



CHARLEVOIX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

13513 Division Street
Charlevoix, Michigan 49720
(231) 547-7234
planning@charlevoixcounty.org

Approved Meeting Minutes February 6, 2025

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Nancy Ferguson called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. in the Committee Room at the Charlevoix County Shirley Roloff Center.

Members present: Nancy Ferguson, Pam Grassmick, Anna McGlashen, Matt Cunningham, Mike Ritter, Marshal Baker, and David Wheeler (arrived at 6:03 p.m.)

Members absent: None

Others present: Kiersten Stark (Planning Director) and Bob Jess (County Commissioner Liaison), LuAnne Kozma, and Ellis Boal

II. Pledge of Allegiance

P. Grassmick led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

III. Approval of Agenda

K. Stark asked that the following item be added to the agenda under V. County Business Items, after Correspondence and Communications: "Farmland & Open Space Preservation Ordinance Update".

MOTION by P. Grassmick to approve the agenda as amended. M. Baker seconded the motion. Voice vote: all in favor. Motion passed.

IV. Public Comments

None

V. County Business Items

Approval of Minutes of January 9, 2025 Meeting

MOTION by A. McGlashen to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2025 meeting as presented. M. Ritter seconded the motion. Voice vote: all in favor. Motion passed.

Correspondence and Communications

K. Stark presented the following items:

- Planning Commission Membership List
- Approved 2025 Meeting Schedule
- Flyer for the Michigan Association of Planning's *Planning & Zoning Essentials Workshop* to be held on March 19th and 20th from 6:00 to 8:00 pm via Zoom (2-part program)
P. Grassmick, A. McGlashen, D. Wheeler, and M. Baker would like to register for the webinar.
- Flyer for the Michigan Association of Planning's *Pro-Housing Webinar Series*
Commission members would like to register for the following webinars:
 - *Housing Finance for Planners* on February 26th – M. Ritter
 - *The Housing Element of a Master Plan* on April 24th – P. Grassmick and M. Cunningham
 - *Use by Right and Administrative Approvals* on June 25th – M. Cunningham
 - *Community Engagement for Housing: Changing Hearts and Minds* on July 16th – M. Baker, M. Ritter, and M. Cunningham

Farmland & Open Space Preservation Ordinance Update

K. Stark gave an overview of the proposed Charlevoix County Farmland & Open Space Preservation Ordinance for the benefit of the new members. Discussion took place regarding the proposed ordinance.

K. Stark provided a status update on the proposed ordinance, explaining that the Planning Commission had presented the proposed ordinance to the Board of Commissioners last year. Based on Board discussion at that time, a minor revision had been made to the proposed ordinance to remove a countywide millage as one of the potential funding sources for the program. She recently presented the revised ordinance to the County Board's Internal Government Committee for consideration. K. Stark described key points and concerns raised by the Committee. Discussion took place regarding the Committee's concerns with the proposed ordinance. K. Stark explained that the Committee had not moved the proposed ordinance to the full Board of Commissioners for further consideration.

Commissioner Jess questioned why the revised ordinance was presented to the Internal Government Committee instead of the full Board, when it had already gone before the full Board a year ago. Discussion took place regarding the process that was followed.

Commission members considered how best to proceed from here.

MOTION by M. Bakker to have Staff go back to the County Commissioners and ask for their approval to pursue taking the proposed ordinance to the townships. P. Grassmick seconded the motion. A lengthy discussion followed, with Commission members deciding this was not the best way to proceed. Voice vote on the motion: all opposed. Motion failed.

Discussion continued regarding the Planning Commission's next steps.

MOTION by N. Ferguson to table further discussion of this agenda item until the next meeting. D. Wheeler seconded the motion. Voice vote: all in favor. Motion passed.

County Parks & Recreation Plan Update

K. Stark explained the County Parks & Recreation Plan needs to be updated. She would like to form a committee made up of two planning commission members, two parks committee members, herself, and the Parks Manager to work on this project. K. Stark explained she is currently drafting a Request for Proposals for Outside Planning Assistance to update the plan. Ultimately, we will receive proposals from various planning firms and the committee will review the proposals, interview the firms, and then make a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners. N. Ferguson volunteered to be on the committee. K. Stark encouraged everyone to give this some consideration, and we can discuss it more at the next meeting. She asked if everyone has a copy of the Parks & Recreation Plan as well as the Future Land Use Plan. She will provide printed copies of both plans for all members. At our next meeting, she was planning to review the proposed Request for Proposals and discuss the scope of work for updating the Parks & Recreation Plan. She noted that after the Parks & Recreation Plan is updated, the Future Land Use Plan will need to be updated.

VI. Townships, Cities, MI Dept of EGLE & Corps of Engineers Items

St. James Township Proposed Conditional Rezone (Adrian-Rogers)

N. Ferguson explained that the Planning Commission previously reviewed a proposed (traditional) rezoning of this property from Single Family Residential (R-1) to Harbor (H). She said that Staff had provided a copy of the record of our previous review, during which K. Stark had suggested the option of a conditional rezoning, for consideration by the Township. Subsequently, the applicant/landowner submitted an application for a conditional rezoning, which is now before the Planning Commission for review.

K. Stark reviewed the request by Rene S. Adrian-Rogers to conditionally rezone a 2.38-acre parcel located at 25460 Lake Dr. in St. James Township from Single Family Residential (R-1) to Harbor (H). The condition offered by the applicant is to limit the commercial uses allowed on this parcel to an art gallery business only. K. Stark gave an overview of the history and what is currently proposed.

K. Stark reviewed the Planning Department Staff Report on the conditional rezoning request. She had no concerns with the conditional rezoning request. Given that the adjacent parcel to the west is zoned Harbor (H), the requested conditional rezoning of the Adrian-Rogers property would be a logical transition from the Harbor district to the Single-Family Residential district, given that commercial uses on the subject parcel would be limited to an art gallery business only. K. Stark also recommended that if the Township approves the conditional rezoning request, their motion should be worded to clearly convey the land uses the Township intends to allow on the property. This is to avoid inadvertently creating non-conformities out of the existing uses on the property.

K. Stark said another option, instead of conditionally rezoning the property, would be a text amendment to the zoning ordinance to allow home-based businesses, *including the sale of goods*, as a permitted use in the Harbor (H) district, given the stated purpose of the Harbor district and the fact that it already allows many commercial uses, including retail businesses. Understandably, a text amendment such as this would open up the entire Harbor district to allow home-based businesses, including the sale of goods, which could potentially change the character of the Harbor district (more commercial and less residential). The Township may have already considered this possibility and ruled it out, but if not, it is worth considering. If the Township wishes to explore this further, it would be beneficial to work with a Planner.

As a side note, looking at the site plan of the property, K. Stark questioned if the Quack Shack (duck pen) would be considered an accessory structure under the zoning ordinance. If so, it appears there are three (3) accessory buildings/structures on the property. The zoning ordinance only allows two (2) detached accessory buildings, not only in the Harbor district, but also in the R-1 district, as the property is currently zoned. K. Stark questioned if this issue has been addressed by the Township. If it hasn't already been addressed, she asked, would it be an option to move the Quack Shack and attach it to the outside of the pole barn? This would bring the property into compliance as far as accessory buildings are concerned (whether or not the property is rezoned). It might work better, too, if they're having more people coming to their property to go to the gallery; they may not want the duck pen in the middle of that activity. Moving the duck pen over to the pole barn would also get it further away from the art gallery.

MOTION by P. Grassmick to send the Planning Department Staff Report to St. James Township for their consideration. M. Cunningham seconded the motion. Discussion: A. McGlashen said a text amendment to the Harbor district to allow home-based businesses, including the sale of goods, would still require a rezoning of the Adrian-Rogers property to the Harbor district, not the R-1 district, correct? K. Stark said yes, that's correct. P. Grassmick said there is very little R-1 zoning in the Township; it's mostly Harbor district. A. McGlashen said the Adrian-Rogers parcel is currently zoned R-1, correct? K. Stark said yes, acknowledging that a text amendment to the Harbor district would not help in the case of the Adrian-Rogers property, unless it is rezoned to Harbor. P. Grassmick emphasized that this would be a decision for the Township. K. Stark agreed. A. McGlashen added the proposed rezoning has come before the County Planning Commission once already and the landowners probably want to get started selling goods soon. P. Grassmick said not until summer. K. Stark said the County Planning Commission had suggested the option of a text amendment to the R-1 district when we reviewed the proposed rezoning last year; the Township may have considered this option already and ruled it out. Voice vote on the motion: all in favor. Motion passed.

St. James Township Proposed Zoning Text Amendments

K. Stark reviewed the Planning Department Staff Report on the proposed text amendments to the St. James Township Zoning Ordinance concerning the floor area requirements in the "R-2" Single Family Residential District. She explained the proposed text amendments would have the following effect:

- Reduce the minimum floor area requirement for principal dwellings from 600 square feet to 400 square feet, except for principal dwellings on parcels with frontage on Lake Michigan, Font Lake, or the Critical Dune Overlay District
- Remove the exclusions from the minimum floor area requirement for principal dwellings, so porches, garages, basements, and utility areas could be counted as part of the floor area for the purpose of determining whether the minimum floor area requirement has been met; this would have the effect of further reducing the minimum required size of principal dwellings; (*Side note:* Traditionally, it has been standard practice for communities to exclude porches, garages, basements and utility areas from the minimum floor area requirement because these areas are not considered part of habitable living space)
- Remove the same exclusions from the minimum floor area requirement for accessory dwellings, so porches, garages, basements, and utility areas can be counted as part of the floor

area for the purpose of determining whether the minimum floor area requirement has been met; this would have the effect of reducing the minimum required size of accessory dwellings

- Remove the maximum floor area allowed for accessory dwellings because this is already stated in Section 6.01, subsection b) Use Regulations, subsection 2).

K. Stark had no concerns with the proposed amendments. She noted that Township officials have had extensive discussion about housing needs on the Island. The Township Planning Commission has been working with the Charlevoix County Housing Ready Program Coordinator to develop the proposed amendments, which will allow for smaller homes, to help meet housing needs on the Island.

P. Grassmick asked if proposed zoning ordinance amendments need to be published. K. Stark said yes, they need to be published in a local newspaper. K. Stark confirmed the public hearing notice for these amendments was published in a local newspaper.

A. McGlashen said she agrees in principle with the proposed amendments to allow smaller homes, based on personal experience.

MOTION by P. Grassmick to send the Planning Department Staff Report to St. James Township for their consideration. M. Ritter seconded the motion. Voice vote: all in favor. Motion passed.

Norwood Township Proposed Rezone (Wagner)

Commission members and Staff reviewed the request by Craig and Billie Wagner to rezone two (2) adjacent parcels from Agricultural (A) to Low Density Residential (R-1). One parcel, having property tax identification #15-011-135-010-10, is located at 955 Norwood Road and is approximately 20.3 acres in size. The other parcel, having property tax identification #15-011-126-008-15, is also located on Norwood Road (no address assigned) and is approximately 0.7 acre in size.

K. Stark explained that, in 2020, the property owners requested a rezoning of the larger subject parcel from Low Density Residential (R-1) to Agricultural (A) because they wanted to farm the land. The County Planning Commission reviewed the request in 2021 and recommended denial because a rezoning to Agricultural was not consistent with the Township Master Plan, which designated this parcel as “Village Proper”. However, the County Planning Commission also noted that the Township Master Plan was due for an update and if the future land use map were to be revised, it would be appropriate for the Township to reconsider a rezoning to Agricultural in the future. The Township Board subsequently approved the rezoning to Agricultural (A).

K. Stark reviewed the Planning Department Staff Report on the currently proposed rezoning of the two (2) parcels from Agricultural to Low Density Residential. She reviewed a comparison of land uses allowed in the two (2) zoning districts, noting that a rezoning to R-1 would eliminate many of the uses currently allowed. She also reviewed a comparison of dimensional requirements in each zoning district, noting that the lower minimum lot area required in the R-1 district is why the landowners are seeking this rezoning, as they would like to subdivide the large parcel into six (6) lots.

M. Bakker asked if the Norwood Township Zoning Ordinance specifies a maximum number of lot splits in the R-1 district. He said, for example, Marion Township has different land development options in their Agricultural district; the option selected determines the number of lot splits that can occur. He asked if Norwood Township has something similar in their R-1 district. K. Stark said she

did not think so, but noted that planned unit developments are allowed in both the Agricultural and R-1 districts. So that option would be available, but the rezoning would not affect that. N. Ferguson said Eveline Township may also have land development options in their zoning ordinance, similar to Marion Township, which limit the number of lot splits. LuAnne Kozma, seated in the audience, noted that lot splits are regulated by state statute. K. Stark agreed, acknowledging it's ultimately the Land Division Act that governs lot splits.

A. McGlashen asked if it is also within the purview of the Planning Commission to review rezoning requests from an ecological perspective. She pointed out the existing natural features on the property and noted that if it is rezoned, there will likely be homes developed on the property. She said, typically, development is encouraged to be more clustered, so farmland and open space can be preserved. The proposed rezoning seems contrary to the goal of clustering development in order to preserve farmland and open space. K. Stark noted the subject parcels are actually within the area designated as "Village Proper" on the future land use map in the Township Master Plan. A. McGlashen acknowledged, in that case, a rezoning to R-1 would be appropriate.

N. Ferguson asked if a soil delineation map was included in the packet. She said several of the soil types on the properties have severe limitations for septic waste disposal systems and she did not think there is a municipal sewer system in that area. She asked if this is being addressed. M. Bakker asked, wouldn't that fall under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) or the Health Department? P. Grassmick and K. Stark said the Township could also have jurisdiction.

M. Bakker noted that even though the landowner stated they would currently like to split the large parcel into 6 lots, they may not be limited to 6 lots; more splits may be allowed. This is also not a conditional rezoning limiting the number of lot splits. So, if they rezone these parcels back to R-1, which only requires a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet, there could possibly be many more lots created there, along with a road. He noted it's important for the Township to be aware of this. N. Ferguson agreed. M. Bakker said he wasn't opposed to rezoning it back to R-1 because the Township never changed their future land use map, so, by rights, it should go back to R-1. It's just that under R-1 zoning, they could potentially have more dense residential development. D. Wheeler made reference to the Sunset Ridge development across the road.

P. Grassmick stated the Norwood Township Planning Commission did their due diligence in reviewing this rezoning request.

MOTION by P. Grassmick to send the Planning Department Staff Report to Norwood Township for their consideration, noting the Planning Commission supports the proposed rezoning of these two parcels back to Low-Density Residential (R-1), but the Township needs to be aware that, under R-1 zoning, there is a potential for more than six (6) lots to be created. D. Wheeler seconded the motion. Voice vote: all in favor. Motion passed.

EGLE Public Notice (Sorber)

M. Cunningham recused himself from the discussion and voting on this agenda item due to a conflict of interest.

M. Bakker disclosed that he had done business in the past with the property owner's agent (permit applicant). He stated he would recuse himself if the Planning Commission thought this would be a

conflict of interest. Brief discussion took place. M. Bakker confirmed that his business with the property owner's agent (permit applicant) was not related to this project. Because his business with the permit applicant was not related to this project, Commission members did not think it was necessary for M. Bakker to recuse himself.

K. Stark introduced the public notice for the permit application submitted to the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy by Brigham Sorber to install a permanent, open-pile dock measuring 200 feet long by 6 feet wide with two finger piers, one measuring 24 feet long by 6 feet wide and the other 40 feet long by 6 feet wide, to install a permanent boat hoist measuring 16 feet wide by 16 feet long, and to dredge 363 cubic yards from two areas. Additional maintenance dredging of up to 137 cubic yards within the same areas for a total maximum of 500 cubic yards of material removed per the life of the permit at his property on Lake Charlevoix in Eveline Township.

N. Ferguson asked for public comments on the proposed project.

LuAnne Kozma (seated in the audience) introduced herself and her husband, Ellis Boal (seated next to her), saying they live in Hayes Township. She is a member of "Protect Lake Charlevoix Shoreland", a nonprofit organization formed a few years ago. She encouraged the Planning Commission to continue reviewing and commenting on these EGLE public notices. She commented that she is taking the Citizen Planner course. She recently attended a session on recusals and conflict of interest and learned that when there is a conflict of interest disclosed, the person recusing himself/herself should leave the room. She said she felt a little intimidated commenting on this project with M. Cunningham present in the room (seated in the audience). She proceeded to comment on the project. Ms. Kozma stated the reason they requested a public hearing is because they wanted to open this up for more public comment. They were surprised that no one from Eveline Township had submitted comments to EGLE on this project. N. Ferguson noted that Eveline Township receives the notices from EGLE. Ms. Kozma said their organization also receives the notices.

Ms. Kozma said the reason why they're opposed to permanent docks in Lake Charlevoix, especially in residential areas, is that it's really loading up the lake with a permanent presence year-round. She understands the need for facilities like this in towns, such as the City of Charlevoix, East Jordan, and Boyne City, but it's really problematic. She referred to the Lake Charlevoix Management Plan (developed by the County Planning Commission in the mid-1980's), which points out that development of the shore is the biggest threat to lake quality. She emphasized the more we allow the shore to be developed with unnatural structures, like permanent docks, the more our lake suffers. She added that, with permanent docks, bubblers are typically used in the winter, which interrupts the lake's freeze-over.

Ms. Kozma noted she had spoken with a scientist who said that permanent structures on a lake encourage invasive species, like quagga mussels, to accumulate year-round rather than just during the summer (as with temporary docks). She noted that this application asserts that a permanent dock is better than a seasonal dock because there's not as much disturbance of the lake bottom due to not needing to put in and take out the dock every year. However, no scientific basis or any data is given to support that assertion. She commented that we don't want invasive species to proliferate in the lake.

Ms. Kozma added that permanent docks also encourage bigger boats that lead to more and more pollution in the lake. And she also doesn't want to view permanent structures on the lake.

Ms. Kozma noted there is no riparian right to dredge for a swimming area. There's also no riparian right to dredge to provide wharfage or for navigation.

Ms. Kozma said she and her husband own three (3) parcels on Lake Charlevoix that are probably the most natural parcels on the lake. She emphasized there is a public benefit to everyone enjoying the lake, to be able to see wooded areas which are undeveloped. She emphasized that EGLE is encouraging natural shorelines, which is really going to help the lake. She hoped the Planning Commission would help improve the lake and not support more development on the lake.

Ellis Boal, seated in the audience, described a book, with EGLE as one of the contributors, which speaks of something called the "Ribbon of Life", which is the shoreline around a lake. It's where spawning and other generative activities of fish and other aquatic species occur. The shoreline is particularly important compared to deeper areas of the lake, so it's important to protect the shoreline.

Ms. Kozma said the book is called "Protecting Michigan's Inland Lakes and Streams". It's a toolkit for local governments. K. Stark said a copy of this book is at the Planning Department office.

N. Ferguson thanked the audience members for their comments.

Referring to page 5 of the application in the public notice, N. Ferguson asked if the property owner is already using their lakefront area for swimming.

A. McGlashen said, in the correction request for the alternatives analysis, the applicant states that the owner and his family have used it for various recreational activities, such as swimming, day sailing, and teaching their grandchildren to kayak, etc.

A. McGlashen added that, having commented on many permit applications like this in the past, it is common for lakefront owners to already be using it for swimming purposes but want to "improve it" or make it more desirable rather than not use it.

P. Grassmick asked if the application states the length of their current seasonal dock. No one could find this information in the application.

N. Ferguson asked if they're proposing a longer dock than what they have currently.

M. Bakker asked if the Eveline Township Zoning Ordinance specifies how far out from the shoreline a dock can extend. P. Grassmick asked, isn't it based on the riparian rights/area? K. Stark agreed. She didn't think a specific length of dock is specified because it depends on the draft of the boat and the water level of the lake.

N. Ferguson noted that, according to the application, the owner has a temporary dock, but in the past, the dock and their boat were damaged by wave action.

M. Bakker asked, what is the Planning Commission's focus when reviewing these applications? Do we focus on potential zoning issues or ecological impact? K. Stark said primarily ecological, but zoning issues also come up occasionally.

N. Ferguson noted that some zoning ordinances have limits on the number of docks or boats you can have on each lakefront parcel. Otherwise, if there are too many, it can become like a marina.

M. Ritter asked if the proposed project is inconsistent with what we've reviewed in the past when we sent no comment to EGLE. He could not see any differences between this proposed project and other projects we've reviewed in the past when we had no comment. He emphasized that if previous applicants have been given the opportunity to do the same, it's very difficult without good rationale to make a change.

N. Ferguson asked how the length of the proposed dock compares to other docks in the area. Commission members considered the length of the proposed dock.

P. Grassmick expressed concern that the proposed dock would be crowding the riparian line. Commission members considered the distance between the proposed dock and the riparian line, and docking a boat.

M. Bakker asked, in reviewing the proposed project, he would look at the potential impact on the riparian rights of the neighbors. He would also consider whether the proposed dredge area would have any effect on the neighboring property and how close the proposed dredge area is to the riparian line.

M. Bakker thought the potential ecological impacts of a proposed project should be up to EGLE to evaluate because they are the environmental experts. He thought the Planning Commission's review should focus more on the potential impact on neighboring riparian areas. He asked if the Township Zoning Ordinance has setback requirements from the riparian lines. K. Stark said she did not recall seeing any zoning ordinances in the county that specify setback requirements from riparian lines.

A. McGlashen made the following points: 1) Dredging has adverse impacts, 2) If extensive work is done, there should be compensatory activities, 3) It's not necessary to have an open pile dock at this location, and 4) The cumulative effect of the proposed project is adverse.

P. Grassmick acknowledged that the applicant wants the dock closer to one side so they can see their kids swimming. It looks a little tight, but on the other hand, we didn't hear any concerns from the neighbors. Commission members gave further consideration to the proposed location of the dock in relation to the riparian line. M. Bakker said he couldn't see where the applicant's boat would not be able to utilize the dock in the proposed location and remain in their riparian area.

LuAnne Kozma was interested in hearing the Planning Commission's views on the proliferation of permanent docks in the residential areas around Lake Charlevoix. She asked what the Planning Commission's vision is for how Lake Charlevoix should look in the future.

P. Grassmick said the townships have zoning authority; the County Planning Commission is advisory only.

A. McGlashen said developing a vision for Lake Charlevoix does fall within our purview and consideration of cumulative ecological impact also falls within this body's realm. M. Ritter noted that developing a vision for Lake Charlevoix would be done as a group. A. McGlashen agreed. K. Stark said, yes, it could be part of the land use plan.

Ellis Boal said the owner could buy a bigger boat in the future. M. Bakker noted that is a valid point and that should be controlled through zoning. Discussion took place regarding who would enforce riparian rights.

N. Ferguson reiterated concern regarding the proposed length of the dock in comparison to docks in the surrounding area. M. Bakker questioned if it should be a concern of the Planning Commission if the proposed dock is longer than other docks in the surrounding area. Further discussion took place regarding the length of the proposed dock.

Commission members also discussed the proposed dredging, with M. Ritter noting that if the dock does not extend far enough into the lake to the necessary depth to accommodate the owner's boat, then dredging is needed.

M. Ritter favored making no comment on this application because this project is not inconsistent with other projects that have been permitted by EGLE.

D. Wheeler stated that he is not opposed to the proposed project.

M. Bakker reiterated that he thought the Planning Commission's emphasis in reviewing these EGLE permit applications should be from a planning or zoning perspective.

M. Ritter said another consideration when reviewing these proposed projects is, are they doing the right thing as far as the shoreline is concerned?

N. Ferguson said the point was made that there was no scientific basis given in the application that permanent docks are better than temporary docks. She questioned if there is scientific evidence that temporary docks are better than permanent docks. A. McGlashen and LuAnne Kozma shared information they had learned from environmental experts.

Given the varying opinions and studies on the subject, M. Bakker favored M. Ritter's suggestion that the Planning Commission make no comment.

P. Grassmick acknowledged that the Planning Commission has not objected to other proposed docks of a similar length, and unless there's a moratorium from the State to stop the construction of docks on the lake, the Planning Commission really doesn't have that kind of authority. She again noted that the Planning Commission is advisory.

A. McGlashen strongly disagreed with the premise that just because the Planning Commission is advisory, we shouldn't have an opinion or that we cannot come to a scientifically-driven conclusion on a topic and express that opinion independent of its influence on zoning or on consensus.

M. Ritter emphasized that the Planning Commission needs to be very careful about where we stand, or where we set our lines when it comes to scientific fact. He agreed with M. Bakker that all of the comments are valid because we do want to protect the environment that we're going to hand off to our children and grandchildren. However, he cautioned that it's very dangerous to then set a line when we have experts in the field like EGLE to evaluate these projects.

MOTION by P. Grassmick to let EGLE know that the Planning Commission has reviewed the proposed project and that we send our comments for their consideration. A. McGlashen seconded the motion. Voice vote on the motion: all in favor. Motion passed.

M. Cunningham returned to his seat on the Planning Commission.

VII. Comments/Reports

Planning Director

K. Stark gave an update on Planning Department activities over the past month:

- Phases 4 and 5 of the Trail
 - The County received proposals from four (4) firms for engineering design, grant work, and construction engineering to complete the trail
 - Proposals are under review
 - Firms will be interviewed and a selection made
- (Solid Waste) Materials Management Planning

At next week's Board of Commissioners meeting, the Board will be appointing members to the new Materials Management Planning Committee, which will get started in March by reviewing and approving a proposed work program for the development of a new County Materials Management Plan

County Commissioner Liaison

Commissioner Jess reported that he attended an Area Agency on Aging of Northern Michigan meeting in Traverse City today. He also attended a Northern Lakes Economic Alliance (NLEA) meeting recently. He emphasized that Charlevoix needs more space for industrial/manufacturing businesses. Charlevoix just lost a manufacturing business that needed more space to expand. They couldn't find it here in Charlevoix County, so they took 43 year-round jobs and millions of dollars of expansion with them to Emmet County.

Planning Commission Members

D. Wheeler commented that it's a normal winter in northern Michigan. Referring to the Planning Commission Membership List handed out earlier in the meeting, he said the geographic area he represents is Wilson Township. N. Ferguson said Staff would make this correction and provide the corrected list to all members.

M. Bakker commented that all of the snow is good for businesses, especially across the Upper Peninsula. He was recently in the Upper Peninsula and said it was good to see businesses thriving again. N. Ferguson said the snow is good for businesses here, too.

M. Cunningham reported that Lakes Michigan/Huron and Lake Superior are down 3 inches. Lakes Michigan/Huron are at 577.89 feet and predicted to fall by 1 inch over the next month. Lake Superior is at 600.89 feet and predicted to fall by 2 inches over the next month. He had also found an interesting graphic online, published by the National Weather Service, showing the ice forecast (coverage) on the Great Lakes.

M. Ritter said he had no training workshops to report, but in schools they are already past mid-year, which is unbelievable. He has been holding meetings with staff again this year, which has been enjoyable because he has not been able to meet individually with everyone across the district for a number of years. Charlevoix Schools will likely be hiring seven to eight teachers due to retirements, and they're considering possibly increasing some of their staffing to provide more opportunities. The elementary school principal just retired, which will be some big shoes to fill. It's a busy time in both

school buildings. A parent night was held last night at the elementary school, which was a huge success. It's the first time in many years that they've held the event. He also reported that budget amendments are right around the corner. The final activities of Winterfest will be held this weekend with a basketball game on Friday night and a dance on Saturday at the Middle/High School. He added that all of the other schools in our county are really busy at this time of year as well.

A. McGlashen had nothing new to report.

P. Grassmick reported that HGTV (Home & Garden Television) is planning to begin working on the south end lighthouse on Beaver Island in May. She also reported they're still working on a Short Term Rental Ordinance for the Island. They also have an invasive species ordinance that will be rolled out soon, which will require people who have either Phragmites or Japanese knotweed on their land to disclose this to prospective home buyers. P. Grassmick also reported that the Charlevoix County Community Foundation is helping with housing surveys. Last year, the Community Foundation distributed ~~\$44~~ \$5 million to various communities in Charlevoix County, which is incredible. In addition to their scholarships, the Community Foundation provides funding for vocational education. They're also working with Michigan Works to place people in jobs. They've assisted individuals with purchasing equipment or tools for employment as well. She emphasized that the Community Foundation is a good group, and communities and schools should be taking advantage of the funding opportunities they offer.

N. Ferguson said she didn't have much to report other than she had confirmed with MSU Extension that she had earned all of the continuing education credits she needed last year to maintain her Master Citizen Planner certification. So now, she will start earning credits for this year. She emphasized there are lots of programs offered each year which provide continuing education credits. She noted that Master Citizen Planners need to earn 6 credits per year and those who are not Master Citizen Planners need to earn 3 credits per year per county policy.

N. Ferguson also thanked LuAnne Kozma and Ellis Boal for attending the meeting and providing their comments on the EGLE public notice.

VIII. Any Unfinished County Business

None

IX. Adjournment

MOTION by M. Ritter to adjourn the meeting. M. Cunningham seconded the motion. Voice vote: all in favor. Motion passed.

Chairperson Ferguson adjourned the meeting at 9:36 p.m.

Minutes submitted by,

Pam Grassmick
Secretary

PG/kjs