

WHITEWATER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES FOR REGULAR MEETING
In-person and via ZOOM
December 3, 2021

Call to Order at 7:02 p.m.

Roll Call: In person: Mangus, Dean, Jacobson, Wroubel, Darrow

Unfilled seats: One commissioner, Board Representative and PC Representative to the ZBA unassigned

Also in attendance: Zoning Administrator Hall-via Zoom, Chris Grobbel-via Zoom and Recording Secretary MacLean

Set / Adjust Agenda:

Declaration of Conflict of Interest: Mangus notes that she has property on Crisp Road that does not adjacent the property of the proposed development but she does own similar condos within the township. Commissioners respond that they do not see it as a conflict.

Public Comment:

Mangus notes that the developers of the proposed multi-family/campground project (project) have put it on hold.

Al Keaton, 5296 Scofield Trail, questioning water usage of the proposed multi-family / campground project.

Glenn Savage, 9833 Pineneedle Lane, proposed project concerns.

Mangus notes that Grand Traverse County says the septic regulations would be handled by the state.

Wayne Miller, 8124 Crisp Rd., proposed project concerns about the road, county road maintenance and millage.

Joel, 5669 Moore Rd., project concerns: campgrounds on two sides of the property, wildlife, noise, traffic, wetland.

Chuck Brayman 5639 Moore Rd., project concerns: traffic.

Allen Bowen, 7771 Crisp Rd., project concerns: water, junk on both sides of property, won't stay if it goes through.

Chris Bowen, 7771 Crisp Rd., project concerns: wildlife

Sally Misolek, 7878 Crisp Rd., project concerns: why would someone do this?

Randy Steelman, 7315 Crisp Rd., project concerns: came to the country from Traverse City and love it, hopefully it can be managed well; require more money for community services.

Bret Bowerman, 8306 Crisp Rd., project concerns: massive project, not a PUD, utilities, roads, property values, property rights, general health, safety and welfare.

Lisa Bowerman, 8306 Crisp Rd., appreciate the emotion and facts presented; not opposed to development; project concerns: size, wildlife, open space, road maintenance, traffic, water, sewer.

Penelope Lemay, 5370 Scofield Trail, project concerns: water, school system.

No public comment from Zoom.

Read public comment: Linda Slopsema, marihuana zoning ordinance concerns and suggestions.

Public Hearing: None

Approval of Minutes:

Mangus requested changes to the minutes for clarification purposes.

Discussion of November 5, minutes Mangus notes that ZA, Hall, made a statement about discussion with the public about specific projects. Mangus shared her opinion that conversing with the public is part of the PC job and communicating in a public meeting is not the only place to communicate with the public. The PC can take comments and converse with people.

Jacobson notes that people reach out to the commission.

Wroubel expressed concerns about discussion with the public as related to the risk management training. The PC can listen to the people but we cannot discuss. The PC can listen to their opinion but we cannot give them our opinion outside of the public meeting whether we agree or disagree. Encourage people to come to the meeting for input.

MOTION by Jacobson, second by Dean to approve November 5, 2021, meeting minutes as amended.

Roll call: Darrow-yes; Dean-yes; Jacobson-yes; Mangus-yes; Wroubel-yes. All in favor. Motion carried.

Correspondence: None.

Reports:

Zoning Administrator Report, Hall: Ask the PC and the Chair to be in touch regarding the annual report.

Proposed condo/campground project on hold, no discussion.

While working on this and other projects regarding Special Land Uses and Site Plan Reviews I note the Michigan Zoning and Enabling Act requires separate standards for both not co-mingled in a way that the Site Plan and the Special Land Use standards are indistinguishable between the two. All special uses are to be accompanied by a site plan. Have sent a formal memo to the township attorney and the township board to place a moratorium on the issuance of any special use permits until we can amend the ordinance and get the appropriate language in place that will protect us and bring us into compliance with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act.

Ask you to look up the meaning of Exparte. On an active application or pending project you are depriving the applicant of input. Mangus notes this is a fine line.

Chair's Report, Mangus: Article 25 will need to be addressed as soon as possible.

Notice from Supervisor that the attorney has highlighted a portion of the ZBA Article 18, regarding who appoints the PC member to the ZBA. Mangus will bring it back to the January meeting.

Have requested from the Township Board that the PC have access to a planner. Grobbel has put in a quote / bid at about \$70 per hour. We have consulting fees approved but we do not have people available to call / use.

Township Board Rep., Not assigned.

ZBA Representative,: Not assigned. Wroubel is on the Board agenda for approval to be the PC Representative to the ZBA. No ZBA case in November.

Committee Reports: None.

Additional Items: None.

Unfinished Business:

1. Master Plan (MP) Review, Mr. Grobbel: Two chapter drafts. Handle typos, formatting, spelling etc., via emails. Highlights of demographics.
Transportation assessment to bring the MP into compliance with state law the Complete Streets Plan.
In the next couple weeks you will receive information regarding the economic development plan and blight.
In the next couple of months we will work to develop questions for a survey that can be done during the winter.
The PC will need to address after everyone gets a chance to read through these sections.
Mangus notes that Whitewater Township does not necessarily want all of the things that a general Master Plan and other entities want. How do we address that?
Mangus' experience is that Whitewater Township people want to drive 30 minutes to work.
Grobbel, we are looking at traffic safety, parents not being home, etc. Most townships want viable businesses.
We can discuss. Grobbel experience is that people generally want a town center. Let's have a discussion. Let's get PC and public input. Want to be efficient with time, planning and the process.
Mangus, let's be open to the answers we may get from the people of the community.
Grobbel notes that he is not starting with a preconceived notion. Openness is very important. Encourage the public to start engaging in the draft MP process.
Wroubel notes that much of the transportation section / assessment does not really fit in our township.
Dean: This is a planning process. Keeping an open mind. Want to be open to the 20 year look with a 5 year revision. Would like the draft sections on the website for public viewing to encourage public input.
Wroubel: Planning is for the people who will be here, in these PC positions, 10 to 15 years from now. What do we need for the people who are 20 to 40 years old now?
Dean: Need to have this for zoning.
Mangus: Need to always go back to what the community wants.
Grobbel notes that the mission is to bring the MP into compliance with state law. The overall vision will be informed by the public and each commissioner gets one vote. Meaningful public input is necessary.
Mangus: Can we do an inventory based road list? Text based is very difficult to read and understand.
Grobbel: Please present road corrections to Grobbel. Need to address intersection safety and pedestrian access.
PC needs to let Grobbel know the specifics.
Dean: We need to have this information so we can address things like this proposed project. We still have work to do. We have a good advocate and partner to work with. Leave broad statements and deal with details.
Grobbel: Something cannot be done in zoning if it is not in the MP. "Complete Streets" can be made for specific areas. It does not necessarily mean every street throughout the township.
Economic development plan and blight in the next couple weeks. Then we can get into the fun input part.
Dean: Need to educate the public, embrace the process. We have a good partner to work with. We can funnel information back to Grobbel. We need to be doing our homework. It will be the required information with our fingerprints (input) and our concepts in it.

Subcommittee work can begin. Subcommittee will bring back recommendations.
Bring it back next month. Create a priorities list by the PC of the transportation section.

Wroubel: Development has to line up with the Master Plan. Slow steady development. Tonight we heard about quality of life.

Mangus notes that she is right on that road.

We have zoning issues that need to be addressed.

2. Preliminary site plan review: The project is on hold, temporarily or permanently, we don't know right now.
3. Article 5 – Zoning Districts: Consensus to use the Kalkaska zoning district sample. Discussion of a subcommittee to review and bring forth only the exceptions.
ZA Hall notes that the zoning district map should be very quick.
Address for the January meeting: Multi family, Commercial, Industrial and Village.
Review the districts and adopt with the corrections.
ZA Hall: Important to note that moving zoning district lines affects adjacent property owners.
Hall will get a black and white parcel map from Grand Traverse County GIS. Mangus would like zoning district maps also.
4. Marihuana zoning ordinance – postpone to January.

New Business:

1. Article 12, district setbacks, initial presentation. Discussion. Possibly change the commercial information to address this project issue and get back to the rest in the future.
Apartments and campgrounds need to be addressed using language or charts. Send information to Mangus and she will combine the information and present.
Wroubel, what are you trying to do here?
Mangus notes that two things were brought to light in the last month. Campgrounds and apartments density need to be addressed. Mangus notes that “the rule didn't follow the use” when apartments were added to Commercial. We are looking to address that. Put the density at the level that we thought it was.
Look at it in January.
Send comments and recommendations regarding set-backs to Kim and she will combine and bring back.
Filling in gaps and holes for review and possible public hearing of changes to Article 12 in February.
Are there campground standards that the industry uses? What was proposed meets all of state standards.
We do not have a density restriction.
2. Discuss subcommittee formation: Wait until January to create subcommittees.

Next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 7, 2022. Change the time to 6 p.m.

MOTION by Jacobson, second by Wroubel to change the time to 6 p.m. for the January 7, 2022 meeting.

Roll call: Darrow-yes; Dean-yes; Jacobson-yes; Mangus-yes; Wroubel-yes. All in favor. Motion carried.

Next meeting agenda:

MP review: transportation, demographics, economic development plan, blight and subcommittees

Meeting dates, By-laws

Article 18 ZBA article

Article 25 site plan review and special use permit

Marihuana ordinance

Public Comment:

Brett Bowerman, notes the detail process on issues, planning.

Mangus notes that we know there are issues in the zoning ordinance that we are working on. Sometimes these important things have had to be put on the back burner.

Denise Peltonen, regarding Master Plan development: Will there be a part for infrastructure?

Brad Boals, 10091 Munro, letter into the record from Slopsma, endorse things that she indicates in the letter.

Lois MacLean, density concern and what constitutes an apartment? Mangus answer = 4 dwelling units = apartments per acre. Concern of legalities after the project has been brought forth. Mangus notes that it has been discussed with legal.

Rod Rebant, Island View Dr., concern about the project proposal, marihuana, campgrounds, maybe developers see Whitewater as the place to go because the Master Plan is so porous.

Vern Gutknecht, PC is very transparent; like Grobbel comments regarding data and long term plans and “stop fighting fires”; would like to see a town center developed.

Commission Discussion/Comments: Darrow indicates he would like a marina. (smile)

The township board is addressing whether we can continue to use Zoom. Let the board know how you feel about it.

Continuing Education: None.

Adjournment: 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted
Lois MacLean,
Recording Secretary