

**TALLMADGE CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
OF NOVEMBER 9, 2009**

Chairman Marvin Bennink called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Members present: Donald Smith, Matthew Fenske, Dewey Bultsma, Marvin Bennink, Joel Terpstra and Dick Temple

Member absent: Jim Szejda

Also present: Greg Ransford, Township Planner

The minutes of the October 12, 2009 meeting were approved as presented.

1. Discussion Item – Proposed Lamont District.

Mr. Ransford had put together revisions based on discussion at last months meeting. He submitted a revised map for the proposed Lamont District and architectural design standards. Revisions were also submitted regarding commercial parking requirements.

Dick Temple said he was absent for the last meeting. He asked how the Planning Commission came to decide on the district boundaries. Mr. Ransford said the idea for a Lamont District began with some concerns regarding setbacks. Most parcels in Lamont are narrow or lacking in depth, and many of the existing houses are close to the street. Also, the township was approached with some interest for commercial uses in the Lamont area. The Master Plan also calls for a separate district for Lamont. Mr. Temple said that historically the Village of Lamont was below the bluff, and after a flood it moved up to Leonard. He feels the original village should be included in the district and therefore would propose to expand the district. He suggested 40th Avenue as an eastern border, going west to the Polkton Township line. He would like the southern border of the district to start at the river and then go north to Johnson Street. He added that public utilities would be needed if the township wants to encourage development for the future.

Marvin Bennink explained that the Planning Commission discussed possible borders for the proposed Lamont District and considered starting with an eastern border at the cemetery going west just beyond 48th Avenue and felt that it could be expanded in the future if desired. He said the intent was to start development along the boulevard.

Greg Ransford said he understands Mr. Temple's point and obviously without utilities not much more can be built. Dewey Bultsma is comfortable with the southern border at the river, but the flood plain will dictate the development there. Dick Temple is concerned with development being out of character with the community.

Donald Smith said there are no public utilities in the Lamont area, and until then it would be a mistake to encourage a lot of development there. Dick Temple suggested contacting the Ottawa County Health Department to get their opinion on future well and septic systems in the Lamont area. Greg Ransford said the north side of Leverette had not been included since they are larger existing parcels and they would not be restricted by the existing R1 setback requirements. Mr. Ransford said there are 10 acre parcels on Johnson and a 25 foot front yard setback requirement would not be appropriate for those larger parcels. Matthew Fenske is hesitant to move too far north. Donald Smith and Dewey Bultsma agree, people that live on larger parcels on Johnson likely wanted to be more rural. Dewey Bultsma likes the Town Center district as designated on the Master Plan. Dick Temple said he was concerned about controlling growth in the future. Greg Ransford said it is

more about preserving the district. He added that during the review process they can have development standards for architectural character and also reminded the Planning Commission that businesses would be limited to the boulevard.

Joel Terpstra said he was comfortable including the north side of Leverette, but he was not inclined to include property further east or west of the district since those are larger parcels. Donald Smith would like the front yard setback to be required to be even with the neighbors or in between the setbacks of existing houses. He is in favor of preserving the district; however he is not comfortable promoting growth without public utilities. Greg Ransford added that proposed lot sizes within the district would be 20,000 square feet with 80 feet of frontage.

The Planning Commission consensus was to use the Town Center district on the Master Plan as a guide for the Lamont District, and keep the commercial limited to the boulevard.

The Planning Commission then discussed parking. Mr. Ransford reviewed the revisions which would be for commercial purposes only. The revised text would permit no more than two off-street parking spaces in the front yard and would prohibit an off site parking lot within 300 feet of the site within the District. The Planning Commission was in favor of the proposed text relating to parking.

The Planning Commission then discussed architectural standards. Joel Terpstra feels standards are definitely needed for commercial uses. Donald Smith and Marvin Bennink feel it would be a financial burden to require architectural standards for residential uses. Joel Terpstra suggested proposing architectural guidelines for residential and presenting them at the public hearing for input. He is in favor of requiring them if they are enforceable, possibly only along the boulevard. Mr. Temple felt it would be difficult to enforce unless a historic district was set. Greg Ransford said it could be enforced along the boulevard to preserve the character for visitors and passers-by. Matthew Fenske wants to encourage growth, but does not want to be too restrictive. Dewey Bultsma also feels that requiring residential architectural standards would be too restrictive. Joel Terpstra feels some people would appreciate the standards in order to preserve the character, therefore the standards could protect the property owners. The Planning Commission agreed that they would like to have architectural standards for commercial. The majority were opposed to the standards for residential.

The Planning Commission would like to discuss this matter further before setting a public hearing. Mr. Ransford will revise the proposed Lamont District information for the Planning Commission to review at the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Somers, Administrative Assistant

