



Fresh Coast Planning

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MEMORANDUM

To: Crockery Township Planning Commission (PC)
From: Julie Lovelace
Date: September 6, 2024
Re: Agenda Items

1. Ordinance amendment – detached garages. Attached is the proposed ordinance amendment for public hearing, as directed by the PC at the August meeting.
2. Nonconforming lots and adjacent land transfers – As you will recall, the Land Division general ordinance is in conflict with the Zoning Ordinance. At the August meeting the Planner and Attorney were asked to draft an amendment to both. We present the attached for your review and will schedule a future public hearing at your direction.
3. Short-Term Rentals (STRs) – A public hearing was held at the August meeting. The PC asked for revisions to the proposed ordinance amendment prior to making a recommendation to the Board. Attached is a final draft for your review.
4. Master Plan – Attached is Chapter 7 Environment and Natural Features for discussion. As usual, the page numbers in red denote where in the 2014 Master Plan the text was taken from. The bolded portions are items added. Also attached is a clean copy.

Julie Lovelace
Planner

Attachments

Chapter Seven

Environment and Natural Resources Policy

Introduction

Crockery Township is drained entirely by the Grand River and its tributaries; Crockery Creek and Black Creek. The extreme northwest corner of the Township is the only land area that does not drain directly into the Grand River. Here, Vincent Creek runs in a westerly direction and empties into Spring Lake near Fruitport. Approximately 3,880 acres or 18% of the Township is located within the 100-year Floodplain of the Grand River and its tributaries. See *Figure 2 Watersheds and Drainage*.

Sensitive natural areas and wetlands are abundant within the Township as part of the Grand River, Crockery Creek, and Black Creek watersheds. These are designated on the Master Plan Map and include floodplain areas of the Grand River and Crockery Creek. These features, along with agricultural lands, are the main attributes that define Crockery Township's rural character. In 2024, public workshop attendees and resident survey results relayed a strong preference to protect the agricultural lands and rural character of the community.

Groundwater Quality

In areas not served by public water, groundwater quality will have a major influence on development. The aquifer nearest to the surface (15-40 feet) is virtually unprotected from contamination by surface sources of pollution due to the porosity of surface soils. As a result, throughout the Township there have been cases of water wells contaminated by septic tank/drain field discharge.

The second aquifer, the Marshall Sandstone aquifer lies at depths of 100-250 feet. This aquifer is well protected from surface contamination and generally provides good water quality. It should be noted however, that high levels of sodium and chloride have been documented within this aquifer. Additionally, glacial activity buried thousands of trees resulting in considerable Tannin levels in this lower aquifer.

Environment and Natural Resource Protection

As stated above, Crockery Township has a variety of environmental resources. These limited features should be protected from development projects and be incorporated as part of a project when present. The Township should promote the preservation and protection of floodplains, wetlands and ground water by working with the Michigan Department of the Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and/or the enactment of Township ordinances addressing these resources. It is the intent of this plan to support, encourage, and provide for the conservation of the natural resources of the Township and to allow for the development thereof while preventing irreparable damage to the property and inhabitants of the Township. These natural features should be buffered by green belts, park areas, and open space with a minimum of development impact.

Implementation Measures

Goals

- Protect and preserve natural features such as steep slopes, wetlands, and floodplains
- Preserve prime agricultural land
- Prevent conditions that increase susceptibility to dangers of flooding and pollution
- Protect soils capable of providing necessary infiltration for the maintenance of aquifer stability
- Prevent damage to waterways caused by erosion, scarification, sedimentation, turbidity, or siltation

Recommendations

- Encourage Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) as permanent conservation land with mandatory clustering
- Encourage Conservation Easements
- Promote the protection of waterways to prevent further degradation by working with watershed groups and educating residents about the importance of vegetative buffers
- Encourage Best Management Practices in farming operations especially in areas adjacent to Grand River tributaries
- Encourage and preserve buffer strips on agricultural land adjacent to creeks and other surface waters

Strategies

- Reduce E. coli inputs from septic systems by requiring proof of regular maintenance and inspection of septic systems in Planned Unit Developments and Subdivisions as a condition of approval.
- In areas with a high water table, or poor soil drainage, require the use of alternative technologies to sanitary sewer.
- Reduce storm water runoff during site plan review by incentivizing the use of impervious surfaces, reducing parking requirements when practical, and prohibiting parking area greater than the minimum required
- Identify those areas with high water tables and retain zoning which would prevent over development
- Identify ecologically sensitive areas and retain zoning which would limit development
- Promote guidelines for reporting illicit discharges to appropriate authorities

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Implementation Measures

Goals

- Protect and preserve natural features such as steep slopes, wetlands, and floodplains [p. 38](#)
- Preserve prime agricultural land [p. 44](#)
- Prevent conditions that increase susceptibility to dangers of flooding and pollution [P. 84](#)
- Protect soils capable of providing necessary infiltration for the maintenance of aquifer stability [P. 84](#)

- Prevent damage to waterways caused by erosion, scarification, sedimentation, turbidity, or siltation [P. 84](#)

Recommendations

- Encourage Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) as permanent conservation land with mandatory clustering
- Encourage Conservation Easements [p. 45](#)
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- Identify those areas with high water tables and retain zoning which would prevent over development [p. 40](#)
- Identify ecologically sensitive areas and retain zoning which would limit development [p. 40](#)
- Promote guidelines for reporting illicit discharges to appropriate authorities [p. 45](#)