

WHITEWATER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES FOR REGULAR MEETING
October 4, 2023

Call to Order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call: DeYoung, Keaton, Slopsema, Vollmuth, Wroubel

Absent: Jacobson, Steelman

Also in attendance: Planner Mielnik, Recording Secretary MacLean, Rob Carson of Networks Northwest
Four on Zoom at the beginning of the meeting

Set / Adjust Agenda: Networks Northwest presentation after Public Comment

Declaration of Conflict of Interest: None

Public Comment: None

Networks Northwest presentation on Traverse Transportation Coordinating Initiative (TTCI), Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Previously we had TC-TALUS changed name to TTCI.

Rob will send the power point presentation to Rachel and/or Randy for sharing including the Unified Work Plan, the presentation in PDF, sample resolution, Intergovernmental Agreement, bylaws. Currently under \$4000 to join.

Public Hearing: None

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION by DeYoung second by Vollmuth to approve the Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes of September 6, Special Meeting minutes of September 20 as amended and Resident Outreach Subcommittee Meeting Minutes of September 15.

Roll call vote: Vollmuth–yes; Jacobson-N/A; Wroubel–yes; Steelman-N/A; DeYoung–yes; Slopsema–yes, Keaton–yes.
Motion carried.

Correspondence: Vern Gutknecht to Rachel, encouraged by the PC work and commented on the name and description of the RC1 district in the zoning ordinance.

Reports:

Zoning Administrator Report, Hall: Report in board packet. Message from Bob: ZBA decision referencing Baggs Road has been appealed to the circuit court. The proposed site condo project will not move forward at this time, pending the court review outcome.

Great work on the MP progress.

Chair's Report, Steelman: None.

Township Board Rep, Vollmuth: Did anyone read the board packet last month? No one did. The October Township Board packet is large. Encouraging everyone to read it. Vollmuth does not believe she can pull out what each person may need. Wants everyone to have a full picture of what is moving forward or not at the board level.

Wroubel attends 2-3 hours of Board meetings.

Vollmuth wants everyone to read the packets. Keaton would like a summary provided.

ZBA Representative, Wroubel: No cases in September. The August ZBA decision is being appealed.

Committee Reports: None

Additional items: None

Unfinished Business:

1. Master Plan / Resident Outreach Subcommittee (ROS) October 12th at 9 a.m. DeYoung read an email from Barry Hicks: Open house went well, 76 people signed in but more attended. Will be reviewing October 10 with Mielnik and October 12 with the ROS in preparation for the November 7 workshop.
 1. Open House discussion Mielnik noted there were likely more like 100 in attendance. Hicks will be preparing a summary of the open house. Wroubel noted interesting conversations with people. So many people think that if it is NOT mentioned in the ordinance then it is legal. The Whitewater Township ordinance is written as permissive – only that which is written in is allowed. Variances can be allowed.
We don't have any enforcement.

Specifically relating to short term rentals:

Slopsema noted that other communities have it written in their ordinance to prohibit or allow with limitations.

Wroubel notes that the state is writing legislation and maybe that is why the township has chosen not to address it.

Other communities have some excellent ordinances addressing it.

Short term rentals is part of the zoning not part of the Master Plan.

Major litigation happening now at the state level.

Is renting houses allowed in the township? Daily? Weekly? Monthly? Annually? Short term or long term.

Amending the ordinance is the only way to allow it in any way.

2. Next Steps: ROS is October 12, work shop is November 7, 7-9 p.m. at Mill Creek Elementary.

3. Review updated Draft chapters 1-4 some minor changes have been made, posted and they were available at the open house.

Slopsema: Page 28, Williamsburg / Whitewater Township – address the Williamsburg / Whitewater descriptor.

Randy will look at it and correct the verbiage.

Slopsema: page 43 any more current data, 2021 is the most recent estimates.

Additional comments can be presented to the PC if they missed the opportunity to participate at the open house.

2. Zoning Project Update: Trying to include notes / notations as part of the draft zoning ordinance.

Possibly zoning ordinance subcommittee. Decision: Not at this time.

Stay focused. Content neutral. Issues need to be addressed at some point. “Major issues” not at this time.

Addressing major issues is not part of this reorganization process.

Everyone read through it all, including the notations included.

The major issue points will need to be addressed after the reorganization.

For instance there are questions regarding Farm Market, Farmers Market and road side stands.

The chart shows how the articles can be combined.

Table of contents will be included.

What do you need from the PC next? Go through the notations and decide which ones are minor enough to change which ones need to be addressed later.

Running list of known issues that will need to be addressed, some are small, some are substantial.

Randy notes the example of clarifying the height requirement, add “whichever is less”.

Randy’s notations need to be read through. Determine if it is a major issue or a minor issue. Only address the minor issues and note the major issues that need to be addressed. Once the reorganized ordinance is approved the PC can prioritize what needs to be addressed more fully.

Look to get some feedback from the Zoning Administrator on what he sees as needing more immediate attention.

The “Public comment” / Public Hearing would be at the end of the whole reorganization before submission to the board for their approval. (commissioners were using the term public comment and public hearing interchangeably when referencing public hearing)

The zoning ordinance can be a topic for the joint meeting.

Randy shared the Zoning Graphics of R-1, R-2 multi and single, R-3 multi and single, A-1, C-21 for the visual.

3. Joint Township Board (TB) / Planning Commission (PC) meeting is scheduled for November 9. Add the zoning ordinance discussion. Avoiding substantial changes, remaining content neutral.

New Business:

1. Networks Northwest – Rob Carson to present on Metropolitan Planning Organization information. Presentation completed before the approval of minutes.

Next meetings:

Regular PC – November 1, 2023, Agenda: DRAFT ordinance 1-4 and come back with comments on Randy’s notations.

Master Plan Workshop November 7, 7-9 p.m., at Mill Creek Elementary

Joint TB/PC Special Meeting, November 9, 7 p.m.

Public Comment: None

Commission Discussion/Comments: Wroubel: Let Randy do his work and make the substantial changes later.
DeYoung: We cannot bog ourselves down during these meetings.

Continuing Education: Networks Northwest Metropolitan Planning Organization Presentation.

Adjournment: 9:54 p.m.

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

Respectfully Submitted
Lois MacLean,
Recording Secretary