

Rutland Charter Township Planning Commission Meeting

Wednesday, February 5, 2025 at 7 pm

Roll Call Members Present:

Larry Haywood, Steve Pachulski, Dan King, Brenda Bellmore, Jennifer Hayes

Others Present:

Gene Hall, Marge Faber, Stacey Graham, Rebecca Harvey, Nickie Haight

Approval of Agenda:

Motion by Pachulski, seconded by Bellmore to approve the February 5, 2025 meeting agenda. All ayes. Motion passes.

Meeting Minutes:

Motion by Haywood, seconded by Bellmore to accept the December 4, 2024 Meeting Minutes. Roll Call Vote: Haywood - Yes, Bellmore - Yes, King- Yes, Hayes - Yes, Pachulski - Yes. Motion passes.

General Public Comment: None

Guests: King welcomes Gene Hall and Marge Faber

Zoning Administrator's Report:

Graham has provided her report to the PC. She points out Attorney Rolfe's memo regarding updates to the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. Harvey explains the PC membership should represent various facets of the township. She also says that there may be bigger changes coming to Master Plans due to the housing issues, as past plans have not been adequate in planning for housing problems we are facing today. She believes RCT is already doing a good job of this. The PC members discuss what has caused the current housing shortage and that the blame does not fall on local governments.

New Business:

Elect 2025 Planning Commission Officers

Motion by Bellmore, seconded by Pachulski, to appoint Dan King as the Planning Commission Chairperson.

Motion by Bellmore, seconded by Pachulski, to appoint Larry Haywood as the Planning Commission Vice Chairperson.

Motion by Bellmore, seconded by Hayes, to appoint Steve Pachulski as the Planning Commission Secretary.

Roll Call Vote: Haywood - Yes, Bellmore - Yes, King - Yes, Pachulski - Yes, Hayes - Yes. Motions Pass.

Chairperson King welcomes new member, Jennifer Hayes.

Old Business:

Zoning Text Amendments for Mixed Use District

Graham tells the PC that the board would like them to continue to review the ordinance. She provides samples from other local governments including Plainwell and Gaines Township.

Harvey goes over her report for the PC. They discuss the possibility of creating a Commercial District, and that these ordinances should follow the vision of the Master Plan. She says it is possible that the MP is no longer adequate. She thinks looking at the MP is a good place to start and see if there are changes there that need to happen. Or if the PC is happy with the MP, they could explain to the Board their reasons for not wanting to make any changes. Harvey feels that some minor changes could accomplish some of the things the Board wants to see, but others might need more in depth changes. She says that as it sits now, every big box store would have to ask for a variance. She explains that in order to change the MP, both the Board and the PC would have to approve.

Haywood says the MP was written that way purposely and does not want to allow a big box store to make them change the ordinances.

Pachulski asks if RCT is open to litigation if they do not make these changes and Harvey says it is possible but only in certain circumstances. Pachulski asks if all of RCT's ordinances are exclusionary. Harvey explains that something is not allowed if it is not listed in the ordinance, and that is fine. But a community cannot make a list of businesses they do not want in their township, just because they do not want them there. If there is a need that is not mentioned in an ordinance and someone asks for it, the PC has the ability to change or add to ordinances. She explains that there is nothing wrong with looking at the MP and ordinances.

Harvey says that the PC has the ability to tell the Board they do not approve the proposed changes because they do not align with the Master Plan. She thinks it will take work to prove that RCT has nowhere for big box stores to go.

The PC discusses that RCT does not currently have the infrastructure to support big box stores and how the existing Urban Services areas work. They also want to have a joint meeting with the board and the PC so they can discuss what they want in a commercial corridor. They ask Harvey to attend that meeting.

King wants to assure everyone that he does not have a conflict of interest between working for the City of Hastings and serving on the RCT Planning Commission. He will always make decisions for RCT that are best for its residents.

Discuss Updates to Schedule of Regulations

Graham references Attorney Rolfe's email and questions if the PC sees other changes which are warranted. The PC does not feel any further changes to the Schedule of Regulations are needed at this time. Harvey will review and advise if she sees something that should be potentially altered.

Open Comments:

Graham offers PC members some booklets on planning and zoning from the MTA and updates the PC on a meeting she had with representatives of Yankee Bill's Bar and Grill.

Adjournment:

Motion by Bellmore, seconded by Pachulski to adjourn at 8:34 pm
Meeting Adjourned. Submitted by Nickie Haight, Recording Secretary

PROPOSED