



Fresh Coast Planning

950 Taylor Avenue, Ste 200
Grand Haven, MI 49417
www.freshcoastplanning.com

Gregory L. Ransford, MPA
616-638-1240
greg@freshcoastplanning.com

Julie Lovelace
616-914-0922
julie@freshcoastplanning.com

Kevin Yeomans
616-821-4969
kevin@freshcoastplanning.com

MEMORANDUM

To: Allendale Charter Township Planning Commission
From: Gregory L. Ransford, MPA
Date: November 2, 2022
Re: Master Plan – End of Comment Period

As you are aware, the Allendale Charter Township Board of Trustees reauthorized distribution of the draft Master Plan for comment to surrounding municipalities, the Rapid, registered parties, and others. The draft Master Plan was formally distributed on August 25, 2022. The comment period expired on October 27, 2022. Despite earlier correspondence from the Rapid expressing concern that they did not formally receive notification of the draft Master Plan, no comments were provided by the Rapid or any other party.

Given this, you may proceed with scheduling the required public hearing at any time. Prior to that hearing, it is important to note two items.

Supervisor Elenbaas Comment Regarding the Agricultural Use Chapter

During the initial distribution of the draft Master Plan, we contacted you in a May 12, 2022 email to provide you with comment from Supervisor Elenbaas regarding a Strategy on page 5 of the Agricultural Uses Chapter of the draft Plan. Specifically, bullet point number seven of the list of Strategies states,

“Review the Agricultural and Rural Zone (AG) and Rural Estate Zone (RE) Districts and allow farming only in areas where appropriate”

Supervisor Elenbaas questioned whether the Township can regulate farming. In response to Supervisor Elenbaas’ question, we provided the following:

“Thanks for the review from Adam. To answer the Page 5 question, that language was revised from the below language that exists within the current Master Plan. The way it is proposed to be rewritten is to examine the Zoning Ordinance and determine the extent of each district and minimize potential conflicts. The Planning Commission is certainly pro-Ag but also recognizes how Ag isn't the only way to achieve rural character. I'll make a note of this for the Commission to review when it returns to them after the distribution, and perhaps they want to make that clearer. Alternatively, the Board could send it back to the Commission for consideration *prior to* distribution but I don't think it is necessary.

“Typically a rural estate or rural residential category is intended to be a transition area between subdivision development and long term farmland but Allendale Township does not have a long term farm land preservation strategy. Because there is little or no difference between AG and RE relative to uses permitted and land development requirements some consideration should be given to deleting or amending the RE Zone in order to simplify the zoning categories or to draw a distinction between the two zoning districts. One method to accomplish would be to amend the RE regulations to no longer allow farming in the RE Zone.”

Census Data

As you may know, the 2020 Census data was due to become available at the end of 2021. That data was delayed to the beginning of this year and remains unavailable. Only small portions of the data are available. Given this, we have been advising our communities that the best available demographic data is from the American Community Survey (ACS), which is constantly conducted by the United States Census Bureau. As a result, we believe the Planning Commission has two options; 1 – update the Appendix with the ACS or; 2 – wait for the official 2020 Census Data release. We understand an additional portion of the data is expected to be released in May of 2023 and the complete 2020 Census to be available by August of 2023.

As aforementioned, following your finalization of the draft Master Plan, a public hearing shall be scheduled. The above “comments” have been scheduled for your review at your November 7, 2022 meeting. Attached for your convenience is a copy of the draft Plan, as presented to the Allendale Charter Township Board of Trustees. If you have any questions, please let us know.

GLR
Planner

Attachment

cc: Adam Elenbaas, Supervisor