

**WEST TRAVERSE TOWNSHIP  
REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
DECEMBER 12, 2018**

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

Roll Call: Baiardi, Opfermann, Kennard, Wallin, Repasky, Mooradian.  
Absent: Gorman.

Visitors: Dawson Moore, Dave Uutinen, Dave White, Sue Matsko.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

Approve Agenda: **Wallin made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Repasky seconded the motion.**

**Vote: All yes.**

Public Comments: Mooradian introduced Dave Uutinen and Dawson Moore as new Planning Commissioners starting January 1, 2019.

Approve Minutes: **Baiardi made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of October 10, 2018 as presented. Kennard seconded the motion.**

**Vote: All yes.**

OLD BUSINESS

Baker Letter Discussion and Recommendations: John Baker had sent a letter to the Planning Commission in response to their prior discussion and questions. Mooradian presented a letter from Tammy Doernenburg, Planning and Zoning Director for Emmet County. She explained what is involved in their department and the amount of help they have. Mooradian spoke with Tammy this morning and she told him that they do not have the staff capacity to take on any extra work and she had had to turn down a township and village for help with their zoning ordinance update and master plan because of this. Mooradian took Baker's latest response as meaning that he feels the County has a better staff and more resources than the Township has. Baker also stated that he feels that personal relationships make it hard to deal with applicants. Mooradian stated that this issue was discussed at the last meeting and it was agreed that if the Planning Commission follows the code, they review it factually and don't look at the name of the applicant, then the issue of personal relationships should not affect any decisions. Opfermann agreed that the Planning Commission is able to do its job without bringing personal relationships into the mix, but he also thought there could definitely be someone who can't get around the friendship issue. Kennard thought that the same issue could come up at the County level. Opfermann said that if everyone is doing their job and being professional, there should not be an issue. Wallin felt that Baker thought the Planning Commission was being too restrictive. He also thought that the Planning Commission has put a lot of work into the Zoning Ordinance and they have a better handle on what the needs and wants of the people they represent are.

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Wallin pointed out that the Sheriff's Office does not enforce any zoning issues. Repasky thought that there were four points the Baker is bringing up. The first point is the Planning Commission level of competence, which he clarified that both the Township and the County are excellent. Repasky wondered at what level does Baker hope to achieve by going to the County. He would like to ask Baker if he has any experiences to show that the Township would be gaining qualifications at the County. The second point is that Baker feels the County has more assets available than the Township. Doernenburg stated that they do not have the assets available. They have asked for more assets, but they don't know if they will be getting any. The third point is regarding legal counsel and will it cost the Township to pay for the County's legal cost or would it be more prudent to maintain the Township's legal representation. The fourth point was the enforcement by the Sheriff's Office, which Wallin already answered to the negative. Repasky stated that he would like to get some clear answers from Baker on what is the basis for even making the claim that the Township will see improvements. Kennard said that he feels Baker's suggestions demean the efforts that the Planning Commission has put in over the last 40 years. Dave Uutinen made the comment that it sounds like the letter desires to take responsibility off the Planning Commission's shoulders and spread it out to the County. He said that he understands the possibility of nepotism, cronyism, but he feels that everybody on the Planning Commission has a lot more interest in the goings on and the appearance of the Township than what you would get from the County. He stated that if you follow the code, there should be no problem. Dawson Moore agreed that the personal relationship issue could happen anywhere, especially in a small community. He also thought that the local control should be maintained.

Mooradian read a sample of a response to Baker's letter which states all of the reasons why the Planning Commission feels that sending all of the zoning to the County is not a good thing to do. Mooradian pointed out some of the zoning situations that came up during the last year that would have been handled differently had they gone through the Township instead of the County. After discussion, it was decided to add another sentence to the response to Baker:

"We believe the West Traverse Township Planning Commission is more vested in our local area/ community than the Emmet County Planning Commission would be; and we feel it is important to maintain local control".

**Wallin made a motion that the Planning Commission makes a recommendation to the Township Board per the "Keep the West Traverse Township Zoning Code in West Traverse Township" letter, dated 12-12-2018, as read. Repasky seconded the motion.**

**Vote: All yes.**

#### NEW BUSINESS

LIAA-Emmet County Coastal Master Plan: Emmet County sent a letter to the Township notifying them that they are intending to prepare an Emmet County Resilient Master Plan. LIAA is doing the coast line work on this project. Mooradian had presented the information so that the Commissioners would be aware of what is happening in the County. It was explained what LIAA stands for and what kind of work they undertake.

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Proposed Zoning Amendments from Planner for Review: Denise Cline, Township Planner, presented a few amendments to definitions. The definitions being reviewed are Accessory Building or Structure, Attached Structure, Common Wall Building, Common Wall and Shipping Containers. These are all in Section 407 of the Zoning Ordinance.

There was discussion regarding accessory buildings and how and why they need to be defined in the Township. There was a lot of discussion regarding common wall and what it really means. It was agreed to go with the definition for Accessory Building or Structure as presented with the deletion of five words and the addition of one. Cline will be asked to clarify the definition of Attached Structure to incorporate habitable or living space into the definition.

Baiardi said that she liked the definition being considered for 407:1(G) for Accessory Building Materials. That definition does not allow non-rigid materials for walls or roofs. Different scenarios were discussed from simple tarps being used to permanent tarpaulin roof systems. It was agreed that the County building code covers these types of structures.

It was agreed to add "shipping containers" to Section 407:2 Nontraditional Storage Facilities.

There was possible new language presented by Cline for "Fence Materials". There was discussion regarding the various types of material that could be used for fences. It was agreed to strike woven wire and welded wire from the prohibited materials and discuss this section again at the next meeting.

PUD Text Review Article 7 Section 727: Mooradian stated that the PUD section will be reviewed starting in January, 2019 and requested the Planning Commissioners reviews this before the next meeting.

Zoning Administrator's Report: Dave White presented his October and November reports.

Township Board Representative Report: Baiardi presented her Township Board report.

Planning Commissioner Comments: Mooradian thanked Paul Opfermann and Scott Kennard for their time on the Planning Commission. Mooradian thanked the whole Planning Commission for their hard work throughout this last year. Mooradian stated that the Planning Commission needs to establish some minimal goals and budgets for 2019.

Kennard said that he thought it would be a good idea for every Planning Commissioner to have a laptop and that there be a large screen for everyone to look at. He suggested that the Township get three prices from IT people who can support the investment of the hardware. Kennard said that part of the reason he is leaving is because the Planning Commission worked for three years on the Zoning Ordinance just to have it thrown back to the County and that is a complete disappointment. He feels that it was a real disrespect for the efforts of the Planning Commission.

Opfermann wanted to thank the Township Supervisor for the opportunity to serve on the Planning Commission. He said that it was a great experience and it has given him a new appreciation for the people and the work involved in managing the Township.

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Mooradian will be gone on the scheduled meeting date of January 9, 2019. It was agreed to re-schedule the meeting for January 23, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

Public Comments: None.

Adjourn: **Wallin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Opfermann seconded the motion.**  
**Vote: All yes.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.  
The next regularly scheduled meeting will be January 23, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

Submitted by:

Paul Opfermann, Secretary

Transcribed by:  
Susan Matsko  
Township Secretary

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Approved: