

Minutes:

Watersmeet Township Planning Commission

Regular Meeting of October 14, 2015

USFS Conference Room

- 1) **Meeting called to order** by Vice-Chairman Dave Sherrill at 6:31 PM.
- 2) **Pledge of Allegiance** was given.
- 3) **Roll Call:** Members present included; Vice Chairman Dave Sherrill, Township Board Liaison-Rich Henriksen, Pete Peterson, Jeff Zelinski, and John Cestkowski. Chairman Roy D’Antonio, Larry Potter and Jeff Wasson were absent. Zoning Administrator –Dave Neumann and Township Board Supervisor- Mike Rogers were also present. Members of the community present included; Craig Hesse, Julie Mathiesen, Peggy Tuttle, Roberta Giannola. With five Planning Commission members present, the requirements for a quorum were met and business could be conducted.
- 4) **Approval of Agenda/Changes:** Vice Chairman David Sherrill asked that the agenda be amended to move the discussion of nuisance farm animals in L1, L2 districts to item 8. The rest of the agenda to be followed in order. The public hearing was cancelled due to detailed information on the proposed changes being unavailable for public access. Pete Peterson made a motion to accept the agenda as amended. This was supported by John Cestkowski. A unanimous “Yes” vote followed.
- 5) **Approval of Minutes:** The minutes for the September 9th meeting were approved as submitted upon a motion by Pete Peterson with support from Jeff Zelinski. A unanimous “Yes” vote followed.
- 6) **Zoning Administrator’s Report:** Dave Neumann stated that he approved permits for one dwelling, one garage, two porches and one land division. Dave stated that he has a problem with a property on Mamie Lake where a six foot wide strip of land is being used as an easement to provide deeded keyhole access to Mamie Lake in long standing violation of the Zoning Ordinance. Dave is consulting with the Township Attorney on this development and possible actions.
- 7) **Town Hall Update:** Rich Henriksen was asked to present the latest plan and elevation for the proposed New Town Hall which was in the form of a large set of prints from the project’s architects. The general reception was quite positive. The proposed building is 7,000 square feet and is estimated to cost approximately one million dollars. The community hall will accommodate 200 persons. Roberta Giannola asked if a commercial

grade kitchen was part of the plan. The answer is no at this time, however the architects are designing to precondition the building's infrastructure to allow for that upgrade in the future. Budget considerations are what they are. Dave Sherrill asked if the building will be "LEED Certified" as he believes that certification would set a good example for future development projects. His principle concern here is to avoid the use of non-permeable (paved) parking areas per LEED principles. The current plans call for on- street angle parking on First Street so that minimal pavement will be necessary on the lot, surrounding the new building. The bidding process will occur during the snow months so that ground breaking can happen in the spring. The current goal is to be ready for occupancy in early November of 2016 – in time to use as a polling place. Truly, the Township is in need of its own meeting facilities and expanded office space.

- 8) **Report on Zoning Workshop:** The Zoning Workshop was held on two dates in Iron River, MI. The Watersmeet Township Planning Commission members taking advantage of this education opportunity were David Sherrill, Larry Potter and Rich Henriksen. Several members of the community were present as well. The first meeting was: Part One-Planning and Zoning Refresher. This was summarized by David Sherrill as being valuable to understanding the relationship between the Master Plan, Planning Commission, Town Board, Zoning Administrator and Zoning Board of Appeals, and the responsibilities of these units. The second session drilled down into how the proper functioning of a good zoning ordinance protects the water features of the township from wide varieties of degradation including pollution and invasive species infestations. Watersmeet Township's future existence is very dependent on the water quality of its vast lake areas.

- 9) **Master Plan Update Continuation:** Vice Chairman David Sherrill has done extensive work capturing the changes necessary to update the Township's Master Plan. With that said, Mr. Sherrill feels that the updated Master Plan is deficient in several areas going forward. There is precious little in the way of goals to advance water quality, for example. A round table discussion developed about the relatively booming past of the Western U.P. versus the diminishing future as business and employment opportunities disappear. Peggy Tuttle and Roberta Giannola spoke to the potential for the new community center to bring interesting and exciting new ways of building the community spirit which could translate into creating some new reasons for the town to continue to exist. Peggy Tuttle mentioned a future possibility to advertise a "Pickle Ball" court. Talk ensued regarding a location for the Chamber of Commerce in the current Township Office building. Vice-Chairperson David Sherrill expressed joy at tonight's community turnout and the great roundtable discussion that ensued. This would have been great had it occurred during the Master Plan's update process. Vice-Chairperson David Sherrill made a motion to revisit the updates to the new Master Plan as he believes much more information can and should be incorporated to make it a viable forward looking plan including water quality enhancement techniques. This was supported by Rich Henriksen. A roll call vote followed: Pete Peterson "No", John Cestkowski "No" and Jeff Zelinski "No", David Sherrill "Yes, Rich Henriksen "Yes". The motion failed by a

three to two vote. The next step, to move the current version of the new Master Plan forward, is a presentation at a Public Hearing as part of the November regular meeting of the Planning Commission. This will require general availability of the document to the public.

- 10) **Zoning Ordinance Change** as proposed requires a rewrite of 7.04C regarding “Reconstruction of Damaged Non-Conforming Buildings”. Nobody did the rewrite to present to the public at this meeting so that will have to be done in advance of the next Public Hearing on this subject. Jeff Zelinski offered to draft the exact wording for the proposed change.
- 11) **Recreation Plan Update:** The members of the P-C need to obtain copies of new Recreation Plans from Ironwood and Bessemer to use as a guide to update the Watersmeet Township Recreation Plan. David Sherrill will distribute these via e-mail to the P-C membership. The update process is tabled until the November meeting.
- 12) **Farm Animals in L-1 and L-2 Districts:** Zoning Administrator David Neumann has been fielding complaints from residents of the North Shore of Cisco Lake. The general complaint regards the nearly continuous noise of roosters crowing all day on Mann’s chicken ranch. Concern is also being raised about the long term effects of chicken droppings finding their way into the pristine water of Cisco Lake. Discussion ensued re. Michigan’s Freedom to Farm Act. GAAMPs (Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practice(s) are required to be adhered to as part of the Freedom to Farm Act. One or more GAAMPs regulate or prohibit new farming operations in primary residential districts. David Neumann is working the issue through a contact in Lansing. The situation is being well handled, at this time.
- 13) **Public Comments:** Craig Hesse suggested that the township attempt to secure funding in the form of donations to install the commercial grade kitchen in the new Community Center. These could be in the form of anonymous gifts, memorials and/or naming rights. Pat Walsh asked if anything regarding Internet Access is part of the Master Plan. The answer is no. It was suggested that Mr. Walsh talk to Sherri Zoars who has been researching this subject for years. Part of the “Northwood’s Experience” seems to be lack of modern communications availability. The reasons; common to most of the U.P. are obvious: Part time seasonal residents, low general demand and low population density. The infrastructure cost to serve few customers is overwhelming.
- 14) **Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn at 8:05 PM by Pete Peterson, with support from Jeff Zelinski. Unanimous “Yes” vote followed.

Respectfully submitted by: *Rich Henriksen* – Planning Commission Secretary

Approved: 12/9/2015