

AGENDA
Tallmadge Charter Township
Planning Commission
Regular Meeting
May 27, 2025
6:00PM

Call to Order: Curt Rypma called the meeting to order. Present: Curt Rypma, David Hanko, Joe Grochowalski, Matt Fenske, Erin Hill and Marv Bennink. Absent Joel Terpstra. Also present; Greg Ransford, Planner and 24 members of public.

Approval of the agenda was motioned by Matt Fenske, seconded by Marv Bennink and it carried unanimously.

Approval of the minutes from the March 25, 2025 Regular Meeting was motioned by Matt Fenske, Joe Grochowalski seconded, and it carried unanimously.

Non-agenda item inquiries:

Thomas Newhouse 10923 2nd Ave. request to read a letter from Ed Szymanski regarding the property on 2nd Ave. Letter was disbursed to PC Commissioners and Township Board members prior to the meeting. Highlights the dirt/earth materials that has been brought in to this property. Concern about the water table and contamination.

Randy Anes 10775 2nd Ave. Brings attention to a past court case. Seems to be exceeding what was agreed upon at that settlement. Would like answers on this matter.

Martin Heyboer 10975 2nd Ave. Speaks on the water issue. Lived thru the water table problem from years ago. Historically there were issues with well drilling, oil well, and fracking. There was salt contamination due to this. A cistern was needed for their greenhouse because of this.

Jason Heyboer. 10935 2nd Ave. Wells are about 70 ft deep in this area. That's not too deep, and having safe water is a real issue.

Curt Rypma addresses the crowd and states that this is a great starting part to express concern.

Dewey Bultsma responds that the fill material is clean that has been slowly brought in for future development locally. This is all permitted by Ottawa health dept. Asphalt is assumed to be cleaned and intended to use as a base layer on the 2nd Ave property.

Lorie Miller 14146 8th Ave. Choose this area for more county living. Addresses the want for chickens. We are in a qualifying area. The language of the ordinance is confusing and she is not sure what is allowed. The chicken allowance within City of Grand Rapids is more than what is

allowed in Tallmadge. Asks for review of the language for the ordinance. If the review is denied and asks for exception for their property. Discussion among Commissioners and is asked to speak with Greg Ransford after the meeting.

Philip Miller – 14146 8th Ave. Its quite simple – as parents what do you tell your kids why they can't and others can.

New Business

- Public Hearings
 - o Map Amendment
 - Bultsma – 550 Lake Michigan Drive
 - Seeking rezoning from C-2 to I-1

Greg Ransford takes the floor to highlight the request of this rezone. Gives history of rezones in the area and the current master plan. Reminds of the differences of these zonings.

Matt LaRue, representative of the applicant, takes the floor. Highlights why this property is not ideal for commercial zoning and the issues they are encountering. A dispute ensued, regarding the need for a building, the requirement of a building and the height of the building. States the intent was to keep as commercial and have a special use, but that planner or township was not interested in this. The use will be for outdoor storage. Our offices are located on Lake Michigan Drive, and we have no use for an additional office location or space. Applicants plan to conceal the property, and the storage will not be seen any longer.

Greg Ransford responds stating he does not agree with this. He highlights a timeline of back and forth between himself/township officials and the applicant while they explore the various options and uses available and not permitted.

Matt Fenske Motioned to open meeting for public comment. Marv Bennink supported, and it carried unanimously

Randy Haims 10775 2nd Ave – states that he feels what he was told is not correct. That this project has been going on and on. Feels there is not a provision for this use and feels this is spot zoning.

Thomas Newhouse 10923 2ND AVE – wants clarification – will all the dirt on 2nd Ave be moved to 550 LMD? Mr. Bultsma responds – this soil will be dried, and compacted at this current location on 2nd Ave.

Randy Anes 10775 2nd Ave – to clarify – The current property is zoned C-2 at 2nd Ave, the future place is currently zoned C-2 and cannot be rezoned because they won't build a building. Greg Ransford states that its only

Cindy Anes 10775 Ave - Askes was is outdoor storage? Greg responds – Storage of materials, equipment outdoors.

Chip Heyboer 10997 2nd Ave- Agrees with the concerns addressed. Concern with big picture – how does this change effect future projects, development or uses. Concern how it butts up to residential and the potential of changes of use.

Randy Anes 10775 2nd Ave – states he had the only industrial property and received lots of pressures to change it.

Jason Heyboer- 10935 2nd Ave – once you change the property you lose. Appreciates the chance to have this discussion. Doesn't think we should change the rules to accommodate it. Applicant states the property was listed on tax rolls as industrial-improved. States that previously the plan was to use this property for self-storage – which is only allowed in industrial.

Randy Haims 10775 2nd Ave – states the Zoning Map shows it colored pink (commercial)

Matt Fenske motioned to close public hearing., supported by Dave Hanko and motion was carried unanimously.

Discussion among Commissioners, Planner and Applicant.

Matt Fenske comments regarding water and storage of material in a wetland area. We do have issues in Tallmadge with the water supply. He cannot support he rezoning.

Marv Bennink highlights the 3 C's of Rezoning;

- o Consistency
- o Compatibility
- o Capability

which is used as guideline for determining a rezone request. He mentions that some of them are not met for this request and cannot support a rezone to Industrial.

Curt Rypma – is sympathetic for the application and his situation. Does feel this is not a good fit for this rezone.

Matt LaRue - Asks who reviews these applications prior to being put on the PC agenda? A: The planner and the planning commission. The purview is a vote of planning commission.

Dave Hanco recommends to the township board denial for of this rezone request because it is not consistent with the master plan nor it compatible with the surrounding properties. Marv Bennink seconds. The motions carries unanimously.

- o Text Amendment

- Pathways

Greg Ransford highlights the reasoning for this review. Mentions the requirements and the changing of the payment-in-lieu requirements.

Marv Bennink motions to open public hearing. Matt Fenske supported and it carried unanimously.

Chip Heyboer 10997 2nd Ave – loves the sidewalks – we support and hope to see more!

Matt Fenske moves to close public hearing Erin Hill seconds and it carried unanimously.

Matt Fenske motions to approve the text amendment changes, as revised by the Township Attorney, supported by Marv Bennink and it is carried unanimously.

Old Business

- None

Planning Commission Comment

- Outdoor storage in commercial districts

Greg Ransford wants to address this and encourages the Commissioners to think how this could affect all commercial properties. Addresses the situation Woodland Equipment is in. Also states how there are 2 commercial zoning districts; C-1 & C2.

Woodland Equipment takes the floor represented by Tim Allspack and Brian Winkler.

Mentions the different uses and what is and isn't allowed and what use Woodland Equipment falls under. States how Woodland meets or falls under the requirements. Highlights how outside storage zoning language as written in 11.06 a5 general standards of outside storage. States how the interpretation varies between the applicant and the planner and is seeking clarification, full disclosure and understanding. Wants to know if Woodland has met the requirements as they would like to expand.

Brian Winkler is not seeking to change the language. Does not want the uncertainty of whether or not they are operating within the requirements and does not want to be hiding behind anything. Loves this area and want to grow within this community. Needs confirmation and understanding.

Greg Ransford acknowledges that Woodland is a top-notch business within the township. Where the disagreement lies is the authorized outdoor display area and outdoor storage. It is not accessible, therefore it is not a display and should be considered as storage.

Tim Allspak reminds of previous plans and how they were presented and approved.

Discussion among Planning Commissioners, Greg Ransford and Applicant.

Commissioners express interest in investigating amending the ordinance to clarify outdoor storage and outdoor display and their uses. There is also expressed interest in adding language to the special use permit, rather than amending the ordinance, to allow for more control over what is allowed. Ransford will draft language for the Commission to consider.

Adjournment – A motion for adjournment by Matt Fenske and seconded by Marv Bennink and carried unanimously at 7:41pm

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Bosch