

WHITEWATER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES FOR REGULAR MEETING
November 1, 2023

Call to Order at 7:00 p.m.

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

Absent: Steelman, Vollmuth

Also in attendance: Planner Mielnik, Recording Secretary MacLean, Members of the ROS, Barry Hicks of LIAA and Bryan McKenna, Superintendent of Elk Rapids Public Schools

Two on Zoom at the start of the meeting.

Set / Adjust Agenda: Consensus to move Mill Creek School discussion at the end of Reports/Presentations

Declaration of Conflict of Interest: None

Public Comment: None

Public Hearing: None

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION by DeYoung second by Slopsema to approve the Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes of October 4.

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

Motion carried.

Correspondence: None.

Reports and Presentations:

Zoning Administrator Report, Hall: None.

Chair's Report, Steelman: Included in packet. Keaton read through the presented report.

Township Board Rep, Vollmuth: Included in packet.

ZBA Representative, Wroubel: No cases in October.

Committee Reports: None

Additional items: None

Mill Creek School presentation by Elk Rapids School Superintendent Bryan McKenna. Information included in the packet. It is a difficult but necessary discussion regarding the financial situation of the elementary school.

Communication is of the utmost importance.

Explanation of “in formula” and “out of formula”. In formula is where the school is paid for each student in a seat on count day. Out of formula is where funding is based strictly on the tax base. The school district has a high number of students that attend Elk Rapids Schools as a “school of choice”.

Several options have been reviewed by the school. They are currently communicating with the State of Michigan on various options, one being that of turning Mill Creek into a charter / academy. The goal is to still have Elk Rapids Schools provide busing and food service.

A communication forum will be held November 3 at Mill Creek 8:30 – 9:30 a.m. More to be announced in the future.

Unfinished Business:

1. Master Plan / Resident Outreach Subcommittee (ROS)
 - a. Review and discuss MP Open House Results, Mielnik. We had more than 80 people participate. Discussion of the goals and objectives. Run through the categories and goals as they have been presented and discussed.
 - b. Workshop planning and discussion, Hicks. The plan is to rank the feedback of each of the sections from the Open House. Will create groups with 10-12 people in each. At the workshop Hicks will do a brief description of what the goal of the workshop is and will explain the ground rules, making sure all participants have their voice heard. LIAA will be general moderators and each group will have A “champion” who will go through the goals, make changes, and write them up. The group champion will present from each group with the what and why of their discussion / decisions. Will need to be careful that the champion does not dominate the group. Need to hear the voice of each person.
 - c. Anything else related to MP and upcoming workshop – Schedule ROS for November 30 at 9 a.m.
2. Zoning Project Update:
 - a. Define substantial change. Define what is a minor change and what is a major change? Working on clarifying

and correcting words and definitions right now not changing anything that changes an outcome.

Consensus on a definition of current zoning ordinance work: Clarification, fix conflicts, state or federal law, duplication and organization but does not change the spirit of the ordinance. A substantial change is anything beyond.

Mielnik is working on reorganization of the zoning ordinance to make it more comprehensive and creating consistency.

Consensus to accept what has been presented by Mielnik for tonight's packet, Articles 1-4.

b. Review proposed ZO restructure and determine which should be updated now and which should wait for the completion of the master plan was included in the previous discussion.

3. Joint Township Board (TB) and Planning Commission (PC) meeting discussion. Looking to get the dates of availability from the Board. PC selected two dates: Thursday, December 13 or 14 for possible joint meeting.

New Business:

1. Elk Rapids Public School Superintendent, Bryan McKenna, sustaining and maintaining ER Schools. Presentation was completed before Unfinished Business.

Next meetings:

Master Plan Workshop, November 7, 7-9 p.m. at Mill Creek. Helpers should be there by 6:30 p.m.

ROS November 30 at 9 a.m.

Joint TB/PC meeting TBD

Regular PC – December 6: Agenda: Discussion of the workshop and zoning ordinance updates that may come from

Public Comment:

Denise Peltonen

Commission Discussion/Comments:

Wroubel notes we are not changing, we are clarifying, not just one thing but through the whole thing.

Use the word clarify instead of change.

Key Notes to share with TB: Share the dates for the joint meeting;

Action Items for PC members, DeYoung will add to the chart regarding the clarification and change.

Continuing Education: None

Adjournment: 9:50 p.m.

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

Respectfully Submitted

Lois MacLean,

Recording Secretary