

Minutes

Watersmeet Township Planning Commission

Meeting of September 12th, 2012

Meeting called to order by Chairman Bill Neumann at 7:02 PM.

Members Present: Bill Neumann, Rich Henriksen, Dennis Snyder, Dudley Pierce and Fred Reimer were in attendance. Greg Garlock, Paul Kempainen and Roy D'Antonio, were excused. A quorum was present and business could be officially conducted.

Members of the community present: Frank Kuchevar-Township Supervisor, and Dave Neumann-Township Zoning Administrator were present. Craig Hesse was in attendance as an engaged citizen.

The Pledge of Allegiance was given.

Minutes of August 8th Regular Meeting: Approval of the minutes was tabled until the October meeting as only three members present at the August meeting, were also present at this meeting. The motion to table was made by Mr. Pierce with support from Mr. Henriksen. As Secretary, Mr. Henriksen has been routinely abstaining from voting on the minutes he presents which would have left only two Planning Commission members voting. Motion carried on a voice vote: 4 Yea, 1 nay.

Zoning Administrator's Report: David Neumann stated that he had personally approved zoning certificates for four garages, four additions, one dwelling and one accessory building.

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA): David Neumann reported that a hearing of the ZBA was convened to rule on the land division of an "in-town" property with two houses. This land division was approved,

Chairman's Report: Mr. Bill Neumann was in attendance at a Michigan Township Association Meeting where he met Representative Matt Huuki. The Chairman spoke to the existence of a "Cemetery Ordinance" that among other things, frowns upon local canines defiling graves with the product of their biological necessities. While I doubt that this activity can be construed to be an editorial comment to the life-legacy of the dear departed, we must get the local dogs to read and obey this ordinance. Chairman Neumann recommended that the Planning Commission research the White Pine and Marenisco ordinances regulating the cultivation and distribution of medical marijuana within those communities. For example, we might determine that the "Wilderness" flower shop, currently vacant, might be a trifle too close to the school for a medicinal pot shop despite being conveniently next door to a doctor's office.

Public Comments: Frank Kuchevar-Township Supervisor reported on showing off the downtown and several resort businesses to Velda Sciafaldi of the Community Action Committee of Gogebic-Ontonagon counties. She would like to attend a future Planning Commission meeting or two, if it doesn't require driving after dark.

Agenda Changes, Additions: Dudley Pierce made a motion to close the agenda as presented with support from Fred Reimer. Welcome back Fred! Voice vote: All in favor.

Old Business:

- a. Master Plan. No discussion.
- b. The proposed 7.14B Wind Turbine Ordinance text which generated significant discussion by members of the commission last month continued with additional discussion from the members absent at the last meeting. From this discussion, several new modifications were suggested. The latest version, showing the latest contributions of the commission, in italics, follows:

Section 7.14B Requirements for *Domestic* Wind Turbines

- A. Setback of tower must equal or exceed the total height of the tower ***plus the length of one rotor blade*** from all property lines, ***ordinary high water mark (if applicable)*** and overhead utilities.
- B. Wind turbines may only be considered for placement on parcels of land adequate to meet all setback requirements.
- C. Erection of any wind turbine tower shall require:
 - 1. A survey by U.S. Fish and Wildlife identifying any potential hazards to local or migratory birds and animals. ***This survey*** must be submitted to the ***Watersmeet Township*** Planning Commission ***with permit request***.
 - 2. Tower must be equipped with an “anti-climbing device” for the first 10 feet measured vertically from the base of the tower.
 - 3. Area surrounding tower base to be covered with ***a ground cloth (weed barrier) and ¾ inch crushed stone*** extending for a 20 foot radius around the tower to discourage burrowing animals from interfering with the tower’s primary grounding system.
 - 4. Applicant must submit a decommissioning plan for the eventual removal of tower.
 - 5. Not more than one (1) wind turbine shall be permitted on any one lot up to 5 acres. No more than two (2) wind turbines shall be allowed on any single parcel up to 40 acres.
 - 6. Commercial type wind turbines (exceeding 20kw capacity) shall only be permitted in the Recreation and Forest (R&F) zoning district. No commercial type turbines shall be permitted in an R&F Buffer Zone.

The discussion suggested the addition of a new section to regulate commercial wind turbine power systems as shown below:

Section 7.14C Requirements for Commercial Wind Turbines

Commercial wind turbines exceeding 20kw capacity shall be regulated by the State of Michigan however they will be subject to Planning Commission approval as provided in sections 7.09, 7.11 and 7.12.

A motion to convene a Public Hearing to address the Wind Turbine ordinance additions of 7.14B and 7.14C was offered by Dennis Snyder with support from Dudley Pierce. Voice vote: All in favor.

Motion to adjourn at 8:37PM by Dennis Snyder and supported by Fred Reimer. Voice vote: All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by,

Richard C. Henriksen - Planning Commission Secretary

Approved: 10/10/2012