

Watersmeet Township Planning Commission
Wednesday, August 20, 2018
Special Meeting Minutes

Location: Watersmeet Community Center

Meeting called to order by Vice-chairman Jeff Zelinski at 6:30 PM

Roll Call:

Members Present: Jeff Zelinski, Jeff Wasson, Pete Peterson, John Cestkowski, Peggy Tuttle, Roy D'Antonio, Craig Hesse, Paul Kemppainen

Members Absent: , Giiwegiizhigookway Martin, no reason given and Pete Peterson who had a School Board meeting

Approval of Agenda: Motion by Craig and 2nd by John. Motion carried.

Public Comment:

Greg Clark again thanked the Commission for allowing the public input into the creation of a short-term rental ordinance and explained the rationale behind what has been submitted in the draft. He said that working with Peggy and Paul had been a positive experience on the committee. He felt that the document represented a good starting point and involved a great deal of discussion and compromise to be at the point it presently is.

He also gave the members handouts of how short-term rentals are dealt with in several other townships in Michigan. In addition, he presented a couple of handouts showing the implications of short-term rentals on fish populations in small lakes, in this case, Long Lake that had been done by the Department of Natural Resources.

Alan Martel, Supervisor from Torch Lake Township in Antrim County, Michigan, gave the commission a report on how short-term rentals have been handled. They do not have a short-term rental ordinance with the exception of a few properties. He felt that the lack of short-term rentals had a positive influence on property values. His township had conducted a survey and overwhelmingly the consensus was against short-term rentals. Because their ordinance did not contain anything about allowing short-term rentals they were not permitted in any property classification and if one was found to be operating they were forced to discontinue.

Discussion of draft Short-term Rental Ordinance:

Good visitor guidelines relative to current ordinances in place would be checked out with Sandy by Paul. Greg Clark stated that he had found 18 short-term rentals on the web. Sixteen of which were on the Cisco Chain or Lac Vieux Desert. The township has only about four of these on file with the Planning Commission.

Peggy asked the committee to give their opinion as to the whether they thought we should continue the process of creating a short-term rental ordinance. Members responded and a voice vote was conducted with everyone voting in favor of going ahead except Jeff Zelinski.

Roy suggested that a survey should be sent out to all residents as to the need for the ordinance. He felt that more than a small sample of the residents should be allowed to give their opinion. Members of the committee responded to this, as they had suggested doing this in the first place. Questions were raised as to how the survey would be conducted and what would actually be asked and where to send them. Because our current Zoning Ordinance allows short-term rentals the idea of doing a survey really would not change the fact that the Commission feels that we need to move forward with the help of those on the committee.

Roy raised several questions as did John and as we went through the draft members of the committee tried to address their questions and clarify any of their concerns. The document is only a draft and is definitely subject to change.

A question was raised by Craig about the moratorium on short-term rentals voted upon at the regular meeting on August 8, 2018. He asked if we could simply put an ending date as required per the recommendation from Tim Dean. Paul suggested that an ending date of December 31, 2018 be added. The change was added as those voting in favor on August 8, Peggy, Craig and Paul agreed. The abstaining of John and no of Jeff Wasson were acknowledged on the motion.

The committee hopes to meet prior to the next regular meeting of the Planning Commission to discuss concerns or possible changes to make to the draft.

Adjournment: Motion by Craig, 2nd Jeff W. Motion carried. Meeting ended at 8:50 PM

Next Regular Meeting on Wednesday, September 12, 2018

Submitted by: Paul D. Kemppainen – Planning Commission Secretary