

2018
Annual Report
Of the
Ontwa Township Planning Commission
Edwardsburg, Michigan



Planning Commission

Chris Marbach, Chairperson
Shane Szalai, Vice Chair
Sandra Seanor, Secretary
Brigid Forlenza, Recording Secretary
Dawn Bolock (Twp. Board Rep.)
Mike Mroczek
Don DeLong
Robert Thompson
Bill Mahaney
Richard Gates

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Planning Commission Approved April 3, 2019

INTRODUCTION

The Planning Commission of Ontwa Township is governed by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, State of Michigan Public Act 33 of 2008, and by the Ontwa Township Zoning Ordinance.

The 2018 Planning Commission was staffed by the Ontwa Township Zoning Administrator; this position was held by Leroy Krempec.

Williams & Works, a consulting firm, was also selected by the Township Board to assist the Township in zoning, planning and land use matters.

Under the Planning Enabling Act, the Planning Commission must provide an annual report to the Ontwa Township Board, as the legislative body of the Township. This report discusses:

1. Activities of the Commission during the past year
2. The status of any on-going planning activities
3. Recommendations to the legislative body related to planning and development

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTIVITIES

The Planning Commission was scheduled to meet the first Wednesday of each month in 2018. The January, March, April, June, July and September meetings were cancelled for lack of business items.

One of the duties of the Planning Commission is the review of all Land Division and Lot Line Adjustment applications. In 2018 the Planning Commission reviewed two applications and they were approved.

The Planning Commission approved zero applications for a Home Business in 2018.

In 2018 the Planning Commission approved a final site plan application for a building expansion in the Edwardsburg Industrial Park and a final site plan application for a commercial building expansion on US 12.

On November 7th, the Planning Commission held a public hearing to review the “Proposed Ontwa Township Zoning Ordinance Changes”. The purpose of the changes were to make it more understandable, simplify some of the requirements and update the accessory building requirements. The Township Board approved the amendments to the Zoning Ordinance on December 10, 2018.

The Planning Commission held a Pre-Site Condominium discussion on October 3, 2018 and then approved a Preliminary Site Condo application for Dockside Landings on December 5th, 2018.

Other activities by the Planning Commission in 2018 included the following:

1. Applications and forms have been updated and reviewed by Williams & Works and are now posted on the Ontwa Township website.
2. A Bike & Pedestrian Committee was chaired by Mike Mroczek. The committee will carefully develop a plan and identify potential projects. This will be done with the assistance of MACOG, Niles-Buchanan-Cass Area Transportation Study (NATS) and the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC).

Ontwa Township, partnering with the Edwardsburg Sports Complex (ESC), supports the ESC Connector Path bike and pedestrian project, funded in part by a federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) grant. It is anticipated that this project will be constructed in the spring of fiscal year 2019.

In addition, Ontwa Township, in coordination with the Cass County Road Commission, submitted and was awarded Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding (2018-2020 funding) for a HAWK Signal and bike/pedestrian extension connecting to the ESC phase 1 project. The termini for phase 2 is Claire St at US12 and Claire St. East to Section St. Construction estimated in fiscal year 2019-20.

In 2019 the Plan Commission will work toward a comprehensive Bike & Pedestrian Plan.

ONGOING PLANNING ACTIVITIES

As a result of the Township Master Plan, the Planning Commission will continue to work on updating the Zoning Ordinance in 2019 as the primary implementation mechanism to achieve the Master Plan goals.

Williams & Works will continue to assist us in updating our Zoning Ordinance. Andy Moore, AICP was assigned to assist us.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE TOWNSHIP BOARD

As a result of the Planning Enabling Act, the Planning Commission is requesting that the Township Board exempt the Planning Commission from having to prepare a Capital Improvement Plan. This can be accomplished by means of the Township Board creating an ordinance that delegates this task to the Supervisor or to a non-elected administrative official.

Ontwa Township Planning Commission

Chris Marbach

Chris Marbach, Chairman