

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mason County Zoning Ordinance Amendment Committee
FROM: Lynée Wells, AICP
DATE: June 22, 2009
RE: Town Hall Meeting

The County facilitated a Town Hall Meeting on June 16, 2009 to gather citizen input on the zoning ordinance update. The meeting was conducted during a two-and-a-half hour evening session at the Mason County Optimist Club facility. Approximately 75 residents attended the event, which included the following activities:

- **Welcome and Overview.** Williams & Works provided a brief introduction to the ordinance amendment process and an overview explanation of how the results of the town hall meeting will be incorporated into the ordinance. The presentation also included a brief discussion on some known ordinance issues.
- **Visual Preference Survey.** In this activity, a series of slides were shown representing land use conditions common in rural West Michigan communities. Participants used a prepared sheet of paper to note their impressions of the scenes. Williams & Works led a general discussion of the images and the land use issues they may illustrate. The primary purpose of this activity was to help participants begin to think about the multiple dimensions of land use, design, infrastructure and growth as a precursor for the roundtable discussions.
- **Roundtable Discussions.** The roundtable discussions involved participants breaking out into five groups to answer a series of questions pertaining to the various issues the ordinance amendments should address. The questions were written prior to the meeting; and were centered on several issues identified by the County. These discussions comprised the bulk of the citizen input activity.
- **Public Comments.** The final element of the meeting was the opportunity for residents to informally approach the podium and share any opinions or ideas relative to zoning in the County. This activity was encouraged in case any participants had ideas that were not adequately addressed during earlier activities.

The purpose of this memorandum is to review the results from the Town Hall Meeting. A more detailed listing of comments follows the Executive Summary of Input below.

Executive Summary of Input

The executive summary selects several issues where there appeared to be considerable discussion or consensus. The following text is our own phrasing and is not meant to be all-inclusive of every comment heard at the meeting. However, these concepts appeared to be some of the most important thoughts generated during the discussion.

1. Many participants felt that the US-10 corridor should incorporate sidewalks or pedestrian paths into development and redevelopment, although some felt these facilities should not be directly adjacent to the road. Participants felt that County zoning can work to ensure pedestrian safety by planning the sidewalks to not conflict with automobiles. Participants also felt that any new pedestrian facilities should not reduce snow storage capacity currently provided in the wide shoulder along the road.
2. Agricultural land and activities are valued and help to define the County's character, but some participants do not favor excessive regulations that inhibit the right to develop.
3. The current sliding-scale approach relative to accessory buildings is appropriate, but some participants felt that the ratio should be increased to allow larger buildings on larger parcels. In other words, the existing standards may be a little too restrictive. In addition, some believed that the County should require a deed restriction to prohibit future splits where such splits would establish nonconformities. Others feel that accessory buildings should be located in the front yard, provided the building is at least 200 feet from the right-of-way.
4. Some level of access management is needed along US-10 to help eliminate turning conflicts, according to some participants.
5. Bicycle and walking paths were discussed to create a linkage between tourist destinations and between certain towns and settlements.
6. Many participants agreed that zoning can require a levelheaded degree of tree preservation.
7. Some participants opined that yard barns are beneficial because they help keep storage materials enclosed and out of view. Regulations should not be onerous. Some people indicated that a 10-foot setback from lot lines was sufficient; but opinions varied.
8. There appeared to be a general consensus among the plurality that more landscaping was needed on certain properties along US-10, although it was also expressed that excessive landscaping standards can hurt business owners.
9. Input on signage requirements was somewhat mixed, but the County can review current standards in an effort to incorporate many of the comments received. Most concerns related to impeding motorist visibility; ugly or cluttered sign structures; and ability to find an establishment.

Visual Preference Survey

Following is a nominal computation of participant responses, and a listing of open discussion comments during the survey and a listing of write-in comments. Please note that in some cases, participants selected more than one answer or may not have answered at all.

1. Sidewalks in commercial areas.



Which phrase/word best applies?

20 A necessity for safety/convenience

6 A bonus, but not needed

2 People don't belong near busy roads

Discussion Comments:

- Need to consider different standards for different commercial areas
- Keep the need of bicyclists in mind
- Don't forget vacationers and some people walk or bike to work
- 2 types of sidewalk, those along the roads and those internal to developments
- Sidewalks along US-10 are useless in winter
- Slower speeds on US-10 would aid safety

Write-In Comments:

- As long as they are well set back from roads
- Bike paths
- Safety - up to businesses involved to decide
- Nice where there are lots of stores
- Waste of money
- Bike paths
- An advantage for safety
- Bike paths
- City can pay

2. Commercial strip mall.



Which phrase/word best applies?

18 Offers services and provides tax base

12 Better design standards are needed

3 Not inviting; no place for people

Discussion Comments:

- This lacks open space

Write-In Comments:

- We have enough already please keep our area rural
- I hate these - aesthetically + sprawl-wise. Needs better landscaping & less abrasive lighting
- Depends on community & need
- Don't have too many

3. **Low-density subdivision on former agricultural land.**



Which phrase/word best applies?

- 5 Nice middle-class housing
- 9 Rural living - what we're about
- 18 Inefficient use of land

Discussion Comments:

- If this borders AG, it brings in non-farm people into farm area who will object to farming activities
- It is costly to bring water and sewer to these low density areas like this
- If utilities are brought in, bring them all in at once
- This doesn't have to be a subdivision, it could just be individual splits

Write-In Comments:

- My idea of low-density is density less than this
- Let them put in own well and septic
- Need to preserve ag. land - no development
- Ugly w/out landscaping
- Smaller lots divided having a larger common open space
- Cost to community would increase
- Someone's dream

4. **Agricultural land/open space.**



Which phrase/word best applies?

- 7 Keep people and development away
- 23 Preserve and protect it
- 2 Good development potential

Discussion Comments:

- None

Write-In Comments:

- We must find a compromise
- Landowner needs to decide
- Allow owners to decide usage
- Let land owners decide
- Let land owners decide

5. **Numerous accessory buildings.**



Which phrase/word best applies?

- 14 Looks great, better to have items enclosed in a building
- 9 Only okay on agricultural or large lot properties
- 12 Too cluttered

Discussion Comments:

- Its hard to establish a specific limit on the size or number of buildings when each situation is different

Write-In Comments:

- Needed w/ mobile homes
- Let land owners decide
- Looks junky
- Too many regulations
- OK
- Owner's choice

6. **Commercial signage.**



Which phrase/word best applies?

- 21 Too big, tall and ugly
- 2 The American way
- 13 Good for identification of businesses

Discussion Comments:

- You don't need to be able to see a sign from a mile away
- Recognize that we have a different opinions about signs locally than when we are new to an area and need direction
- Tall signs are OK, they are up out of the way and don't interfere with traffic
- Low level signs can create glare and interfere with driver vision

- The image is deceptive as the signs are tall because a freeway is nearby
- Mason Co. is very “tight” on sign regulations.

Write-In Comments:

- Need smaller signs
- Needs neater landscaping & less obstructive lighting
- All should have shorter, smaller signs
- Standardize
- Monument signs are better

7. **Wooded housing development.**



Which phrase/word best applies?

- 12 Site planning should always protect trees
- 27 Trees are an aesthetic enhancement
- 1 Trees get in the way of development

Discussion Comments:

- Trees look better. Why get rid of existing trees only to plant new ones?
- Shade is good, but we can't quit building just to save a tree. You can get the same effect with building placement.
- This issue needs common sense.

Write-In Comments:

- We need trees for wind protection - heating/cooling aspect of housing

8. **Multiple-family housing.**



Which phrase/word best applies?

- 22 We need options like this
- 1 Should be limited to senior housing
- 6 Does not belong here

Discussion Comments:

- We do need more senior housing to keep seniors in the area, but protected from noise of families.
- Two-story housing can be difficult for seniors.

Write-In Comments:

- In more densely-populated areas

- Where appropriate – in town
- Not in rural settings
- Let supply/demand control amount
- Proportional to population
- Should not be 2-story

9. **Large accessory building.**



Which phrase/word best applies?

- 1 The bigger, the better
- 13 Ok, if agricultural use
- 21 Depends on the size of the property

Discussion Comments:

- I'd rather see big buildings than my neighbors
- It is better to enclose the junk

Write-In Comments:

- Location is necessary
- Depends on usage in the area
- We have to support business
- Some locations
- Should be allowed w/o destruction
- OK if conforms to forestry, too
- Don't divide property after building
- Owners of property should have choice
- Landowner's choice

10. **Traditional neighborhood.**



Which phrase/word best applies?

- 17 Small lots are good for young people and seniors
- 5 Great for vacation rentals
- 6 Too urban for our County

Discussion Comments:

- Need to define "small" lots
- This could be OK with common open space area

Write-In Comments:

- Infrastructure should be in place where people live
- Fine for all

- OK if grouped together
- In town
- Too urban for me, but others may like it
- New made to look old. Looks better than previous subdivision, good for a mixed commercial area
- Good use of land - other open spaces
- Need people in these homes

11. **Farm worker housing.**



Which phrase/word best applies?

- 9 Located too close to adjacent property
- 4 Located too close to main building
- 18 Let farmers put it where they want

Discussion Comments:

- Don't put it next to the property line
- Why treat farm worker housing any different from other higher density housing?

Write-In Comments:

- Should be compliant with other regulations
- Do a reverse set back and require them to be x amount of feet from the main homestead
- Set back 200'+ adjacent properties
- Need size restrictions
- Setback, density
- Often substandard & a disgrace
- If year round, they should follow rental guidelines

Roundtable Discussions

Each of the five roundtable discussion groups was facilitated by a Williams & Works staff person, who took notes on participant responses to the questions. Below is a summary of comments from each group.

TOPIC ONE: US-10 Corridor

- a. What one improvement along US-10 would make a trip from Scottville to Ludington more enjoyable if traveling in a car? Does your answer change if you have to stop and make a purchase somewhere along the way?

Group 1

- Extend access limitations like at Staples and Applebees which share a driveway.
- Consider alternate internal circulation routes, along the rear of the uses. Possibly improve 1st Street.
- Currently parts are very dangerous due to speeds and turning movements – especially left-turns.
- Need traffic measures to limit entering left turns to routes with traffic signals.
- Pedestrians and bicyclists on US-10 are unlikely. The exception may be in the vicinity of Quarterline Road, where there is more residential and the school. Also, to the west in Pere Marquette Township where fast food establishments are.
- The area at Quarterline Road and to the south is zoned commercial but it is residential in use and the lots are only 100-feet wide, so commercial uses are not likely.
- We need to create some breaks in the commercial uses and look at other categories of commercial, like office or services and zone for those uses along the route.
- Keep the big boxes where they are.
- We need to do a parcel-by-parcel existing use inventory along the strip and begin to form two or three zoning districts around existing patterns where possible.
- A long time ago, industrial was expected south of US-31 near the RR tracks. This probably is not viable anymore.

Group 2

- Traffic lights need to be more in sync to improve traffic flow
- Traffic gets all backed up sometimes due to slow drivers in the left lane
- Many people use the road purely to get somewhere and are not interested in shopping
- A light is needed near Meijer/Home Depot
- Master Plan called for some driveways near intersections to be closed – this needs to start happening now.
- In some places, the option to turn left on to 10 needs to be eliminated because its too dangerous.

Group 3

- Reduce the number of lights
- Install a round-a-bout
- Require cross access drives for commercial buildings, reduce the number of driveways.
- Move driveway at Meijer and Home Depot so people cannot drive across

Group 4

- Sidewalks and/or a bicycle trail are needed.
- But we need a place to store snow, so keep the shoulder as it is. The current configuration allows the wide shoulder to be used by pedestrians and provides snow storage in the winter when there aren't pedestrians.
- The shoulder is large enough for pedestrian use.
- Bicyclists use the existing shoulder.
- Who will pay for sidewalks? Do not make the businesses pay; all taxpayers should pay.
- But people walk in the road and it is not safe.
- We should include design stipulations for future sidewalks and they should be encouraged, not required via zoning.
- Sidewalks will help save Scottville businesses by linking that small town to Ludington.

Group 5

- Another access road to the south, similar to the one that serves Wal-Mart and Lowe's would be helpful. The road would be from Brye Road east to Stiles Road.
 - We are concerned about all the abandoned buildings. We need a way to reuse or tear them down.
- b. What areas of US-10 between Scottville and Ludington need special attention? Please describe the location and nature of the problem. Think in terms of the positive impact zoning can have on "problem" or "eyesore" areas.

Group 1

- See above.

Group 2

- Lighting on businesses is way too bright, especially the movie theater.

Group 3

- Meijer intersection
- Need to follow Comp Plan
- Group shopping opportunities

- Left turn light needed at bypass, sometimes it is impossible to make left turn
- Problem with people driving too fast
- Too many deer/car accidents

Group 4

- Access management:
 - The Meijer and Wal-Mart area experiences many accidents.
 - We need a right-turn only set-up.
 - Parking lot connections and access roads should be required.
- The current landscaping standards are adequate; they do not need to be strengthened.
- The landscaping near Starbucks (and other new businesses) looks nice; requirements are stringent enough.
- Landscaping requirements, if too strict, will keep businesses out.

Group 5

- There needs to be a way for tourists to get from Ludington to the commercial corridor in Amber Township. A bike and walking path is necessary.
 - Commercial zoning should be from the interchange to Stiles Road. Stiles Road east should be residential and sidewalks should be in place to Dennis Road. The driveway ramps intersecting the sidewalks should be changes to ease the transitions.
 - Maintenance standards should be upheld for abandoned buildings.
 - The parks and recreation plans needs to think long terms about connecting parks, trails, and paths within the County and to adjacent counties.
- c. What should the County request of new residential or commercial development in terms of sidewalks, paths, or trails?

Group 1

- See above.

Group 2

- Alternate means of travel (bike, walking, etc) is likely to increase. New developments should contain a trail/path for alternate modes of travel.
- How would funding for a sidewalk or path in this corridor be obtained? We can't tax any more than we currently do.

Group 3

- Left turn lanes
- Sidewalks
- Cross access drives
- All should be paid for by developer

Group 4

- The last place you need sidewalks is in residential neighborhoods; people can walk on the side streets.
 - It would be nice to have trails, but trails are currently cost prohibitive for the County.
 - We should have a trail between Ludington and Scottville. It doesn't need to be along US-10, but perhaps off the road quite a bit.
- d. As a long-term goal, should US-10/US-31/Ludington Avenue be safe and accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists? Is it important to you or someone you know to be able to ride a bike from Ludington to a business on the US-10 corridor?

Group 1

- See above.

Group 2

- US-10 should be accessible to pedestrians/bicyclists. However, maybe the pathway shouldn't be right along 31.
- Law says bikes have the right to use the same road as cars, and some people will insist on riding down the street

Group 3

- No bike lane on US-10.
- Possible bike path off the road, but there is too much traffic from driveways

Group 4

- You must be able to walk or ride a bicycle. Youth need this alternative available for youth who cannot drive.
- Sidewalks should be designed for universal accessibility, with cuts along the curb for bicyclists or people who cannot step up.

TOPIC TWO: Natural Features/Rural Character

- a. If you had to describe "rural character," what physical attributes come to mind? How should the zoning ordinance preserve rural character even as new homes are built in Mason County?

Group 1

- What defines rural character? Less traffic, open space, gravel roads, more visual beauty, farming contributes to it, but doesn't define it exclusively.
- Don't make development too easy in the rural areas.

- Consider incentives to establish open space or conservation design developments. There have not been any of these yet.
- “If it’s zoned AG, they have no business developing it.”
- If utilities are ultimately planned for an area, it may make sense to allow development
- We should let farmers make all the land splits they might want to and be entitled to, but restrict how the resulting land can be developed.
- The don’t want to re-visit quarter-quarter development restrictions

Group 2

- Rural character means a traditional way of life.
- It means if I walk into my back yard, I can’t see any other houses.
- The rural character around Ludington is gone
- People move up to Mason County from the city to find rural character, and then try to make everything look exactly like where they came from

Group 3

- Trees and farms should be preserved
- Program to control autumn olive invasion
- Preserve larger wetlands
- Possible maximum lot size for non-farm properties in AG districts.
- Cluster development possible
- Preservation of farmers rights
- Limit non-farm dwellings

Group 4

- Trees, wildlife, open space, a variety of wild animals (turkeys, deer, etc.), acres of tall trees, farmland, accessory buildings, barns, large setbacks.
- Migrant housing should be put toward the rear of a property.
- Migrant housing should never be permitted for use as rental housing.
- Encourage larger setbacks (sliding scale) on larger lots. If a larger setback can be achieved, encourage a landowner to provide it; but it should not be required.
- Subdividing “bowling alley lots” is a problem and detracts from rural character. These are the long, narrow lots that put homes too close together. We should keep the existing depth-to-width ratio.
- You can’t “boilerplate” the entire County with the same zoning ordinance, because each Township is different. This causes conflicts and encourages Township zoning (Grant Township is an example).

Group 5

- Rural character means no sidewalks in residential areas.
- Rural character has open space and homes clustered together to protect open space.

- Don't rezone ag. land to other residential districts before it is time. Victory Township needs to return to ag. zoning.
- b. When driving down a road in a wooded area, do you like to see houses or do you prefer that the houses are screened from view? Where are the areas of the County where tree protection should be a priority?

Group 1

- See above.

Group 2

- Should be up to the individual property owner
- It doesn't matter if a home is screened from view or not

Group 3

- Non-farm views should be screened, farm views should be left alone.

Group 4

- Trees should be preserved as much as possible; and large setbacks are one way to encourage this.
- The current 50-foot minimum required front yard setback should not be increased.
- The Manistee National Forest area along route 10 is one area we should identify for preservation. Even though this area falls outside the County's jurisdiction, a development of some sort was allowed along the road and it should have only been allowed deep in the forest away from the road, to maintain the wooded view.
- Trees will be protected by developers anyway because they add value to a development and to property.
- Trees help an area appear more established; they beautify an area.
- c. When reviewing a site plan or a development proposal, would it be important to save existing, mature trees or forested areas on a site or should a developer be allowed to harvest the trees and then plant new trees? Why?

Group 1

- On tree protection, it's just one more restriction that probably is not needed in most areas of the County.
- Common sense should be used when siting a building to save worthy trees, but not necessarily at the expense of intelligent development.
- On larger land development projects like subdivisions, the Planning Commission should be able to require some tree protection or at least be able to ask the question.
- We need to understand and coordinate County standards with those of the MDEQ related to saving trees and vegetation along the Lake Michigan shoreline and dunes.

- The standards should also recognize that not all trees are the same or equally valuable.

Group 2

- Trees should be saved; it will make properties worth more in the long run
- Developers should be encouraged to protect them
- Trees help with saving energy in both winter and summer
- If someone owns a lot and wants to cut down all the trees and have a big yard, who are we to tell them they can't do that if they bought property and invested in the community?
- There needs to be a sensible balance between "save every tree" and "cut all the trees down"
- There is concern about people who cut down all the mature trees and plant little ornamental things in their place that don't provide any real benefit

Group 3

- Establish tree buffer standards to prevent compaction or root damage
- Don't want regulations on trees. Property owners should be able to make decision.

Group 4

- Some of them should always be saved. With site plan review, the County always has the ability to look at the quality of trees to determine what should be saved.

Group 5

- Trees grow; there is no need to preserve every tree.
 - Trees along the lake shore should be maintained to stabilize the dune area.
 - The County needs to ask more of developers, especially national chains. If you don't ask for it, they will never give it.
- d. Are there any specific natural areas in Mason County that are threatened—such as Lake Michigan bluffs or the Pere Marquette River? Please explain with specific examples of concern, and discuss how the zoning ordinance may be amended to respond to your concern.

Group 2

- Erosion around water bodies can be a problem in some areas
- Septic tanks can pollute streams if they are too close
- There are already regulations in place that address a lot of this: the State says you can't build within 140' of the Pere Marquette River, and you can't build within 40' of streams or lakes
- Near Lake Michigan, new roads and development are causing a lot runoff - where does it go if not into the ground?

Group 4

- The Pere Marquette River is an area that needs protection. A neighbor cut trees down to enhance property value by augmenting the view to the water. The river is covered under the Scenic River Act; and standards exist. While standards exist, enforcement is an issue.
- Most environmentally-sensitive areas are within critical dune areas, where the County has limited jurisdiction.
- Lot sizes in Summit Township along Lake Michigan are too small; we should increase the minimum requirement to half an acre or one acre. Lot sizes and setbacks are one way to protect natural areas.

Group 5

- There is the natural river zone, but there are other low lands, creeks and smaller rivers that need protections. Trees should be protected in these low land areas. North and south of Lincoln River is another area that should be protected.

TOPIC THREE: Garages/Pole Buildings/Yard Barns

- a. How far should “yard barns” be set back from lot lines? Would you want your neighbor’s yard barn to be placed on your shared lot line, or should it be built a minimum of 10 feet away, or some other distance?

Group 1

- See below.

Group 2

- Setbacks are OK right now
- If two property owners agree to have their outbuildings back-to-back along the property line, then that should be ok.
- People sometimes store junk between the back of an outbuilding and the property line

Group 3

- There should be no regulations in rural or AG districts
- Should be based on where property owner wants them
- One size solutions won’t fix all problems
- Use sliding scale based on property size
- Victory RR zoning should go!

Group 4

- Yard barns should be set back the same as other buildings.
- We should not allow multiple yard barns. Currently, it is easier for a landowner to place three yard barns without a permit and fees than to erect one, single building totaling the same square footage. This is wrong. We should encourage fewer, larger buildings.
- We should limit yard barns.
- We should not require an arduous permit process for small buildings.
- It should be easier to construct a 24'x24' garage than three 10'x10' yard barns. The garage requires a permit, fee and review process; the yard barns don't. This needs to change.
- Yard barns should be at least 10 feet off the lot line. Nothing should be built on the lot line.

Group 5

- There must be at least a 10' setback for accessory buildings.
 - If the house is set back from the road, the accessory building can be in front of it. The accessory building should be at least 200' from the road.
- b. Should the number of accessory buildings permitted, and the square footage of those buildings, be based on acreage of a parcel of land? How should this "sliding-scale" work? Should there be a reasonable limit to the number of accessory buildings on a non-agricultural property?

Group 1

- The maximum floor area for accessory buildings under the existing sliding scale is too limiting.
- If a larger building is permitted for larger parcels, we need a deed restriction to assure that a subsequent split doesn't create a nonconforming structure
- Some division in the group about requiring that accessory buildings be kept in the general area of the principal buildings. Possibly think about different standards for farm buildings or in AG district
- We need to be sure that accessory buildings don't become illegal residences or commercial storage facilities.
- For larger structures, don't make the bar too low. Require Planning Commission approval and public hearing.
- Make sure the ordinance includes clear provisions on how the footprint of the building is measured. Should be consistent for all building types.
- One suggestion regarding the exterior appearance of the buildings. Make them look like surrounding uses. Others less interested in that if landscaping screens the building.

Group 2

- Current ordinance is too restrictive with regard to pole buildings. If it doesn't affect the neighboring properties and doesn't decrease their value, then who cares?
- The original reason for the pole barn regulations was that people would eventually start living in them. Just enforce the current rules!
- A lot of people who are currently zoned RR should be zoned RE or AG; it would alleviate a lot of the problems.

Group 3

- Number should only be regulated in dense areas with small lots

Group 4

- Yes, we need the sliding-scale approach; but, the ratio should be increased to allow larger buildings on larger parcels.
- We should not require a residential use to exist on the property for permission of an accessory building.
- We do not want people living in accessory buildings. This becomes more likely if a dwelling doesn't already exist on the property.

Group 5

- Don't limit the number of accessory buildings on the property, just the overall square footage.
 - The sliding scale works, but needs to increase for 10+ acre properties. Just tie it to a deed restriction.
- c. How should the zoning ordinance regulate the location of accessory buildings?

Group 3

- More regulations in dense areas, less to no regulations in rural & AG areas
- d. Should zoning limit the size of an attached garage? To what?

Group 3

- Size should be based on property size.

Group 5

- No, there should not be a limit on the size of an attached garage.

TOPIC FOUR: Housing Choices

- a. Assuming gas prices and utility costs will continue to increase, what types of homes may become more desirable? Where should they be located?

Group 1

- See below.

Group 2

- People should be able to replace a trailer with a new one; at least it would get rid of the eyesore.
- Elimination of single wide trailers forced a lot of young people out of county who cant afford to build a nice house
- Getting rid of mobile homes was a bad idea.
- Should have changed the minimum width to 14' from 12'; this would have gotten rid of the old junky looking mobile homes and allowed them to be replaced with nicer ones, while still permitting them
- Senior duplexes near Ludington and Scottville is a good idea.

Group 3

- Plats and subdivisions should be put in areas with existing water & sewer close by.
- Only farm related housing should be in AG areas
- Non-farm housing in AG should have maximum lot size (may prevent well & septic)

Group 4

- Zoning should not address the types of homes to be constructed. The market will determine this. The laws of supply and demand will regulate proposed dwelling types.
- Senior housing should be in Ludington and Scottville, because they are walkable.

Group 5

- We need to accommodate all home choices, especially homes on smaller lots. Homes will become more energy efficient and building on a smaller lot makes sense.
- Homes need to locate near the village areas, where infrastructure is available and on lots which were previously developed. Don't build in greenfields.
- Also, residential could located north and south of US-10, behind the commercial.
- Keep the non-conforming uses along Quarterline as residential. Preserve this area along US-10 as residential.

- b. Mason County has several migrant worker housing clusters. Do you have any concerns or recommendations for those areas?

Group 1

- We need to be clear on how state standards regulate itinerant worker housing and coordinate County zoning with those procedures.
- Note: Allyson Wolf (?) is the party that had to build a conforming house on a 1+ acre site for their migrants. She seems a good source for technical information on this topic.
- Can we identify a way to limit use as migrant worker housing for a specified period of time? I suggested licensing rentals as a general law ordinance and no one found that attractive.
- “Why wouldn’t the County permit a duplex in an AG area? How is it any different than any other type of housing?”
- Should migrant housing be treated like other “farm buildings?” Allow state regs and GAAMPS to take precedence.
- How prevent these units from turning into rentals when they are no longer used for itinerants?

Group 2

- There should be minimum standards for migrant housing.
- Farmer should be responsible for managing the housing, keeping it under control and looking nice.
- The closer the migrant worker housing is to the farm, the better
- There should be a limit on the number of migrant worker families that can live in the same dwelling

Group 3

- Should allow single wide trailers to be used for migrant worker housing
- Should be able to maintain or replace without a ZBA or PC approval
- Helps farmers in hard economy
- Hard to farm if a fancy house needs to be built
- Cluster these so farmer can sell land at later date if he chooses
- County should not regulate location, type, size of migrant worker housing
- Duplexes on one parcel should be permitted for migrant worker housing

Group 4

- Migrant housing should be regulated differently from conventional housing.
- Once a farm is sold, are you left with an apartment complex? The County should require deed restrictions to address this.
- Place migrant housing toward the rear of a property.

TOPIC FIVE: Site Design/Landscaping/Lighting/Parking/Signage

- a. What improvements to the commercial areas of the County are needed in terms of site design/landscaping/parking/signage? Please list the areas and the suggested improvements.

Group 1

- Require that parking lots include green areas to reduce “sea of asphalt”
- Evaluate sign standards to avoid cluttered appearance.
- Compare more liberal sign standards in Pere Marquette Township with what is found in Amber Township
- They feel their sign standards are pretty effective.

Group 2

- Light pollution is getting out of hand, especially the movie theater
- Ingress and egress into businesses should be consolidated to improve safety
- The strip malls along US-10 are ugly
- Many places should do more landscaping besides a tree and a bunch of wood chips. Many places don’t even bother to maintain that one tree and it dies anyways.

Group 3

- Signage should be consistent across county
- Brand Signs should be restricted
- McDonalds signs should not be different size/scale as other signs
- Sign size not a problem for the most part.

Group 4

- Signs should be positioned high in the air to ease readability from a distance. Ground signs can block traffic.
- Businesses are suffering because of sign restrictions.
- Message board signs should be allowed.

Group 5

- Landscaping improvements along US-10 would be helpful. There should be very attractive gateways near the interchange, welcoming people to Mason County.
- The gateways need to be more “friendly” since we are a tourist destination.
- Landscaping in the parking lot makes sense. Parking should be to the side or rear, not necessarily upfront.
- A sidewalk needs to be placed along the building front and from the parking area to the main building entrance.

- b. When visiting a commercial business, what are the most important physical features of the site?

Group 3

- Landscaping is important; we need more trees in some areas
- c. The size, shape, height, and materials used for commercial signs can help to define the character of an area. Think about the signs from Ludington to Scottville. What areas are the most attractive and welcoming (in terms of signs)? Please describe those signs.

Group 3

- The lighting is okay
- Parking is okay
- d. Would it be appropriate to require a certain type or size of sign all along the US-10 corridor from Meyers Road (Walmart) to Scottville? Should signs be larger in some areas and smaller in others? Please give examples.

Group 1

- Look at standards to limit any more billboards
- Possibly incorporate standards to regulate LED (jumbotron) billboards

Group 4

- When you allow tall pole signs, the next business will want a taller sign, the next business after that will want a taller sign, and so on. Where does it end?
- If the signs are too high, you cannot see them.
- Signs should be at eye-level so you can see them.
- We should not permit signs so tall that they call people from miles away.

Group 5

- Don't allow flashing signs. Maintain the clear vision areas.
- The smaller the sign, the better.
- There should only be one sign for a shopping center.
- Prohibit digital signs.
- Bury power lines in commercial and residential areas.
- We don't need big signs, but the size of signs should depend on the zoning district and use.

Miscellaneous Roundtable Discussion Comments

Group 2

- 10 acres is too much required for a cemetery – this standard makes no sense
- RR is too restrictive and many properties zoned RR don't even meet the criteria the ordinance lays out for that district

- The Master Plan suggested quarter-quarter zoning to preserve AG land

Public Comments

The concluding activity encouraged interested participants to speak into a microphone about any zoning issues or concerns. Three residents took advantage of this opportunity and shared the following thoughts with the entire group.

1. Change the Rural Recreational areas in Victory Township back to Rural Estate. Consider more than Victory Township, too.
2. Allow accessory buildings in front yards if the house is set back far from the road.
3. Most of Victory Township is Rural Recreational, but most of the land doesn't even meet the standards for that district. It's too restrictive.
4. Victory Township is Rural Recreational but it should be AG. Farming isn't even allowed and it should be.
5. Don't change zoning "when people aren't looking."
6. Summit Township wants to site a cemetery but the minimum area required is 10 acres and that is more than they need and too restrictive.