

The Portage Township Planning Commission (PC) May 6, 2021 meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM via Zoom by chair Melanie Watkins. Present were Watkins, Ted Soldan, Jeff Koski, John Ligon, Connie Sherry, and Peggy Anderson. Guests John Ollila, Keith Garot (Ottawa Innovations), Matt Treado (UPEA), John French (Baraga Telephone), Joni Moore (Ottawa Innovations), Koray Inal (Baraga Telephone), Shawn Laemmrich (Baraga Telephone), Steven Eckley (Ottawa Innovations), Russ VanRite (Ottawa Innovations), and Bruce Peterson were also present. No signup sheet was available since it was a Zoom meeting, so the chair made a strong effort to make sure everyone was accounted for before the meeting started.

Anderson made a motion to accept the minutes from the February 25, 2021 regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Sherry. There being no discussion, the motion was put to a vote, and passed unanimously.

Baraga Telephone (BTC) representatives next addressed the commission. They presented an update on the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) grant they had received from the FCC to upgrade broadband service to underserved rural areas. A map was shown to the commission (see attached) outlining the areas BTC planned to upgrade to fiber to the household with 500/50 service for a cost similar to their current rates (approximately \$50/household). BTC officials were interested in dovetailing their fiber upgrades with any municipal construction projects that might coincide with their project. The Green Acres/M28 project was discussed as one possible avenue for cooperation. The commission suggested they contact Chris Holmes for a current update on the plans for the Green Acres project.

Supervisor Peterson asked if BTC would use the same directional drill as the sewer/water construction. BTC said they would use directional drilling under the roads just like the contractors would do for the sewer/water, but would put their conduit at least 6' away from the sewer/water conduit. This would make it safer in case the township would need to dig up a sewer/water line. Several commission members requested clarification on the map to determine if this upgraded service might reach their own neighborhoods.

Next on the agenda was a site plan review to repurpose the old Van Straten facility on US41 for a proposed retail marijuana facility. Joni Moore addressed the commission on behalf of Ottawa Innovations, expressing her enthusiasm for the proposed facility. Matt Treado went through the site plan check sheet (attached) and discussed plans for closing one of the two driveway entrances and for remodeling of the interior of the building. Treado said they would remove and replace the existing septic system. There was some discussion about the stormwater drainage from the property. The property next door, Goodwin Motors, shares the drainage infrastructure. A question was asked about illumination of the parking lot. Treado said that the sign was to be illuminated, but that there were no current plans to illuminate the rest of the parking lot. Koski asked if there would be landscaping to the property. Treado said none was planned. There was some discussion about water drainage in the NW corner of the property, where the beehive drain appeared to be higher than a part of the parking lot where water was said to accumulate. Several options to fix this were discussed. There being no further questions, a motion was made by Ligon to accept the site plan as presented. The motion was seconded by Soldan and passed with no dissent.

Zoning Administrator John Ollila brought an issue to the attention of the commission. Two changes that were made to the zoning ordinance need to be redone. Although they were approved by the planning commission, they did not have either a newspaper posting or a preceding public hearing as required. The details on this issue will be provided to the PC prior to the June 10 meeting by Zoning Administrators Ollila and Bingham.

Ollila said they had been permitting mobile homes of less than 900 square feet, which should fall under the category of a tiny house. Since a tiny house is a special use in all districts where it is allowed, then technically every small mobile home should be brought before the planning commission for a site plan review. Ollila said that in discussions with the MTA, he has learned that the township cannot discriminate against mobile homes.

The word dwelling includes both frame homes and mobile homes. These are both permitted if they meet the square footage requirements of the zoning district.

The MTA further stated that campers without a well and septic system can be parked on the owner's property; in fact, according to MTA, no Michigan law prevents a landowner from living in a camper on their own property. The health department has concerns about long term residency in campers not supported by well and septic systems. MTA recommended setting a time limit for camper residency. Watkins said she thought Munising had something in their ordinance regarding a time limit for campers, and that she would look into it and email what she found to the commission.

Koski asked is there a problem with people living in campers in our township? Perhaps we are trying to solve a problem that doesn't exist. One person at the meeting recalled a property owner complaining that his neighbor was living in a camper, but the two of them eventually worked it out between themselves. Soldan asked about township residents that park their personal RVs on their property. Will they be precluded from doing this, since it would be difficult to know whether they are "living" in them? The answer was that a RV that is accessory to a dwelling is ok for indefinite parking. Peggy Anderson said she'd call Ann Gasperich to ask about problems with RVs in Keweenaw County.

Ollila also announced the co-zoning administrator Bill Bingham is having issues with his back such that it is not possible for him to continue as co-zoning administrator. For the foreseeable future, Ollila will be the only zoning administrator.

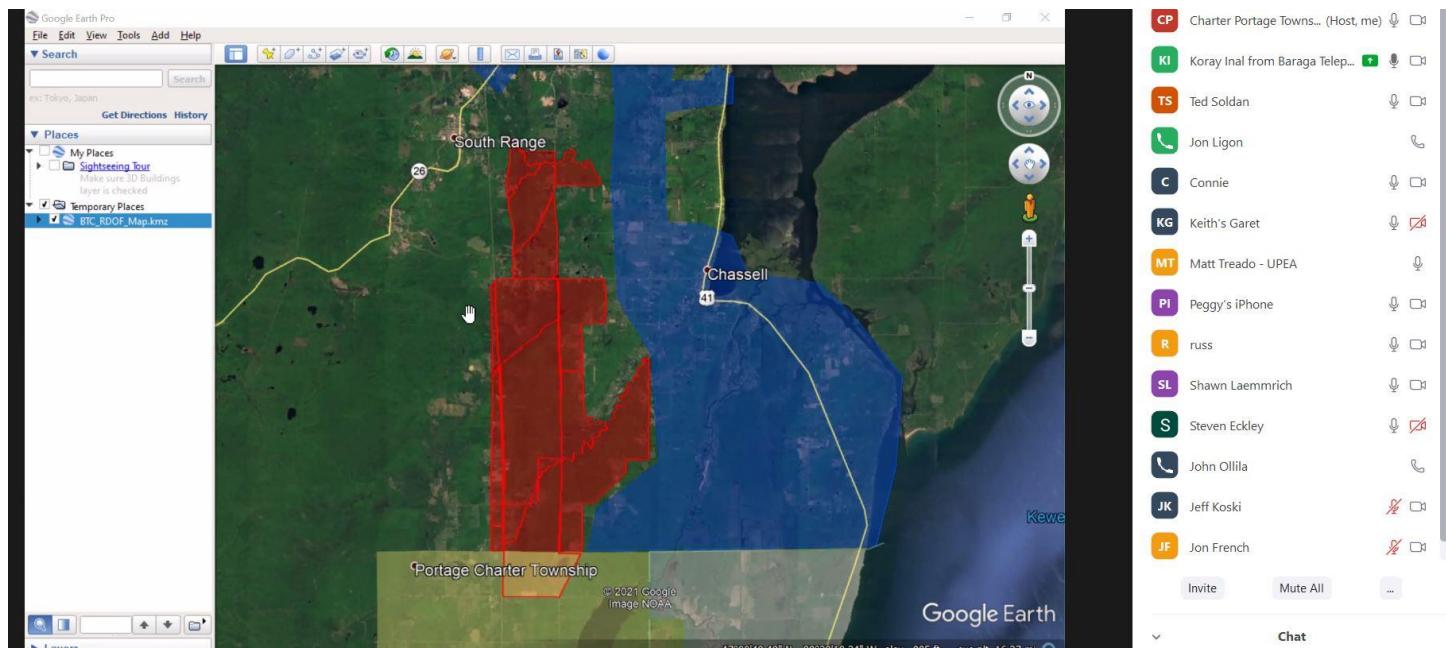
Anderson proposed June 10 for a working session for the proposed zoning ordinance changes. Anderson also asked if anyone objected if she submitted attendance forms on behalf of every PC member that attended the meeting. There being no objections, Anderson said she would proceed.

Anderson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 pm. The motion was seconded by Koski and passed.

Respectfully submitted,



Ted Soldan, Secretary



April 20, 2021

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[P179-00535]

Portage Charter Township 47240 Green

Acres Road Houghton, MI 49931

**RE: Ottawa Innovations – Plan Review**

Dear Portage Charter Township Planning Commission,

Below are the Portage Charter Township Site Plan Review Check list items which I will present at the Planning Commission Meeting.

- A. Vicinity map illustrating the location of the site within the Township.

**The site is located approximately ½ mile south of the golf course on US-41. The project location is the existing Van Stratten Building located at 46479 US Highway 41, Houghton, MI 49931. A vicinity map is located on the cover of the attached planset.**

- B. Date site plan was prepared.

**The plans were prepared on 4/16/2021**

- C. Name, address, of preparer. Professional seal of preparer if available.

**Matthew Treado, PE UP Engineers & Architects, Inc 424 S Pine Street Ishpeming, MI 49849**

- D. North arrow.

**Existing (C100) and proposed site plans (C101) have north arrow located in the bottom left corner.**

- E. Legal description based upon most current survey.

**The legal description is located on Existing Site Plan, C100 in the top right hand corner.**

- F. Existing and proposed topographic elevations at two (2) foot intervals on the site and to a distance of ten (10) feet outside the boundary lines of the site.

**The rear of the property has a steep slope into the site, then a gentle slope towards US-41. The topography is shown on Existing Site Plan, C100 and Proposed Site Plan 101.**

- G. Direction of storm water drainage and how storm water runoff will be handled.

**The existing site includes storm water collection system located within the US 41 corridor. We have been told that no stormwater management plan is necessary since no significant earth work will take place. Attached see letter from Houghton County Drain Commissioner John Pekkala.**

- H. Location of existing and proposed buildings, their intended use, the length, width and height of each building, and the square footage of each building. **See Proposed Floor Plan A1.0**
- I. Location of abutting streets, rights-of-way, services drives, curb cuts, and access easements serving the site, as well as driveways opposite the site and driveways within 100 feet of site. **Property fronts on US 41 for 152.40'.**  
**Property currently has two driveways and MDOT requests that in time, we eliminate the southernmost driveway. See attached MDOT email. See Proposed Site Plan, C101.**
- J. Location and size of all water and sanitary sewer lines and storm drainage lines as well as fire hydrants and catch basins, and location of septic tanks and drain fields and utility easements. **The property has well and septic.**  
**Onsite well and septic information to be gathered by the Houghton County Health Department and submitted to the Houghton County Building Department. Current drain field location is unknown. Minimal earthwork is planned for this project.**
- K. Location of all sidewalks, bike paths, and other walkways. **Located around the entrances of the building. Sidewalk locations around the building are shown on the site plans.**
- L. Location and size of any walls, fences, or other screening provisions. **Existing chain link fence located off the northern property line. The rear of the Goodwin Motors building to the south. See attached photos.**
- M. Location of all proposed landscape materials, including size and type of planting.

**N/A**

- N. Location of significant trees and other important natural landscape features on the site.  
**Yew hedge located on highway side of the building.**
- O. Location of all proposed accessory structures, including light poles or fixtures, flagpoles, storage sheds, transformers, dumpsters and recycle areas, signs, and existing and proposed utility poles. **There will be no proposed accessory structures. Existing power poles located on the north and south property lines. Dumpster will be located behind the back of the building.**
- P. Proposed parking areas and access drives showing number and size of spaces and aisles, and loading areas. **There are 13 Customer parking spaces in the front of the building. Employee parking will be in the back of the building.**  
**There are currently two driveways, one to be eliminated per MDOT recommendations.**
- Q. Location and type of significant existing vegetation, water courses, and water bodies including county drains and manmade surface drainage ways, and wetlands. **Catch basins and ditch line paralleling US 41. No surface drain ways or wetlands.**
- R. Statement of FEMA floodplain map of flood hazard to include FEMA Flood insurance rate map number. **N/A**
- S. Zoning of the site.

**B-2**

- T. Zoning of adjacent sites.  
**The zoning is B-2 to the north, south, and west. R-3 to the east. See photo off across the road. The R-3 area across the road is vacant.**
- U. Location and specifications for any existing or proposed above or below ground storage facilities for any chemicals, salts, flammable materials, hazardous materials as well as any containment structures or clear zones required by this Ordinance or any other state or federal agencies.

**N/A**

Please let me know if there are any remaining questions or concerns with the submitted application.

Sincerely,

Matthew Treado, P.E. UPEA