

Minutes:
Watersmeet Township Planning Commission
Regular Meeting of November 11, 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, Jeff Zelinski, John Cestkowski, Larry Potter, Jeff Wasson, and new member Giiwegiizhigookway Martin. Pete Peterson was absent. Zoning Administrator –Dave Neumann and Township Board Supervisor- Mike Rogers were also present. Members of the community present included; Pat Walsh, Craig Hesse and Julie Mathiesen. With eight 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 approved as presented. This was supported by Larry Potter. A unanimous "Yes" vote followed.
- 5) **Approval of Minutes:** The minutes for the October 14th meeting were not approved as Pete Peterson was absent. Therefore only four members that had attended that meeting are present which is insufficient for a vote to be taken. This was tabled on a motion by David Sherrill with support from John Cestkowski. A unanimous "Yes" vote followed.
- 6) **New Member Welcome:** Giiwegiizhigookway Martin was welcomed as a new member of the Planning Commission. She is filling out the remainder of John Neumann's term.
- 7) **Zoning Administrator's Report:** Dave Neumann stated that he approved permits for one dwelling, and two poll barns. 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.

- 8) **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 define or advance "the Northwoods Rural Experience", for example. The available draft of the new Master Plan needs to be submitted to the Township board which then sends a copy on to the Gogebic county board which has 63 days to comment. After that period, a public hearing will follow. A motion to send the Master Plan (as is) to the Township Board was made by Jeff Zelinski with support from Jeff Wasson. A voice vote followed with 5 yeas, 2 nays and one abstention.
- 9) **Recreation Plan Update:** Chairman D'Antonio suggested that we re-consider hiring Coleman Engineering to "do the recreation plan". The members of the P-C were not interested, as before, to pay Coleman \$5,000 to tell us what to do. We still need to engage with the public to find and identify a recreational activity not available to Watersmeet Township residents. All members are encouraged to edit the existing recreation plan. David Sherrill moved that all P-C members should read the current Recreation Plan and be prepared to discuss edits at the December meeting. This was supported by Jeff Wasson. Voice vote followed with everyone in favor.
- 10) **Non-Conformance Structures Ordinance** as proposed requires a rewrite of 7.04C regarding "Reconstruction of Damaged Non-Conforming Buildings". Jeff Zelinski drafted and submitted the following: *"All buildings or structures built prior to the original ordinance, dated December 18, 1969 that do not meet the current setbacks and said buildings or structures are destroyed other than by intentional act of principal owner, may be rebuilt on the same footprint, with the same number of square feet as the original building or structure"*. The above contains both the original wording and wording added as a result of extensive and sometimes heated discussion of this subject. Jeff Zelinski made a motion to adopt his language with support from Jeff Wasson. A roll call vote was taken: Roy D'Antonio-Yea, Dave Sherrill-Nay, Rich Henriksen-Nay, Jeff Zelinski-Yea, John Cestkowski-Yea, Larry Potter-Yea, Jeff Wasson-Yea, and Giiwegiizhigookway Martin-Yea. The results are 6=yea, 2=nay. This change will move on to the town board for public hearing and approval.
- 11) **Public Comments:** Craig Hesse commented on high Michigan taxes. More discussions ensued regarding how this is driving down property values in Watersmeet Township.
- 12) **Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn at 8:29 PM by David Sherrill, with support from Jeff Zelinski. Unanimous "Yes" vote followed.

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

Approved: December 9, 2015