

FRENCHTOWN CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
July 21, 2022

SIG 
APPROVED

The meeting was held both in person and via Zoom and was called to order at 7:01 p.m.

Roll call: Paul Thoma Hillary Venier Fred Calkins
Chris Collins Brian Dotson

Absent: Dennis Staelgraeve
Don Abrams

Also present: Mark Mathe, Mannik & Smith Group, Township Engineer Representative
Lucie Fortin, Township Planning Consultant
Cindy Allor, acting as Planning Commission Recording Secretary
Jim Jacobs, James S. Jacobs Architects, PLLC, Architect
Jennifer Glover, Aver Signs
Richard Kowalczyk, Applicant

2 interested citizens

1 interested citizen via ZOOM

A quorum being present, Chairman Paul Thoma called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. This meeting was held under the Open Meetings Act.

All those present were requested by Chairperson Thoma to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairperson Thoma introduced Lucie Fortin as the Township Planner. Ms. Fortin thanked Mr. Thoma and told the Commission about herself and expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to represent Frenchtown Township.

Item No. 3 Agenda Approval.

Motion

Moved By: Fred Calkins

Supported By: Hillary Venier

MUC

A motion made to approve the agenda as amended, removing Item No. 4 as draft minutes are not yet available due to clerical staff needing additional information, and adding Item No. 7b - Zoning Map Discussion.

Item No. 5 Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items Only.

None.

Item No. 6a Public Hearing – Rezoning Request: Parcels #58-07-532-038-10, 58-07-018-501-00, and 58-07-018-501-20, located at 6398 N. Dixie Highway, from A, Agricultural to GM, General Manufacturing district.

Mark Mathe, Mannik & Smith Group of Michigan, Township Engineer, presented the Engineer’s report dated July 14, 2022. Mr. Mathe stated the notable engineering concerns in his report, including many allowable uses in GM district could be challenging to fully implement on these subject parcels.

Lucie Fortin, Mannik & Smith Group of Michigan, Township Planning Consultant, presented the Planner’s report dated July 14, 2022. Ms. Fortin recommended that the Planning Commission recommend approving the rezoning request for the 33.6-acre parcels and provided her explanation in her report.

The Commission discussed.

Motion

Moved By: Hillary Venier

Supported By: Brian Dotson

MUC

A motion was made to accept and place on file the following correspondence:

- Lucie Fortin, Mannik & Smith Group of Michigan, July 14, 2022
- Mark Mathe, Mannik & Smith Group of Michigan, July 14, 2022
- Randy Kendall, Frenchtown Water Department, June 22, 2022
- Legal Notice – publication date July 5, 2022
- Affidavit of Mailing dated July 1, 2022, of which 8 property owners were notified.
- Submittal Documents

Motion

Moved By: Hillary Venier

Supported By: Fred Calkins

MUC

A motion was made to open the public hearing at 7:38 P.M.

Paul Thoma, Planning Commission Chairperson, asked three (3) times if there were any citizens who wished to address the Commission. No comments were made.

Motion

Moved By: Hillary Venier

Supported By: Fred Calkins

MUC

A motion was made to close the public hearing at 7:39 P.M.

Jim Jacobs, James S. Jacobs Architects, PLLC, Architect, approached and answered questions on behalf of the applicant, Masserant Group, LLC. He stated that these parcels would be used to support the Enrico Fermi II power plant, and that regulatory issues require certain activities to be off-site. The Planning Commission stated that they would like to see a letter from DTE Energy confirming the need. The Commission also discussed what types of manufacturing uses would be permitted by right, and the lack of public infrastructure currently for traditional General Manufacturing use on these sites.

Mr. Jacobs requested this item be tabled.

Motion

Moved By: Fred Calkins

Supported By: Chris Collins

MUC

A motion was made to table this item, as requested by the applicant.

Roll Call: Thoma – Yes, Collins – Yes, Calkins – Yes,
Dotson – Yes, Venier –Yes.

MUC

5 - Yes votes, 0 - No votes

Item No. 6b Public Hearing – Special Use Request: Parcel #58-07-018-511-60, located at 4992 Post Road, special use approval for a private grass airstrip in the A, Agricultural district.

Mark Mathe, Mannik Smith Group, Township Engineer, presented Engineer's report dated July 14, 2022. Mr. Mathe stated they have no objection to granting the approval.

Lucie Fortin, Mannik Smith Group, Township Planner, presented Planner's report dated July 14,2022. Ms. Fortin recommended that the Planning Commission approve the request for the private special land use. She also refers the required site plan approval to the administrative review committee.

Richard Kowalczyk, Applicant, approached and answered any questions.

The Commission discussed.

Motion

Moved By: Hillary Venier

Supported By: Brian Dotson

MUC

A motion was made to accept and place on file the following correspondence:

- Lucie Fortin, Mannik & Smith Group of Michigan, July 14, 2022
- Mark Mathe, Mannik & Smith Group of Michigan, July 14, 2022
- Randy Kendall, Frenchtown Water Department, June 22, 2022
- Legal Notice – publication date July 5, 2022
- Affidavit of Mailing dated July 1, 2022, of which 6 property owners were notified.
- Submittal Documents

Motion

Moved By: Hillary Venier

Supported By: Fred Calkins

MUC

A motion was made to open the public hearing at 8:17 P.M.

Paul Thoma, Planning Commission Chairperson, asked three (3) times if there were any citizens who wished to address the Commission. No comments were made.

Motion

Moved By: Chris Collins

Supported By: Brian Dotson

MUC

A motion was made to close the public hearing at 8:18 P.M.

The commission discussed.

Motion

Moved By: Fred Calkins

Supported By: Brian Dotson

A motion was made to grant the special use approval as presented and approved by the Federal Aviation Administration.

Roll Call: Collins – Yes, Calkins – Yes, Dotson – Yes,
Venier –Yes, Thoma – Yes.

MUC

5 - Yes votes, 0 - No votes

Item No. 6c Sign Waiver: Parcel # 58-07-030-007-02, located at 1700 N. Telegraph Road (Meijer) in the C-3, Highway Commercial zoning district. Request for sign waivers from current sign size requirements.

Lucie Fortin, Mannik & Smith Group, Township Planner, presented Planner's report dated July 13, 2022.

Ms. Fortin recommended that the Planning Commission deny the waiver requests because they do not comply with the Frenchtown Township sign regulations.

Motion

Moved By: Hillary Venier

Supported By: Brian Dotson

MUC

A motion was made to accept and place on file the following correspondence:

- Lucie Fortin, Mannik & Smith Group of Michigan, July 14, 2022
- Submittal Documents

Paul Thoma, Planning Commission Chairperson, asked three (3) times if there were any citizens who wished to address the Commission. No comments were made.

The Commission discussed all information previously received and revisions provided.

Jennifer Glover, Aver Signs representing Meijer, approached and answered questions. Ms. Glover compared the proposed signs to those at the nearby Walmart. Planning Commission members stated some changes have been made to the Sign Ordinance since that install. The Commission discussed the recent Circle K gas station waiver and if that same rationale should be used here.

Mr. Jim Jacobs asked to speak and provided his professional input on the interpretation of Sign Ordinance. He stated that setback distances, multi-drive distances, and multi-uses all play factor in determining allowable square footage for signs.

Motion

Moved By: Brian Dotson

Supported By: Fred Calkins

MUC

A motion was made to grant the sign waiver, using the following rationale to make that determination:

- Building size, frontage, and setback from Telegraph Rd.
- The existing non-conforming sign will not be increased in size
- The “Fresh” and “Home” signage is navigational in nature, and if we treat this as a multi-tenant building (i.e. different reasons for entering the store), they could be as large as 100 square feet each. This would leave the existing sign as the only non-conforming sign.

Roll Call: Calkins – Yes, Dotson – Yes, Venier –Yes,
Thoma – Yes, Collins – Yes.

MUC

5 - Yes votes, 0 - No votes

The Commission discussed the request for a temporary “Grand Re-Opening” sign.

Motion

Moved By: Chris Collins

Supported By: Hillary Venier

A motion was made to grant the temporary sign, with the condition that the sign not to exceed 43 square feet and must be removed after 90 days.

Roll Call: Dotson – Yes, Venier – Yes, Thoma – Yes,
Collins – Yes, Calkins –Yes.

MUC

5 - Yes votes, 0 - No votes

Item No. 7 Other Business/Discussion.

a. Action: Solar Energy System, Article 200, Section 4.46, Zoning Amendment

Lucie Fortin, Township Planner, informed the Planning Commission that the Township Attorney is requesting Planning Commission input on Section 4.46 Solar Energy. The Commission discussed and felt no amendments are necessary.

Motion

Moved By: Hillary Venier

Supported By: Chris Collins

A motion was made that the Planning Commission recommends that the Solar Energy System Ordinance - Section 4.46 - as stated, is satisfactory and no changes are recommendations are noted.

Roll Call: Venier – Yes, Thoma – Yes, Collins – Yes,
Calkins – Yes, Dotson –Yes.

MUC
5 - Yes votes, 0 - No votes

b. Zoning Map Discussion

Lucie Fortin, Mannik & Smith Group of Michigan, Township Planner, presented proposed changes to the Zoning Map.

The Commission discussed.

Motion

Moved By: Hillary Venier

Supported By: Chris Collins

MUC

A motion was made to replace the LEM (Lake Erie Marina) zoning district with PS (Public Services), since the area currently zoned LEM is owned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

A discussion also took place regarding the lack of zoning listed for the recently acquired additional parcels at the Quality Inn on N. Dixie Hwy.

Motion

Moved By: Fred Calkins

Supported By: Brian Dotson

MUC

A motion was made to match the C-3 (Highway Commercial) zoning district to all parcels acquired at the Quality Inn on N. Dixie Hwy., so all 3 parcels conform in zoning.

Old Business.

The Commission discussed RV parks and campgrounds, and if a moratorium might be appropriate while the Planner prepares draft Ordinance language.

New Business.

There were no citizens remaining to open the floor for questions, comments or concerns to the Planning Commission.

Item No. 8 Board Reviews and Administrative Update.

- Township Board Report from Chris Collins.

- Planning Commission August agenda and report from Paul Thoma, Planning Commission Chair

Item No. 9 Adjournment.

Motion

Moved By: Fred Calkins

Supported By: Brian Dotson

MUC

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 9:49 p.m.