and townhomes. If we want to make this area walkable, where will they be walking to? We don't have a central park like Mumford, or a like Chelsea that got a million dollar grant to create a public gathering space. What are these new people going to do in the Village Center, where are they are going to congregate as a community? What are families going to do? What are kids going to do? There are no restaurants that are in the vicinity to walk to. We don't have a public gathering open space with playgrounds or amenities. They are not going to walk the Lakeland Trail to Manly Bennett Park. Brighton and Milford have a nice downtown area with many types of housing and many amenities (parks, restaurants and other shopping nearby). Hamlin suggested that everyone think and review these comments and maybe not make any decisions to not make any amendments to the VCMP. Muck suggested that everyone digest all of the comments from the meeting tonight, and in the minutes next month, and depending on the next one to two meetings, we can see the number of agenda items and see if we can revisit this discussion. David shared that he has met with the owners of the Haskins and the CVS Hamburg Village frontage properties. David suggested supporting Hamlin's recommendation to not stop this discussion of the VCMP. It would be good to know what type of commercial developments will be slated for these vacant parcels. Then we can look at these new developments in conjunction with public space. The PC can talk about this topic again in a few months.

Trustee Hughes suggested that the members think about Hall Road. We shouldn't have made the VCMP map fit when the storage units were being proposed. We don't know if the businesses along Hall Road will continue for years to come. They might get to a point where they will not be able to continue their business. We then can keep the flexibility to be able to do either residential or commercial in this area. Chair Muck asked David to bring this discussion back up in a few months. Commissioner Priebe asked Commissioner Hamlin to share his ideas for simplifying the VCMP. Leabu said it would be nice to say it was a good plan that was cutting edge, but it wasn't for Hamburg. Hughes said that this plan was created during a boom time. Leabu said it was.

### **3. Discussion of the compliance of 7749 E. M-36 site that was presented by Commissioner Hamlin.**

Chair Muck opened the meeting to Commissioner Hamlin. He opened the meeting to Commissioner Leabu. Leabu said that the Flexible Space at 7749 E. M-36 site needed some architectural improvements. Amy Steffens required a front porch and Leabu required awnings over each entrance for this building. David just started working at Hamburg Planning and Zoning after Amy moved away and this is during COVID. It was difficult to meet in person with the owner and the builder to ensure they met all our zoning standards and architectural requirements. We didn't require any specific lighting or fixtures because we usually left up to the Zoning Administrator. Currently the lights that have been installed there break all our zoning regulations for commercial locations. There are no shields on the lights. There is a giant concrete parking lot without any grass islands in the center. How do we enforce these requirements and avoid this type of problem in the future. Hamlin stated that we are not lighting experts. We are not photometric professionals. This is like the traffic studies, and we rely on MDOT to make recommendations for us. This is not a good thing. As for the PC, we need to say that we approve said plan with the condition that it meets our zoning standards to be compliant. Hamlin stated that it is not a good thing to leave it in David lap; this is not good. Leabu stated that he did some research and found that you can still purchase the Village Center Master Plan light fixtures. They can do photometric study. Usually, we approve a certain type of

light fixture in the development lighting plan. Leabu said he doesn't remember seeing such a plan. Hamlin read that our ordinance states that before a land use permit is issued, the applicant must submit a photometric plan that shows the lighting intensity on the parcel. David said that Zander did this submittal. Leabu said that they did not approve the lighting fixtures. David said that he talked to Nick Zander today. He said who really knows how to read a photometric plan? Both his engineer and our engineer reviewed this plan; both approved that it met the requirements. For the photometric plan to work, the light fixtures need to be higher up which shoots light off site. This is not compliant with our ordinance. With lighting shields, he would have failed his photometric plan. It would not have illuminated the parking lot appropriately. We are operating at catch 22 with him. Once he gets in the awnings, they will tilt the lighting. There will be some areas in the parking lot that will not be lit up. Nick has not received his final or his CoO. He has no occupants, and they are still finishing the work there. The lights are set on timers to go off at 11pm. The lights must be off from 11pm until dusk.

Commissioner Priebe said that when she was appointed to the Planning Commission in 1981, the planner on staff had to review a development plan on the spot, at a meeting, without much review. When she worked at Brighton Township, they had a professional planner and engineer review all developmental plans. Now there is no one to review these plans. Hamlin said that when he worked at Ann Arbor Township, they had a planner, an engineer, a Zoning Administrator and an attorney at every PC Meeting. They were very careful with their conduct at each meeting. David let the PC members know that he is a professional urban landscape planner. Amy was a professional planner. Scott Pacheco was a professional planner. We don't have planning consultants. Hamlin and Priebe said that those reviewing the plans should make recommendations to the PC members on what things to look for or ask for with each development. David said that they could increase their Planning and Zoning Department but then it would make a developer's process more burdensome to have that many more eyes on their work and process. Trustee Hughes said that the US as a whole is saying that they need to get this permitting process quicker and easier than it is today. They are blaming the fact that there is not enough homes on this permitting process. There is a delicate balance needed here.

Chair Muck asked David if we have a firm or a consultant or a retainer that you can call up and ask for advice on complicated development. David said no. Muck asked if it would help David do this type of work. David said it depended on the workload. Conceptual reviews are required for every development now to help the developer get through this process. The past staff report templates that Hamburg Township has used for years are not very easy to read or intuitive. David recommended that the PC members need a more streamlined version of the staff reports. Many communities use consultants. Hamlin said that he didn't think we needed a planning consultant since he is a planner. Hamlin stated that he did not know about the lot sizes in the Village Center until he got to the meeting tonight. David said he doesn't find writing these staff reports any easier than the PC members reading through them. He tries to simplify them to make the language clear and concise. Muck said that he had conversations with Amy about issues in the staff reports. He recommended that staff point out red flags that they might want to focus on, with tough issues or problems with development.

Chair Muck asked the PC members if they recommend that David hire a consultant or another staff member when the Planning Department gets busy with land use permits and site plan reviews for new development in the township. Muck said Trustee Hughes can take this recommendation back to the Township Board for discussion for future needs. She said that the board is in the middle of Budget Hearing. Pat Hohl is leaving the board too.

To summarize this last point, David is working with Nick Zander to ensure he completes all the work that he needs to in order to get his Final CoO for his building.

**Zoning Administrators Report:**

David is cancelling next month's PC meeting due to a schedule conflict. There were no agenda items scheduled yet anyway. We will be looking at some accessory structure ordinance tweaks in July 19 but we can plan to revisit the review of the Village Center Master Plan at August's meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Approval motion was made by Trustee Hughes, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin, to adjourn at 8:38 pm.

**VOTE: MOTION CARRIED**

Respectfully submitted,

**Lisa Perschke**

*Planning/Zoning Coordinator & Recording Secretary*

**David Rohr**

*Planning & Zoning Director*

The minutes were approved as presented/corrected: \_\_\_\_\_

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Commissioner Jeff Muck, Chairperson