

WHITEWATER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES FOR REGULAR MEETING
April 5, 2023

Call to Order at 7:02 p.m.

Roll Call: Jacobson, Keaton, DeYoung, Rebant, Wroubel

Absent: Vollmuth, Steelman,

Also in attendance: Planner Randy Mielnik and Recording Secretary MacLean

Zoom attendance: at start

Set / Adjust Agenda: Address Classic Equine, special use permit right now instead during NBa (see below for details).

Declaration of Conflict of Interest: None

Public Comment:

Public comment began at 7:11 p.m.

No one in the building. There is an issue with the zoom audio.

Public comment ended at 7:13p.m.

Public Hearing: None

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION by Jacobson second by Keaton, to approve the minutes of March 1, 2023, as amended.

Roll call: Wroubel-yes; Jacobson-yes; Vollmuth-n/a; Keaton-yes; Rebant-yes; DeYoung-; Steelman – n/a.

Motion carried.

MOTION by DeYoung, second by Jacobson to approve the minutes of Master Plan Subcommittee March 10, 2023 and March 17, 2023.

Roll call: Jacobson-yes; Vollmuth-n/a; Keaton-yes; Rebant-yes; DeYoung-yes; Steelman-n/a; Wroubel-yes.

Motion carried.

Correspondence:

Reports:

Zoning Administrator Report, Hall: Outside sources for training is better than self-training. There is a scheduled training coming up, available to all.

Kalkaska county is distributing their MP. Elk Rapids and GT County have given notice of intent to plan.

Have not heard anything from the golf course group. Hoping to have for something to you in June.

The upcoming ZBA case is another non-conforming issue. The ordinance offers very little to no guidance on what to do.

The ordinance is lacking on the subject. It is not necessarily urgent but it would be good to deal with it. Bob will share information to everyone. Carl doesn't feel that changes need to be made to the zoning ordinance regarding non-conformities at this time.

Chair's Report, Steelman: Has no information on the standing of Amendment 84. Publications should have been received by the PC members.

Township Board Rep, Vollmuth: Rod Rebant shared a note from Heidi. The PC binders are nearing completion. Green MTA books have been disbursed, MTA red books have been ordered.

Vollmuth is proposing that the PC monthly report given to the Board as a shared responsibility by PC members.

PC Bylaws are scheduled on the board agenda.

Movie night featured zoning related topics.

Land division basics as discussed in the citizen planner series is a top priority that each of us should revisit as part of ongoing education.

Budget: The board has budgeted more funding for the PC for education, outside consulting, the planner, printing, etc.

Mielnik's contract covers Master Plan and assisting with ordinance as a whole and individual ordinances as requested. He will discuss with Steelman and the Supervisor. The contract between Mielnik and the Board needs to be addressed. At this point the understanding is that the Supervisor has to approve each item for Mielnik. The PC can submit what they would like the contract to cover. Mielnik will present a change in the contract to the Board.

Bring the subject back as an agenda item next month.

Micro managing is a problem for the PC being able to move forward. Need to have permission to spend the money without having to get a motion and a vote from the board every time.

What and why is the procedure the way it is now?

ZBA Representative, Wroubel: No meeting in March. Address non-conformities when the time is more appropriate.

Committee Reports:

Planner, Mielnik: Schedule and scope of work and cost. The Board wants to take back the approval or disapproval of the PC bylaws. The planning and enabling act makes it clear that the PC controls its own bylaws. The bylaws can be presented to the board. Give this to Heidi, to look up what all the rules are, quote the planning and enabling act, and present to the board on behalf of the PC. Author a letter from the PC to give to the Board regarding the PC stance on the subject. PA 33 of 2008, 125.3818 is where the planning enabling act gives authority to the PC to create their own bylaws. This is another example of micromanaging the PC.

The Master Plan Subcommittee is working on a community survey. The committee will bring forward recommendations for PC for approval. The basic time line was / is in the March 17 minutes.

Have a computer available at the township for people to be able to come in and use to take the survey.

Take tablets out to those who can not get out.

Discussion of Survey Monkey / online survey and other options.

There has been a lot of background done on the Master Plan, demographics, maps, etc.

The zoning ordinance recodification, explained to the board via a presentation and letter, in detail what things are wrong with the ordinance. Discussion of Municode and it seems the board does not know where the contract stands at this point. The Board has that on hold until they gather more info from Municode. The township ordinance is difficult. Individual ordinances are like chapters in a full novel.

An option would be to retype the whole ordinance and readopt it. There are things that need to be addressed, there are conflicts. Needs consistency. Fix the easy things. Identify and correct areas that are not clear

The PC recommends getting it retyped into an editable format. Municode was supposed to do that. The board needs to decide if they want to move forward with Municode.

We need to pick a version and stick with it. Retyping is the smallest part of the whole ordinance issue.

Mielnik presented a proposal to the board to create an editable version of the ordinance and do some basic clean up. It has been put on hold by the board.

Create a committee to address. If the PC cannot spend the money in the budget what is the point in having the funds budgeted.

Present to the board for their May meeting.

MOTION by Rebant, second by DeYoung to create a committee that will look at budget, work flows, and existing projects in 2023/2024 and propose a process and a solution to improve the efficiencies of the Planning Commission.

Roll call: Jacobson-yes; Vollmuth-n/a; Keaton-yes; Rebant-yes ; DeYoung-yes; Steelman-n/a; Wroubel-yes.

Motion carried.

Committee members: Keaton, DeYoung, Rebant and Mielnik. April 13, 8:30 a.m. – 10 a.m.

Unfinished Business:

1. Project Flow Chart – Rebant – postpone
2. Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) – DeYoung – this is really for the people who come behind us. We are already doing this. It is a handbook of what the PC responsibilities are. Falls right in line with the bylaws. Possibly move this to the committee to address.
3. Private Roads Discussion – postpone to May agenda
4. New Adopted Bylaws – included in packet

New Business:

1. Classic Equine – Special Use Permit Extension (Handled at the beginning of the meeting.)

MOTION by DeYoung, second by Jacobson to approve the extension of the special use permit granted May of 2022, until May 31, 2024.

Roll call: Wroubel-yes; Jacobson-yes; Vollmuth-n/a; Keaton-yes; Rebant-yes; DeYoung-yes; Steelman-n/a.
Motion carried.
ZA Hall will notify Classic Equine.

2. Zoning Ordinance Amendment Process – Rebant noted that Mangus had created the step by step of the zoning ordinance amendment process. MSU Extension puts it in chronological order – step by step. What else does the board want included?

Next Regular Meeting May 3, 2023, 7 p.m.

Agenda: Private Road Ordinance, project flow chart, bylaws, work flow and processes.

Special Meeting, Master Plan Resident Outreach Subcommittee

Public Comment:

Public comment began at 9:05 p.m.

None

Public comment ended at 9:05 p.m.

Commission Discussion/Comments:

Possibly change the date of the meetings. Makes communication with the board flow more smoothly. Look at the 3rd Wednesday of the month.

Clerk will need to be notified of the April 13 special meeting of the subcommittee.

Clerk will need to be notified of the April 19 special meeting.

Clerk will need to post the meeting date changes.

Meeting Synopsis:

Budget control or lack thereof; research bylaws; formed a new committee; approved Classic Equine special use permit; experienced zoom audio issues.

Continuing Education:

Citizen Planner updates. Carl is taking the 6 section MSU Extension course on ZBA. Recommends everyone to take it. Each section is about two hours.

Planetizen Courses available via weblink provided.

Adjournment: 9:23 p.m.

Tabled items: Article 5 Districts; Article 25, Special Use Permits: campgrounds

Respectfully Submitted
Lois MacLean,
Recording Secretary