

MICHIGAMME TOWNSHIP

PLANNING COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT – 2021

Introduction

The Planning Commission is responsible for oversight of Zoning and Planning in Michigamme Township by working with the Zoning Administrator and the Michigamme Township Board. The Zoning Board of Appeals is an ad hoc group that only meets for issues that cannot be resolved otherwise or for issues only under their purview. All members of these commissions serve on a voluntary basis, and their participation in this vital activity is much appreciated. Emma Murphy and Joel Johnson have served on the Planning Commission for many years, and they concluded their service to the township at the end of their terms. Their contributions to our community are greatly appreciated.

Members of the Planning Commission are:

Ruth Starr (until 2022), Janice Anderson (until 2023), David Niemi (until 2024), John (Terry) McBride (until 2024), and Julia Anderson-Leake (Board Representative until November 20, 2024).

Zoning Administrator: Jason McCarthy

Members of the Zoning Board of Appeals: Gregory Murphy, Paul Olson, and Janice Anderson.

Meetings: The Planning Commission meets monthly, usually on the second Thursday of the month, unless there is no business to conduct. However, meeting times have been adjusted to meet the schedules of members or to insure there is a quorum present. In 2021, the Planning Commission met ten times.

Master Plan

The Planning Commission is still in the process of rewriting the Master Plan. Although most of the Master Plan has been written by Bob DellAngelo, the Planning Commission has decided to delay adoption of the plan until a new Community Development Survey has been conducted and the demographic data have been updated by information obtained from the recent National Census. Since the goals and objectives of the Master Plan should be based on survey data, and since our last survey was done in 2017, it seems prudent to update that information. The Planning Commission will again seek the help of CUPPAD in evaluation of the data obtained from the survey.

Zoning Ordinance Amendments

All Zoning Ordinance Amendments must be reviewed and must coordinate with the Master Plan once it is adopted. The Zoning Commission has worked specifically on language for the Sign Ordinance, A Small Animal Ordinance and preliminarily is looking at the Marijuana Ordinance as a result of a marijuana grow business looking to locate in our township.

Blight

Blight continues to be a problem within Michigamme Township. Two blight surveys were conducted by members of the Planning Commission and the Zoning Administrator. First time offenders have received letters instructing them to clean up their properties. Second time offenders or those who have not improved the blight on their property were cited and referred to the courts.

Language on the Blight Reporting Form has been revised to make it more user-friendly.

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Short-Term Rentals

The Planning Commission of Michigamme Township continues to oversee the licensing of Short-Term Rentals. The purpose of this oversight is to protect adjacent property owners and to work to address quality of life concerns of township residents. All rental properties must obtain a license from the township, which is valid for one calendar year. Currently, there are 10 licensed Short-Term Rentals within the township.

Zoning Permits Issued:

1. Fritz and Ramona Curth, 208 Brown Road, Screen porch.
2. Nate Smith, 106 Green Road, Deck.
3. Charles Anderson and Corbin Lutz, 219 Main Street, garage.
4. Nicole Haskett, 134 Brown Road, Shed.
5. Donald Leake, 270 Pink Road, Garage.
6. Dan and Kelly Meade, Blue Road, Residential structure and accessory building.
7. Thomas Edmark, 374/376 Red Road, Residential addition.
8. Michael Brinker, 509 Red Road, Garage.
9. Michigamme Township, 107 Barnum Street, Garage.
10. Rachael Hautamaki, 126 Brown Road, Garage.
11. Adam and Rachel Simonsen, 541 Cardinal Road, Residence.
12. Dan Helppi, Green Road, Accessory Structure.

Redevelopment Ready Community (RRC) Certification

Robert DellAngelo is no longer the Michigamme Township representative for RRC. However, it is his assessment that the township is very close to achieving RRC Certification at the Essential Level.

Recreation Plan

The Planning Commission approved the final draft of the Recreation Plan on December 21, 2020 upon which it was sent to the Township Board for final approval. A public hearing on the Recreation Plan was held on January 26, 2021, after which the Township Board approved the Plan. The Planning Commission applied for grant money from the Michigan Department of Resources for resurfacing of the tennis and basketball courts. We appreciate all of the time Bob DellAngelo spent in writing this grant and to Debbie Kinnunen for following up on incomplete sections of the grant and navigating a very difficult on-line submission process. Unfortunately, Michigamme Township was not a recipient of one of these grants but intends to resubmit a revised application this year.

Training

Terry McBride attended the MTA training for Planning Commissions in person on October 27-28, 2021; and found the sessions to be very informative and helpful. Janice Anderson and David Niemi attended the training remotely.

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Conclusion

Planning the future of a community and enforcing zoning ordinances are important parts of ensuring that Michigamme Township continues to be a clean, friendly, and prosperous environment. There is much that needs to be done, but the Planning Commission has made significant progress in achieving our goals. As those goals become clearly identified with the adoption of the Master Plan, we will be well positioned to move forward toward fulfilling the potential of Michigamme Township.