

Minutes:
Watersmeet Township Planning Commission
Regular Meeting of September 9, 2015
USFS Conference Room

- 1) Meeting called to order by Chairman Roy D’Antonio at 6:31 PM.
- 2) Pledge of Allegiance was given.
- 3) **Roll Call:** Members present included; Chairman Roy D’Antonio, Vice Chairman Dave Sherrill, Township Board Liaison-Rich Henriksen, Pete Peterson, Jeff Wasson, Jeff Zelinski, John Cestkowski, and Larry Potter. Rich Henriksen agreed to author these minutes as Secretary Pro-Tem. Zoning Administrator –Dave Neumann and Township Board Supervisor- Mike Rogers were also present. No other members of the community were present. With all eight Planning Commission members present, the requirements for a quorum were met and business could be conducted.
- 4) **Approval of Agenda/Changes:** Zoning Administrator David Neumann asked to include discussion on Short-Term Rental Special Use Permit changes. Vice Chairman David Sherrill asked that the agenda be amended to include a number of additional items. He wants discussion regarding Town Hall updates. He also wants discussion on proposed by-law changes and a continuing education update and lastly public comment. David Sherrill made a motion to accept the agenda as amended. This was supported by Rich Henriksen. A unanimous “Yes” vote followed.
- 5) **Approval of Minutes:** Finally a sufficient number of members were present at this meeting that had also attended the May 13th meeting to consider approving those minutes. They were approved as submitted on a motion by John Cestkowski supported by Pete Peterson. A unanimous “Yes” vote followed. The minutes for the August 12th meeting were approved as submitted upon a motion by Pete Peterson with support from David Sherrill. A unanimous “Yes” vote followed.
- 6) **Zoning Administrator Report:** Dave Neumann said he approved permits for two dwellings, two garages, two house additions and one deck. Dave stated that he has a list of eighteen properties being Short-Term rented. He will be sending letters to the owners asking that they comply with the Zoning Ordinance by obtaining the requisite Special Use Permit.
- 7) **Recreation Plan Update:** This was tabled until Supervisor Mike Rogers can get copies of current Recreation Plans from neighboring communities for us to use as a guide. (This

has been done.) David Sherrill made the motion to carry this item over to the October meeting. This was supported by John Cestkowski. A unanimous “Yes” vote followed.

- 8) **Master Plan Update Continuation:** Vice Chairman David Sherrill has done extensive work capturing the changes necessary to update the Township’s Master Plan. These updated documents have been available to the P-C’s membership for several months. The next step, to move the new Master Plan forward, is a presentation at a Public Hearing as part of the October regular meeting of the Planning Commission. A motion to that effect was proffered by Chairman Roy D’Antonio with support from Rich Henriksen. A unanimous “Yes” vote followed.
- 9) **Non-Conforming Structures:** Chairman Roy D’Antonio initiated a long discussion about how the Watersmeet Zoning Ordinance is too restrictive in section 7.04C regarding “Reconstruction of Damaged Non-Conforming Buildings”. Roy was specifically concerned that a Sauna owned by Terry Strauch, located fifteen feet from the shoreline of Cisco Lake, which was nearly totally destroyed by fire, can’t be rebuilt in its current location per Section 7.04C. He maintains that relocating the replacement to comply with current set back requirements, would present an insurmountable hardship for the property owner, and the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) shouldn’t be involved in recognizing that hardship. Therefore, Roy made a motion to change 7.04C so that any structure destroyed by fire, wind or other disaster may be repaired or replaced as long as it fits within the original (grandfathered) footprint. This was supported by Jeff Zelinski. A roll-call vote followed: Roy D’Antonio-Yes, Jeff Wasson-Yes, Jeff Zelinski-Yes, Larry Potter-Yes, John Cestkowski-Yes, Pete Peterson-Yes, Rich Henriksen-Yes, David Sherrill-No.
- 10) **Special Use Permits:** The Zoning Administrator presented a list of Short-Term Rental requirements which he would like to see applied to all Township properties in all zoning districts in the interest of uniformity and fairness. These were also presented at the August meeting. Chairman Roy pushed back, that in his opinion, the Township Zoning Administrator is trying to discourage visitors coming to this community. Pete Peterson spoke at length to the need to require periodic septic system inspections especially for the short-term rental properties. Limiting the number of persons allowed in the short-term (vacation) rental to the actual septic capacity is unfair in the opinion of many of the planning commission members. Jeff Zelinski again stated that there should be no zoning ordinance whatsoever as every property owner should be free to do whatever they please. Consequently, no actions were taken.
- 11) **Town Hall Update:** Rich Henriksen was asked to bring the latest conceptual plan and elevation for the new town hall which he circulated. The general consensus was quite positive. The proposed building is 7,000 square feet and is estimated to cost approximately one million dollars. Detailed construction plans are coming in the future. The bidding process will occur during the snow months so that ground breaking can happen in the spring. Obviously the Township is in need of its own meeting facilities.

- 12) **Proposed By-Law Changes:** David Sherrill mentioned that the Planning Commission has been suffering from poor attendance as evidenced by the cancellation of the July meeting due to lack of a quorum. The members present at the May meeting were not present in quorum compliant numbers until tonight's September meeting, delaying approval of this meeting's minutes. David believes P-C members should be required at minimum to attend nine of the twelve meetings in a year. The P-C members were quick to point out that only one meeting this year was cancelled due to lack of quorum and it is very difficult to make every meeting; what with work, family, hunting and fishing trips competing for time. Roy D'Antonio stated that he will be unable to attend the October meeting. He also stated that he is stepping down as chairman. A replacement needs to be sought. No action was taken. David Sherrill noted that on the last page of the web copy of the zoning ordinance, it lists additional ordinances some of which do not exist. This needs to be corrected at the Township Offices.
- 13) **Continuing Education:** Vice Chairman David Sherrill mentioned the upcoming shoreline protection seminar that will be attended by several of the P-C members.
- 14) **Public Comments:** None. There was no "Public" present.
- 15) **Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn at 8:30 PM by Pete Peterson, with support from Jeff Wasson. Unanimous "Yes" vote followed.

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

Approved: October 14, 2015