

**Whitewater Township Planning Commission  
Minutes of 12/2/09 Regular Meeting**

**Call to Order**

Chairperson Zakrajsek called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Roll Call**

Members Present: Boyd, Courtade, Lyons, Mangus, Miller, Savage, Zakrajsek

Members Absent: None

Also Attending: Planning/Zoning Administrator Meyers,  
Recording Secretary MacLean plus eight others.

**Set/Adjust Agenda**

No adjustments to agenda

**Approval of 11/4/09 Regular Meeting Minutes**

Motion by Savage, seconded by Lyons, to approve the 11/4/09 Regular Meeting minutes.

**Motion carried 7-0.**

**Approval of 11/9/09 Special Meeting Minutes**

Motion by Mangus, seconded by Boyd, to approve the 11/9/09 Special Meeting Minutes.

**Motion carried 7-0.**

**Conflict of Interest:**

Zakrajsek notes a correspondence received by the township supervisor then directed to himself, regarding a possible conflict of interest on his part regarding the Sheer Salon extension request, being a landlord to a hair salon. Zakrajsek notes that this is regarding a permit issue not whether or not it will be a salon. Correspondence also notes restrictive use regarding septic. Zakrajsek states that he does not feel there is a conflict of interest. After discussion with the township supervisor, believes he does not have a conflict of interest.

The Planning Commission agreed that there was no conflict of interest.

**Public Comment:**

Jim Snider, 8316 Old M72, Williamsburg, Michigan.

Ready to start doing things on a new foot today, but if things go the way they did at the last meeting, we are going to have problems. I was honest and there were a lot of things that were flipped out there that night that were not factual. I've done what you've asked of me and I'm saying "he who has not sinned, cast the first stone." If you are in a position to give someone approval, you better make sure that you have done the same things yourself as far as not being in any kind of violation at all. Thanks.

**Public Hearing - None**

**Reports:**

**Correspondence:** Meyers:

Letter from Cheryl Walton, in packet

Intent to update Master Plan letters from Kankaska County and Antrim County.  
Requested that we receive these correspondences electronically until they can provide us with their final drafts.

**Zoning Administrator:**

Attached are October and November and Road Committee reports.

**TC TALUS Representative, Meyers:**

November 2009. Two of the final documents have been adopted by the board and we still have three more to go. They may be requesting an extension past the December 31, deadline. Socio-Economic and the modeling for traffic are the two approved documents. (Attached)

**Township Board Representative, Boyd:** None

**Chair, Zakrajsek:** Notes that there are three terms on the PC up this year. Supervisor Lake is happy with the PC and has put out letters to all three members to stay on board. Zakrajsek states that in his 18 months as the Chairperson he has seen a lot of growth together. We've had subcommittees that have had great results. Things are getting accomplished. In public comment we are getting not so many angry, aggressive comments, we seem to get suggestions and input on the direction we should go. That is what we look for in public comment. It's been a good year with lots of accomplishments. We've got a lot of work in the coming year. It's been a pleasure being here. For the record, the members whose terms are up are: Courtade, Lyons and Zakrajsek.

**Old Business:**

**1. Extension request for Sheer's Salon**

Zakrajsek: It's a time line issue. We know you are working hard on it and obviously you did a lot this month. Minutes from years past indicate that some of the same issues were going on then too. With the information we have here, we can move forward and have a good working relationship. Zakrajsek has a packet of information with permits and other necessary, requested information.

Snider: I gathered the information. I put my money, time and effort into this and want to move forward with it.

Zakrajsek: The packet contains:

1. A current building permit, issued 12/2/09
2. An extendible, 30 day land use permit, which was necessary to get the building permit, issued 11/17/09
3. Fire department sent in approval, via e-mail, 12/2/09
4. Soil erosion letter indicating no erosion issue, dated 11/20/09
5. Septic permit okayed previously
6. Electrical permit, dated 11/30/09
7. Plumbing permit, dated 12/1/09
8. Mechanical permit, dated 12/1/09

Motion by Mangus to approve the extension request for Sheer's Salon until

January 1, 2011, seconded by Savage.

Roll Call vote: Mangus-yes; Miller-yes; Savage-yes; Zakrajsek-yes; Boyd-yes; Courtade-yes; Lyons-yes. **Motion carried 7-0.**

## **2. Sign Ordinance**

In the previous meeting specifically signs of political nature were discussed. Since this is such a big issue for all of our community's businesses we are addressing the whole sign issue now. Proposed sign ordinance discussion:

There are a lot of inconsistencies in our township, much of it due to grandfathering in from previous businesses. We need to give our businesses a sign ordinance they can work with. We have businesses that have expressed an interest in getting new signs but are not doing it because they do not know what the new ordinance will be. This is difficult and frustrating for the local businesses.

\*We would like to hear from the businesses what they would like.

\*Definitions will be included. Temporary signage information included.

\*Currently, subdivision signs are unrealistically small (12 sq. ft.) and has been addressed in this new revision. Sub-divisions usually have large, architecturally tasteful signs.

\*Need to differentiate between landscaping, fencing and signage.

\*We have increased the square foot of the commercial signs and signs on the building.

\*On a road that moves as fast as M72, front facing signs are not necessarily the best.

\*According to current definitions, sign posts and braces are considered part of the sign and therefore part of the square footage.

\*We need to allow for creativity.

\*Sign Review Board, made up of the Planning Commission, if someone wants something different than what is in the very strict regulations of the current sign ordinance; no ZBA, special meeting or additional fees necessary.

\*Multi-tenant commercial buildings are currently allowed the same sign size as single tenant commercial buildings.

\*We have a very small industrial and a very small commercial district. This is our business tax base. We need to allow the impulse businesses the signs necessary to pull in the business. We are not all destination businesses.

\*Nothing looks better in our community than a successful business.

\*Sign height needs to be addressed also.

\*Agricultural / farm market signage.

\*Separate agricultural from recreational and institutional

\*Off premise signs, specifically for the farm markets. (No Burma Shave style signage)

\*Temporary signs for grand openings and 6 non-consecutive 14 day periods per year

\*Temporary signs issue may be better addressed as a general ordinance so it can more easily be changed should it turn into a debacle.

\*Civic and charity event signage require notification to the township.

\*Political signs to have contact information. Possibly use MDOT or county specifications regarding placement and removal and disposal of signs. Possibly just let the state or county deal with it, then the township isn't wasting time, money or effort. If we cannot come to a consensus on the political signs we can always adopt the rest of the ordinance and address the political signs later.

\*Authorize the zoning administrator to go to each business and find out what they want and invite each business to be at the January 6, 2010, regular meeting.

\*Zoning Administrator will have a complete report to the PC at the regular January meeting. Then we can decide on any necessary special meetings and/or scheduling of a public hearing for approval.

## **New Business**

### **1. Master Plan Discussion – Sub-Committee Establishment**

Each sub-committee to have at least one planning commission member. Subcommittees to work on pertinent sections of the Plan simultaneously to have reports back by March, the time line is critical on this.

Sub-committees and who will be heading the committee:

Agriculture – Matt Lyons

Transportation – Pat Miller

Natural Resources/Environmental/Recreation – Julie Courtade

Lot Size/Housing – Glenn Savage

Village/Commercial/Industrial – Kim Mangus

Code Enforcement and other Zoning Issues – Arnell Boyd

Tribal Issues – Steve Zakrajsek

\*Each sub-committee will determine how large or small the committee should be and how many meetings are necessary. Sub-committees will also need to determine what issues aren't covered in the survey and try to deal with some of those too.

\*Educate the public, along with the members of the sub-committee on the various subjects. Possible funding through the tribe for MSU Extension education.

\*Several volunteers have already stepped forward to work on the various sub-committees.

\*Zakrajsek is working to get the regular meeting compensation for these additional meetings, probably 6 meetings at the most.

**Public Comment:** None

### **Continuing Education-Conference Update by Meyers**

**Motion to adjourn at 9:25 pm** by Boyd, seconded by Savage. Motion carried 7-0. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Recording Secretary, Lois MacLean