

Casco Township Planning Commission

Regular Meeting

March 19th, 2025

6:00 PM

Casco Township Hall

Members Present: Andy **Litts**, Ryan **Brush**, Dan **Fleming**, Greg **Knisley**, Dian **Liepe**, Kelly **Hecker**

Members Absent: None

Audience: Jim **McManus** AICP, Julie **Cowie**, David & Mary **Campbell**, Allan **Overhiser**

1. Call to order: Meeting was called to order by Chairman **Litts** 6:00PM

2. Review and approve agenda:

A motion was made by **Hecker** to approve the agenda, supported by **Fleming**. All in favor.
Motion carried.

3. Public comment:

Julie **Cowie** – 7376 101st Ave. as a member of the Allegan County Community Foundation **Cowie** commented that there is a need for more housing in every category type, especially Senior Housing and Starter homes.

4. Correspondence - None

5. Approval of Minutes: A motion was made by **Fleming** to approve the February 19, 2025 Regular Meeting minutes. Supported by **Liepe**. All in favor. Motion carried.

6. Public Hearing – None

7. New Business – None

8. Old Business:

a. **McManus** from McKenna Associates is assisting Kyle **Mucha**, who was unable to attend tonight's meeting. **McManus** is still working on updating the Introduction to the Master Plan (MP). Tonight's objective is to discuss updating the goals and objectives, as well as the Future Land Use (FLU) Boundaries and Categories. Chapter 2 Community Profile, Chapter 3 Natural Systems, and Chapter 4 Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Services will be discussed at the March 26th Workshop.

McManus explained how proposed House Bill 5557 would amend the Michigan Planning Enabling Act to require a local government's master plan to promote a range of housing types and include an assessment of the community's housing demand with strategies and policies for addressing those demands. It also would add housing to the list of major interests that the membership of a local government's planning commission must represent. **McManus** stated that this would need to be incorporated into the goals and objectives.

McManus and the PC reviewed the FLU map and the FLU Categories. **McManus** would like to update the Water and Sewer Service map and include other types of utilities like Natural Gas availability. Little Sable has been rezoned and needs to be updated. Property along 103rd and 73rd needs updated and also the Glenn Shores Area. Missy Fojtik's – Daydreamer Domes property at 397 Blue Star also needs the Private Recreational designation removed.

McManus asked the PC if they would like to see reductions to the minimum lot size in the AG District. **Brush** stated that the higher density would go against the rural character. **McManus** explained how the Township could protect the AG District farmland from the threat of development by promoting Purchase of Development Rights (PDR); which is a voluntary legal agreement, or conservation easement, that restricts all future non-farm development while encouraging farming, forestry, and other land uses that are compatible with agriculture.

McManus also discussed how the Township's soil and environment are conducive to unique crops that could be protected by designating it as Prime Farm Land.

McManus also discussed Compatible Renewable Energy Ordinance (CREO) and how important it was for the Township to have ordinances in place to regulate Solar or Wind Projects and Battery Storage facilities. Otherwise, Public Acts 233 and 234 of 2023, which preempt existing local siting authority, set statewide siting standards and grant siting authority for utility-scale renewable energy facilities to the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC). Under PA 233, an applicant must first contact the local government to verify if it has adopted a CREO which is an ordinance that provides for the development of utility-scale energy facilities within the local unit of government that is no more restrictive than provisions included in Section 226(8) of PA 233. If the local government has adopted a CREO, the applicant must go through the municipality for approval and bypass the commission. Under the legislation, the MPSC will have permitting authority over Solar Projects with a capacity of 50 megawatts or more, Wind Projects with a capacity of 100 megawatts or more and Battery Storage facilities with a capacity of 50 megawatts or more.

What types of housing and what Districts they should be allowed in was also a topic of discussion. The Township's Parks and the Blue Star Bike trail extension were also discussed. As well as Short Term Rental (STR) regulations, Public Safety, Minimum Dwelling Requirements, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU), and extending the Commercial Development Use along Northshore Drive and the US 31 Expressway. **Fleming** stated that he is against "Strong" Zoning and would prefer to let the property owners be allowed to use their land as they see fit.

9. Administrative reports:

Zoning Administrator – **Smalley** presented her February report. **Litts** wants to discuss the Cisco Sand mine report Re: sand removal numbers and ground water levels; after **Smalley** preforms a site inspection.

Township Board Representative – **Fleming** reported that the Board has hired Kelli Jellison as their new Tax Assessor.

ZBA Representative – **Liepe** had nothing to report

10. Public comment – None.

11. Adjourn 8:27 pm

Attachments: available upon request

Minutes prepared by:

Jennifer Goodrich, Recording Secretary