

**TALLMADGE CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
OF MARCH 8, 2010**

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

Members present: Matthew Fenske, Dewey Bultsma, Marvin Bennink, Joel Terpstra, Jim Szejda and Dick Temple

Member absent: Donald Smith

The minutes of the February 8, 2010 meeting were approved as presented.

1. Non-agenda Public Comment.

There was no Non-agenda Public Comment.

2. Rezoning and Text Amendment Public Hearing – for Sections 15.03, 4.01 and Chapter 9A Village of Lamont District.

Dick Temple thanked the public for their interest and attending tonight's meeting. He then gave some background information prepared by the Township Planner, Greg Ransford, which explained that the township has received numerous inquiries regarding the opportunity to conduct small businesses in the Lamont area over the last couple of years. In addition, it has been recognized for a long time that the lots in Lamont are substandard (most created decades ago) and do not easily accommodate the construction of a typical dwelling plan proposed today. Furthermore, the Planning Commission appreciates and desires to maintain the small town character of Lamont, both of the building architecture and the close proximity of the community residents.

As a result, the Planning Commission has designed the proposed district to pursue that end and seek the comments, concerns and opinion of the public. This meeting is not expected to contain any action from the Planning Commission but is instead intended for the collection of public input and interest in the proposal. Furthermore, we have provided copies of the proposed text, map, and examples of commercial architecture that is designed into the text as well as a comparison chart of the existing district rules versus the proposed district for the convenience of the public. These are for the public to examine today as well as take home and examine further at their leisure. We welcome comments during this meeting as well as after the meeting at any time and hope that residents take the opportunity to look over the materials and provide additional comments to us.

Mr. Temple then referred to the materials in the back of the room for the public. The issue was brought up because a non-compliant use was found in the Lamont area, and it was found that the Zoning Ordinance did not allow this type of use. Tonight's meeting is for public input. No action will be taken tonight. The Planning Commission will ultimately make a recommendation to the Township Board.

The meeting opened to the public.

Chuck Miller of 4580 Leonard said he wants to preserve residential. This proposal would allow commercial uses. He also referred to businesses being sustained by the population. He said the charm of Lamont is residential, and feels any business would fail. His main concern is how to rationalize a commercial district that is maintained from within.

Betty Bronkema of 4639 Leonard said what they have is not broken, so why fix it? She asked why the proposed Lamont District would allow commercial uses only on the boulevard. Marvin Bennink answered because it is a thoroughfare. Mrs. Bronkema then asked about parking, and asked if the existing church parking would then not be allowed. Marvin Bennink said the church is in compliance.

June Tebeau of 4394 Leonard said she moved to Lamont 10 years ago and likes the small town charm. She said if you want to buy something you should go somewhere else. She added that Grand Rapids and Coopersville are only about 10 minutes away.

Mrs. Sheteron of 4387 Leonard likes the small town atmosphere. She said the economy is bad and people should support other areas. She said people only come to the Lamont area to go on scenic drives and a commercial district would not be feasible and could not be supported.

Mr. Bronkema of 4620 Leverette asked if a welding shop would be allowed. Marvin Bennink said any proposed use would have to come to the Planning Commission for approval.

Dale Bronkema of 4639 Leonard is not in favor of a commercial district. He feels that the proposal would allow businesses in the entire proposed Lamont District. He then asked about the proposed 25 foot front yard setback. He is not in favor of a commercial district or the proposed 25 foot front yard setback.

Jim VanHuis of 5035 Leonard asked for a definition of the boulevard. Marvin Bennink said where the boulevard is only. Mr. VanHuis asked why the proposed district included parcels on the north side of 48th Avenue further west than on the south side. Marvin Bennink answered that it was brought to the Planning Commission's attention that there are homes of historical style in that area. Dick Temple added that the proposed district was also based on the original Woodbury Plat which had smaller parcels.

Clifford Bronkema of 11989 14th Avenue asked how the Planning Commission arrived at the Lamont District. Marvin Bennink said there have been several public meetings and the planner has been working on it due to the interest shown in the past couple of years, as stated at the beginning of the meeting. Clifford Bronkema does not like the proposal and feels businesses would be allowed anywhere in the proposed Lamont District. Marvin Bennink responded that commercial was only proposed along the boulevard. Joel Terpstra read from Section 9A.03 (d) of the proposed text for the Village of Lamont District, "The following special uses may only be located on a lot that abuts and has direct access to the boulevard of Leonard Street and contains the minimum road width along the boulevard as required by Section 9A.04. Properties along the boulevard of Leonard Street may include a mix of land uses and are appropriate locations for the following uses that are not otherwise appropriate in other locations within the L District boundaries. The structures for these uses shall keep with the historical character of, and shall not materially alter the residential character of, the L District."

Marvin Bennink pointed out the Town Center area on the existing Master Plan which corresponds to the proposed Lamont District.

Marge Day of 4919 Leonard asked where the current Village of Lamont is. Dick Temple said a Village is a political entity, which Lamont is not; Lamont is part of Tallmadge Township. Jim Szejda explained that there is a Village of Spring Lake which is recognized as such by the state as they have their own governmental body and pay taxes.

Mr. Kemp of 4690 Leonard asked what the purpose of this meeting is. Mr. Temple referred to the statement he read at the beginning of the meeting, which included a business on the boulevard which was non-compliant. He said there is interest in small commercial businesses in the Lamont area; however the township would like to preserve the village character.

Larry Pals of 4818 Leonard asked if the proposed rezoning and text amendment would be necessary to allow the requested businesses. Marvin Bennink said there is currently no mechanism to allow commercial business in the Lamont area. He added that any business there currently is not compliant.

Kyle Parcher of 4581 Leonard confirmed that the people who are requesting businesses are already living in the Lamont area. He has a business at a different location and would like to operate the business from his home on the boulevard. He has an organic cheese shop which is currently operating approximately 3 ½ miles to the west.

Betty Mc Farlin of O-1526 Leonard said she grew up in Lamont and there was a grocery store and two gas stations and a couple of other businesses. She said they are no longer in business because they couldn't survive there.

Chuck Miller of 4580 Leonard is concerned that the entire boulevard could become commercial and not have any residential.

Betty Bronkema referred to the proposed Section 9A.03 (e), "Uses which provide retail goods or services to meet needs of Township residents but which are not listed above in this Section may be permitted by the Township if deemed to meet the purpose of the L District and if found to be similar to a use listed above in this Section. In determining similarity the Township shall consider the following:

1. Size, nature and character of the proposed use.
2. Traffic congestion or hazard that may be created by the use.
3. Whether the proposed use is harmonious with adjoining neighborhood.
4. Necessity of the proposed use to serve the needs of the Township residents.
5. Effect of the proposed use on adjoining properties and surrounding area."

Mrs. Bronkema asked if this would apply to the whole district. Marvin Bennink said it refers to uses permitted after special approval.

Kelly Clark of 4872 Leonard said he has two adjacent parcels. One is in the proposed district, the other is not. He would like them both to be the same. These are parcel numbers 70-09-12-430-005 and 70-09-12-430-006. Marvin Bennink said the Planning Commission would discuss this matter with Mr. Ransford.

The meeting closed to the public.

Marvin Bennink thanked the public for their comments and said this matter will be postponed until a later date. He noted that the Planning Commission meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00pm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Somers, Administrative Assistant

